

PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING MEETING MINUTES
RE: SPECIAL PERMIT for RELEAF CULTIVATION, LLC
OCTOBER 19, 2021 - 7:00 p.m.

Members present: Mark M. Schafron/*Chairman*, Robert Swartz/*Vice-Chairman* Robert J. Bettez, Sr., Stephen Cormier, Paul A. Cormier-*Members*, and Trevor Beauregard/*Director-City Planner*.

Members absent: *None.*

Also present: Chris Coughlin-Engineering, Christine Fucile-DCDP, Rafaella Cardoso-Releaf, Peter Martin-Releaf, Jon Allard-Fuss & O'Neill.

ANNOUNCEMENT - Any person may make a video or audio recording of an open session of a meeting, or may transmit the meeting through any medium, subject to reasonable requirements of the Chair as to the number, placement and operation of equipment used so as not to interfere with the conduct of the meeting. Any person intending to make such recording shall notify the Chair forthwith. All Documents referenced or used during the meeting must be submitted in duplicate to the Director of Community Development & Planning pursuant to the Open Meeting and Public Records Law. All documents shall become part of the official record of the meeting.

Mr. Schafron, Chairman called the Public Hearing to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Schafron read aloud the Public Hearing Meeting Notice for Releaf Cultivation, LLC

T. Beauregard noted the proponents were in front of the Development Review Committee a few months ago and have since submitted the Definitive Plans.

Rafaella Cardoso introduced herself and said she is the CEO and Co-Founder of Releaf Cultivation. Ms. Cardoso noted they are proposing to build their facility here in Gardner and introduced Mr. Jon Allard of Fuss & O'Neill who is the civil engineer for their project, as well as Peter Martin, also Co-Founder of Releaf Cultivation.

Mr. Allard pointed out 120 Suffolk Lane on the plans displayed, and noted it is in Summit Industrial Park area, which is about 5 ½ acres of undeveloped land. Existing conditions, include typical vegetated cover, as well as a drainage ditch that runs down, pretty much the middle of the property and ends up in a wetland area. Explained the drainage ditch collects water from Suffolk Lane, and the water from the neighbor to the west. Further, they are proposing a 34,440 square foot building on the site with associated parking of 22 spaces. There are additional parking spaces in the rear of the building, depending on the occupancy at certain times. Handicap spaces are closest to the entrance on the corner at the main entrance.

The drainage will end up in the detention basin in the back with a high-water overflow into a large, existing detention basin, as well as planning to enlarge the basin. The peak flows are met at the 100-year storm. The existing utilities within Suffolk Lane include electrical, water, and sewer. In addition, there will be two rather large propane tanks located on the site in the back with an electrical transformer.

Mr. Allard asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Swartz asked if the propane tanks serve any specific purpose. Mr. Allard replied there are no gas lines on Suffolk Lane. T. Beauregard added that gas was looked at numerous times in the past, however, it is an expensive endeavor since it has to be brought in from the other side of Route 140, and could possibly be cheaper if all the businesses in the park agree together to tie it in. Also, worked with Unitil to come up with some numbers, but there are not a whole lot of users in the park.

P. Cormier noted mention of solar panels and if they will be in before they start building. T. Beauregard stated this was just a comment from the Development Review committee, therefore, it was just a recommendation. Ms. Cardoso added they are considering this and is something they would like to do in the future, however, in the meantime they will go with options for their systems that are more energy efficient to make up for the fact they are not going with solar.

S. Cormier asked about the secured dumpsters, and if they will be located next to the gas in the back also. Mr. Allard said yes and confirmed there will be three (3) separate dumpsters in the back that will be secured. Also, the emergency access in the back will allow the City's largest fire truck to get through and maneuver through there.

S. Cormier asked if the back will also be plowed during the winter, as well as maintained. Mr. Allard answered yes and noted there will be snow storage along the west side of the parking lot, with additional snow storage in the back. Mr. Schafron asked if the snow storage is shown in the landscaping plan. Mr. Allard said right now there are 3 ½ inch caliber trees proposed in that area and will be within the five-foot belt.

S. Cormier pointed out the conceptual plan looks like glass on the front corner of the building, facing Suffolk Lane, and questioned the proposed building. Mr. Allard noted the plan shows Phase 1, as well as Phase 2 for the future which looks like glass in the sketch because it is not fully built.

T. Beauregard asked to talk a little bit what Phase 1 and Phase 2 will consist of. Ms. Cardoso commented the entire project being proposed today is a 34,440 square foot building, and only going to build out Phase 1 which is about 22,000 square feet. Phase 1 was pointed out on the sketch displayed.

Mr. Swartz asked what parts of the building will be administrative, manufacturing, and growing. Ms. Cardoso pointed out on the sketch starting out back showing the flower room, and for Phase 1, there will be flower room one, flower room two, and flower room three. There is a room which is for smaller plants. In addition, there is mother and clone rooms, for the tiny plants other than the budding plants. Also pointed out is where they will be growing, and processing, receiving, as well as drying all the products, and up front is administrative. Mr. Martin noted at one time, they were contemplating manufacturing, however, they are super focused on only cultivating at the moment because they would need additional licenses to do anything other than that and are only licensed to cultivate.

T. Beauregard asked about the odor control. It was explained, for a variety of reasons, they pressurize all the air within the grow rooms inward, so all the air is being maintained and sucked in to make sure a stable environment is created so there is no bacteria and mold which are things that keep them from making money. From an odor perspective, a by-product of them is run through ionization, and sanitize all the air once they take it in before it is reintroduced into the actual air circuit, so there are a lot of things they do to protect the integrity of their actual operation to end up resulting in no odor outside. Clean air in for the benefit of the crop, and then the clean air back up again. Mr. Martin noted they do have plan if needed.

S. Cormier asked if the carbon filters are something that would be for exhaust. Mr. Martin asked if he means do they take the carbon out, and then where does it go. S. Cormier said the carbon filters are described as part of the washing system and is this for the air that is being expelled from the building to the end, and this is what is going to eliminate odor, or whatever going on. Mr. Martin stated it would be his assumption that there is no way for it to go out without having been treated but can definitely confirm this. Ms. Cardoso added that is the idea, positive pressure in the actual grow rooms, negative pressure in the hallway, so once the door is open, all that air goes from the grow room into the hallway, and then from there, goes through that exhaust system with multiple filters, actually carbon filters, and at that point, it is expelled.

T. Beauregard asked if there will be bollards around the propane tanks. The reply was yes, as well as bollards around the transformer.

T. Beauregard mentioned he noticed there are wall packs for lighting of the building, but commented there is a fairly dark area towards the entrance of the site, and wondered if there are any street lights in that proximity that would help light up that area. Mr. Allard was not sure but will confirm. C. Coughlin noted the city has street lighting on Suffolk Lane, but not sure on the distance from the address location, but believes it is fairly closer on the other side of the road. Mr. Allard will look at it in more detail with the existing street light.

R. Bettez asked what type of security they will have for the building. Mr. Martin replied they have every single-entry way and exit way to require a RFID (radio frequency ID) scanner and going to maintain all logs in entering and existing and are required for 90-days. There is a whole security requirement within the 935 CMR which is the state's cannabis regulation, which they must commit to that includes having full surveillance over any product generating area. Anything employees interact with (*regulated substance*), will have to be seen every single square inch of the facility, therefore, a camera plan was submitted for this. Also have full redundancy for all of their recordings, so if they lose electricity, or anything like that, they are not going to be blind to anything that transpired. Ms. Cardoso noted they keep all their footage for at least 90 days, and the Gardner Police Department has access to any footage they need, so if there is any incident, they can come by and get the footage they need. T. Beauregard added the Police Chief has reviewed their plan.

Mr. Swartz questioned if they have an agreement with the city yet. Ms. Cardoso replied yes, the Host Community Agreement, and they will be sharing 3% of their gross revenue. In addition, they have a provisional license with the cannabis control commission, and once they get through this next phase of just getting everything checked off with the actual building itself, then will be able to reapply for their final license.

T. Beauregard inquired what type of material will be used for the exterior of the building. Ms. Cardoso answered a steel building, with at least half covered with brick to make sure it fits in with the covenants.

Mr. Schafron asked if drainage, water, and sewer flows have been addressed. C. Coughlin noted they submitted all the traditional stormwater reports, however, have not yet received water and sewer because this will be a permit directly through DPW. C. Coughlin asked what size water line the building might require. Mr. Allard believes there is a two-inch and six-inch, separate for fire, and are not stubbed into the property currently, but are proposing to do so. C. Coughlin asked if Mr. Allard could talk about the phased approach with both roof drainage, and where the overland flow will go. Mr. Allard said there is an existing detention basin in the back which collects some flow that goes through a drainage ditch into the back and collects flow from the property to the north. In addition, have positive drainage away from the building collecting into

catch basins along the side (*pointed out on plan*), ultimately ending up in a new detention basin (*pointed out on plan*), and a high-water overflow into the existing detention basin in the back.

T. Beauregard inquired how the area not being developed will be stabilized. Mr. Allard replied it will be seeded.

T. Beauregard asked how many parking spaces being created. Mr. Allard said the requirement for the square footage is about 13 parking spaces, and they have 22 parking spaces on the west side of the building, two handicapped/one van, one ADA accessible space, and during harvest time, there will be more employees, so extra parking spaces available in the back. Mr. Schafron asked if this will be adequate for them when getting to the end of Phase 2, and the operation has expanded. Ms. Cardoso answered she believes so. T. Beauregard asked if it would meet zoning requirements, and the answer was yes.

Mr. Schafron noted there is no public in attendance, therefore, no public comment for, or against, and declared the Public Hearing closed.

The Public Hearing closed at 7:23 p.m.

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| All documents referenced or used during the meeting are part of the official record and are available in the Department of Community Development and Planning pursuant to the Open Meeting and Public Records Law. |
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