HPNA considers Suns Mass cannabis operation, impact on local pot shop

Mary Ellen Gambony
Staff Reporter

The Hyde Park Neighborhood Association (HPNA) heard from representatives from Suns Mass at its two-hour virtual meeting on Thursday, Jan 7 about its plans to open a cannabis manufacturing plant within a two-minute walk from a locally-owned marijuana dispensary.

Ironically, although 73 people attended the Zoom meeting, there were not enough HPNA members for a quorum to take a vote on this business nor for two restaurants seeking the group’s support. A majority of attendees were members of unions in support of Suns Mass, a Massachusetts subsidiary of Harvest Health and Recreation, a national cannabis chain with operations in seven states. Many of the members were not Hyde Park residents, although some were but did not hold HPNA membership.

The project, located at 931 Hyde Park Ave., will need variances, in part because it will be within half a mile of a competing dispensary — Evergreen Farms at 883 Hyde Park Ave. — which the HPNA openly supported. In addition to manufacturing cannabis in the former Serino’s factory, it intends to sell both medical and recreational marijuana.

Attorney Mike Ross, a former City Council president, represented Suns Mass. He explained that the project has “changed substantially” from when it was first presented at other Hyde Park groups over the past two years. This incarnation will be something that will be “truly unique” for Boston as well as Massachusetts.

“Our goal is to have 75 percent of our employees be Boston residents, with a majority of those being Hyde Park residents,” Ross said. The 100 employees will be 50 percent of those being Hyde Park residents.

They allow annual meetings to be virtual; allow officer vacancies to be filled by the directors at any meeting, and permit directors to vote by written proxy.

LANA also discussed the timeline for sale, adjustment, conservation, and redevelopment at the parcels at 104 to 108 Walter St.

The parcel at 104 Walter St. will be accessioned to the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) in partnership with the Department of Neighborhood Development to build and manage four units of affordable homeownership housing. The lot line will be set back eleven feet from the road. A preferred use plan, developed by the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) in partnership with the Department of Neighborhood Development to build and manage four units of affordable homeownership housing. The lot line will be set back eleven feet from the road.

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Longfellow Area Neighborhood Association surveys the new year

Justin Roshak
Staff Reporter

The Longfellow Area Neighborhood Association (LANA) laid out planned changes to their bylaws at Monday’s meeting. The revisions provide for a new category of Participating Members. This includes anyone not eligible to become a resident or Associate member but who wishes to attend meetings.

They will not be able to vote or serve on the Board of Directors or committees. The bylaw revisions clarify that only one member of a household or family can serve as a director at the same time. They provide for removal of a director by a majority at any meeting with or without cause.

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Pandemic slows down three Jamaica Plain institutions’ plans

Richard Heath
Staff Reporter

The expansion and redevelopment of three Jamaica Plain institutions were stalled by the pandemic of 2020: the Eliot School, the Shattuck Hospital, and the Faulkner Hospital.

The Eliot School convened three public workshops in Jan. and June 2018 and in June 2019. Abigail Norman, the director since 2007, explained at the Jan. 28, 2018 kick-off planning meeting that the school was outgrowing its schoolhouse and needed to expand its space.

One option described by DesignLAB architects at the June 7 meeting was an addition to the old school building. At the June 24, 2019 meeting a second option was described of a new building at another Jamaica Plain location.

Norman said then that the Eliot School board would choose an option in March 2020 and begin a major capital campaign.

But March 2020 was different. When the Boston public schools closed on March 13, so did the Eliot School, which serves 2,000 public school students, and the teaching quickly went virtual.

Lead visual art teacher and community partnership director Abby Neal, for example, turned her living room and her cell phone into a classroom.

Sewing teachers Carol Price and Deborah West made face masks in April when the school participated in the Boston Area Face Mask Initiative for healthcare workers. All spring classes were cancelled and then

J P Development
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The Shattuck Vision Plan was published a year ago but release deferred by COVID-19.

COURTESY PHOTO

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COURTESY PHOTO

Last year LANA celebrated the designation of the Roslindale Wetlands as an Urban Wild, and this year LANA celebrates more.
the summer classes. Cancelling the classes left the school with a huge deficit and it went on Facebook to ask for donations.

Twenty thousand dollars were raised at its first-ever, virtual spring gala on April 26. Tuition-based programs provide a third of the school’s budget, the Eliot School “and we have to put all of [them] on hold, the pandemic has wreaked a severe toll on our finances,” Norman told The Bulletin at the end of December.

“A year ago we were envisioning an optimistic future in which we would be able to achieve enough space for our programs,” she said. “Before we return to that vision we will need to rebuild our finances and our programs from the pandemic’s devastation.”

Norman said feelings are mixed among students and teachers about returning to in-person.

“We plan to install a clean air system plus filtration this winter as a first step toward being able to reopen in person.”

Norman was upbeat.

“We’ve been through the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, two world wars, the Spanish flu and the Great Depression. We’re going to make it through this.”

The Lemuel Shattuck Hospital began planning for the re-development of its 13-acre campus on April 12, 2018.

The Shattuck proposes to move its 160 in-patient beds on the campus on April 12, 2018. The Shattuck proposes to move its 160 in-patient beds from the outdated and deteriorating 65-year-old, 12-story hospital building at Franklin Park to the Newton Pavilion on West Newton St that it would lease for 99 years at Boston Medical Center.

This would free up the 13-acre campus for redevelopment for which, among other public health uses, a 76-unit supportive housing community was recommended from the start.

The project was scheduled for 2021 then moved to 2022; now it won’t happen until 2024 according to the PPP statement to the JP zoning committee.

Speaking to a South End residents group, Peters explained that the move was delayed because the Newton Pavilion had been reopened in March to serve homeless people who had tested positive for COVID-19. According to the PPP statement, this used ended in June and the Pavilion has not reopened.

At the last Shattuck planning public meeting on June 15, 2019, consultant Kathleen McCabe explained its purpose.

“We’re beginning to finalize the vision that will go into the final (request for proposal) RFP,” she said. “We will be looking for partnerships in the re-imagining of the Shattuck campus including supportive housing.

The 200-page Vision Plan was completed in December 2019 and published in digital form in February 2020 but not made publicly available.

A copy of the Vision Plan was emailed to The Bulletin by an anonymous source two weeks ago.

The Bulletin learned by chance that the Asset Management Board (AMB) would meet on Dec. 23, 2020 to vote on the Preliminary Project Proposal based on the Vision Plan.

HHS provided a copy to The Bulletin after the AMB voted to approve the Proposal, which read in part that: “The PPP will be a basis for a Request for Proposals to enter into a long-term lease arrangement with a developer/service provider for a integrated public health program of behavioral health services and housing with services... the developer will be charged with a phased redevelopment of the full 13 acres.”

A public meeting on the PPP was scheduled for later in 2021.

According to the timeline provided to the AMB, redevelopment is planned to begin in 2025 after the private partner has been approved.

The Faulkner Hospital filed an Institutional Master Plan (IMP) with the BPDA on July 26, 2019 for a new five-story, 78-bed in-patient wing close to Allandale Street, two new garages totaling 952 parking spaces and a second entrance drive nearly opposite Springhouse.

Designed by George Takoudis, the total cost in July 2019 was $230 million.

This was the first expansion of the Faulkner since 1976 and it was on a smooth track since no zoning variances were required.

The BPDA sponsored a public meeting on Aug. 14, 2019 and Susan Dempsey, vice president of Brigham and Women’s Faulkner Hospital, gave a courtesy presentation to the JP zoning committee on Aug. 21, 2019.

After a hearing before the Boston Civic Design Commission on Sept. 3, 2019, the IMP was scheduled for a BPDA vote at its April 16, 2020 meeting.

The BPDA declined to review any master plan or large project reviews for several months after March 2020 and the Faulkner Hospital has not been re-scheduled.

The Faulkner went before the BCDC for a second time on Oct. 27, 2020. Design changes had been made to the in-patient wing that the Commission warmly approved.

According to David Goldberg, communications director of the Faulkner, one major change was programmatic.

In response to COVID-19, an infectious disease floor has been added equipped with infrastructure that will allow for greater flexibility in the event of future pandemics. The hospital has tried to care for routine patients as much as possible during the pandemic while treating COVID-19 positive patients on a daily basis,” Goldberg said.