



**New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission
May 4, 2021
Minutes of Public Meeting**

This meeting was publicly accessibly online via Zoom.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The May 4, 2021 public meeting of the Cannabis Regulatory Commission was called to order by Chairwoman Houenou at 6pm at the commission offices, 225 East State Street, Trenton NJ 08608.

2. NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Executive Director Jeff Brown read the following statement:

“Madam Chair, this is a regular meeting of the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission. Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with the Senator Byron M. Baer Open Public Meeting Act. The Commission’s Annual Meeting Schedule was published in the Asbury Park Press, Courier Post, Trenton Times, and Star Ledger, on April 29th, and ran in the Bergen Record on April 30th. Notice has been sent to the Secretary’s Office and posted on the public bulletin board outside the secretary’s office. Information regarding the virtual nature of meeting due to the Covid-19 pandemic was posted in the publications and on the CRC/MMP website. In addition, notice of said meeting has been and is being displayed on the websites of both the New Jersey Department of Health and the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission.”

3. ROLL CALL

Chairwoman Houenou took the roll, and the following Commissioners were present: Mr. Charles Barker, Ms. Maria Del Cid-Kosso, Mr. Samuel Delgado, Ms. Krista Nash, and Ms. Dianna Houenou.

4. CHAIR’S REMARKS

- Chairwoman Houenou gave opening remarks

5. APPROVAL OF APRIL 22, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

This item was removed from the agenda

6. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Brown gave remarks about the 2019 RFA.

Enrollment in the medical cannabis program currently sits at over 107,000 patients and over 4,000 caregivers. There are now over 1,300 participating healthcare providers. Apothecary in Maplewood becomes the 16th dispensary operating in the state.

The Executive Director gave a brief overview of the various social equity tools that are available under the statute.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairwoman Houenou described the procedure for submitting comments and where to submit comments in order to be featured during the public comment portion of the public meeting. Commenters submitted their names and emails to MMPQuestions@doh.nj.gov to be given the opportunity to speak during the public comment portion of the meeting.

There were approximately 65 submitted commenters prior to the meeting, and everyone that wished to speak was given the opportunity to do so.

Anthony Russo/David Bernstein – discussed the importance of educating the cannabis workforce, using certifications to achieve standards, and offers a source of revenue for the state

Ami Kachalia – ACLU-NJ, discussed issues of creating equity and an inclusive cannabis marketplace in New Jersey

Rebecca Osborn – Gave praise of the medical marijuana program and discussed her newly created nonprofit called Momma's Circles

Chirali Patel – Blaze Responsibly, discussed barriers and problems with the current legislation as it applies to microlicenses, as well as social equity to minorities and women

Jason Bacon – shared personal story of incarceration due to marijuana offenses and how microbusinesses can uplift communities and emphasized the increase of the cap on the licenses offered

Michael Starling – discussed exclusion of out of state participants and giving priority to New Jersey residents for a defined time period, and assistance with expungements

Brendon Robinson – discussed social equity and its impact rather than the business opportunities offered

Antonio Jimenez – discussed micro-licenses and the path to full licensure

Monique Hamilton – DMMC South Orange- Discussed the importance of the requirement of in person physician visits for medical marijuana, and a bonafide physician patient relationship

Jessica Gonzalez – discussed how social equity will make its way to those impacted by the war on drugs to those who do not wish to participate in the cannabis marketplace, as well as various way companies try to skirt social equity provisions or requirements

Precious Osagie-Erese – Roll Up Life Inc, discussed issues of delivery and transportation for her business in the recreational marketplace, and emphasized equity in the delivery context

Hasaan Austin – Moving the Needle Media Productions, discussed patient care, health and wellness, and business development with an eye toward social equity

Nadir Pearson – NJ NORML, discussed specificity of social equity in the cannabis industry

Nichelle Pace – Camden Business Association, discussed social equity and stated equity in this context is economic justice

Chuck Latini – discussed standards of the CRC, such as education, and cleanup legislation regarding removing barriers for microbusinesses and zoning

Hugh Giordano – UFCW, discussed labor and worker rights in the cannabis industry

William Sosis – discussed the benefits of marijuana in general

James Jackson – Mark Edward Partners, discussed an actual social equity applicant status at all levels of licensing

Mollie Lustig – Chasan Lamparello Mallon & Cappuzzo, discussed barriers and problems, specifically with cultivation and retailing of cannabis

Taralyn Gonzalez – discussed her interest in entering the adult use market, and reducing economic barriers to those wishing to enter the industry

Randy Thompson – discussed the profile of a social equity applicant, and how to assist these applicants

Christopher Almada – discussed wishing to take part in the cannabis industry

Edward Grimes – SativaCross.org, discussed general fairness, compassion, and quality in the cannabis market

Travis Ally – 93ID Inc., discussed wanting to see actual social equity, and because of the specificity of the drug war towards people of color, then social equity should be specifically directed towards people of color

Usman Khawaja – Sugar Leaves, discussed hardships of minorities starting a business in the cannabis space

Darrin Chandler Jr.– Premium Genetic Partners, discussed having a plan for social equity and inclusion in the market, as well as more transparency in the application process

Leo Bridgewater – Minorities for Medical Marijuana, discussed aspects of education and the lack thereof in the New Jersey cannabis market

Alpesh Patel – business owner in NJ discussed microbusinesses and allowing everyone to start from the same starting point

Valerie Woodson – NJ Alliance for Minorities in Cannabis, discussed job creation and expungements to relieve barriers for minorities

Adam Umansky – discussed cannabis for religious purposes and asked that cannabis be treated like alcohol when used in religious ceremonies

Timisha Woods – discussed diversity hiring practices in laboratories, as well as various social equity ideas

Christian Velasquez – advocated for the medicinal marijuana program and discussed priority for the mmp over the adult use market

Jiles Ship – advocated for real social equity and closing loop holes that allow entities to get around social equity rules

Carl Burwell Jr. – discussed the idea that bigger is not necessarily better when it comes to cannabis businesses, and allowing more micro-licenses to allow fair competition

Kevin Lewis – discussed appreciation for license exclusivity and the creation of separate license classes

Commissioner Houenou, Del Cid-Kosso, Barker, Nash, and Delgado gave closing remarks and thanked the commenters for their participation in moving the cannabis industry forward.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business to discuss, Chairwoman Houenou called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso made the motion to adjourn, and seconded by Commissioner Delgado. Chairwoman Houenou called the vote.


AYES: Chairwoman Houenou, Commissioner Delgado, Commissioner Nash, Commissioner Barker, Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso

NAYS: None

The public meeting adjourned at 10:15pm.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing minutes represent a true and complete summary of the public meeting held by the Cannabis Regulatory Commission on Tuesday, May 4, 2021.



Dianna Houenou
Chair