



State of New Jersey
CANNABIS REGULATORY COMMISSION
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PHILLIP D. MURPHY
Governor

SHEILA Y. OLIVER
Lt. Governor

DIANNA HOUEYOU, *Chair*
SAMUEL DELGADO, *Vice Chair*
KRISTA NASH, *Commissioner*
MARIA DEL CID-KOSSO, *Commissioner*
CHARLES BARKER, *Commissioner*
JEFF BROWN, *Executive Director*

MINUTES – PUBLIC MEETING
April 13, 2023 –1:00PM
Publicly Accessible via YouTube
Board of Public Utilities, 44 South Clinton Ave., Trenton, NJ

CALL TO ORDER

The April 13, 2023, public meeting of the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission was called to order by Chairwoman Houenou at 1:06pm at 44 South Clinton Ave., Trenton, NJ 08625 and via YouTube.

Board Secretary Jolitha Joanem read the following statement:

“Chairwoman Houenou, this is a regular scheduled meeting of the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission’s 2023 annual meeting schedule. Adequate notice of this Meeting has been provided in accordance with the Senator Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of the Meeting was provided to the Asbury Park Press, Atlantic City Express, Bergen Record, Courier Post, Star Ledger, and the Trenton Times on January 11, 2023. The agenda and information regarding the meeting was also posted on the CRC website. The meeting time and location has also been posted on the website of the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission and with the Office of the Secretary of the State.”

1. **ROLL CALL**

Board Secretary Ms. Joanem, 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.

No one was absent. *The following NJ-CRC staff members were present:* Jeff Brown, Kelly Anderson-Thomas, Toni-Anne Blake, Wesley McWhite, and Christopher Riggs.

2. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chairwoman Houenou called for a motion to go into Executive Session. Commissioner Barker made the motion, and Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso seconded. Hearing no discussion, Chairwoman Houenou called the vote.

VOTE:

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

NAYS: None

The motion passed.

Executive session started at 1:10pm and ended at 2:28pm.

3. **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING'S MINUTES**

The open, public portion of the meeting began at 2:28pm. Chairwoman Houenou asked for a motion to adopt the minutes and executive session minutes for the March 2, 2023, meeting. Ms. Joanem noted that the minutes were shared with the commission members prior to the meeting. Chairwoman Houenou stated there were some edits that were made during the executive sessions meeting, and additional changes were made to the public meeting minutes on pages 4 and 6. Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso made the motion, and Commissioner Nash seconded. Hearing no further discussions, Chairwoman Houenou called the vote:

VOTE:

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

NAYS: None

The motion passed

4. **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Chairwoman Houenou recognized everyone in attendance both in person and virtual, and the 2nd anniversary of the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission's launch. She stated the last two years have seen tremendous changes in the cannabis landscape. She mentioned the work the NJ-CRC has done with the public to develop rules for every class of licensure for the cannabis businesses. She talked about the significant increase in the number of medical dispensaries that are open to patients, the approval of more than 50 adult-use cannabis businesses, and the first legal recreational cannabis sales. She also discussed how setting up in this industry was a continuing process and should not be rushed. She also stated she is proud of the work the NJ-CRC has done to provide meaningful access to a regulated cannabis industry, as reflected in a diverse and inclusive recreational and medical market.

Chairwoman Houenou stated that even with all that the CRC has done, there is still room to grow. There are still a lot of business opportunities for people who are picturing themselves in the cannabis industry, including individuals who are growers, sellers, marketing firms, and interior designers who specialize in supporting cannabis businesses.

Chairwoman Houenou expressed her excitement for the NJ-CRC's next chapter, thanked the staff for their continued work at the NJ-CRC, and extended her appreciation to the patients, stakeholders and consumers.

Next, she advised the public that the May Meeting had been canceled, as reflected on the NJ-CRC website. Finally, she noted that there were some representatives and some licensees in attendance who were there to speak to the board.

5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Brown congratulated the NJ-CRC on its two-year anniversary, noting how it was momentous in New Jersey cannabis history because five years ago also marked the beginning of the medical program that kicked off the path to recreational cannabis. Next, he provided an update on license applications, stating that the NJ-CRC has received over 1800 applications submitted for review with only 57 of them still needing to be reviewed. He also provided statistics for the timeframes for license processing. He also indicated that there were more conditional licensees applying to convert to annual licensees, and that over 207 conditional conversions have been submitted. For consideration for today there are 62 conditional applications, three conditional-to-annual conversion applications, and six annual applications. Finally, he highlighted additional site openings for RestoreNJ, and BLOC, and referred the public to the NJ-CRC website for additional information regarding the site offerings. .

6A. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT:

Commissioner Barker provided a report on the Public Engagement and Education Committee. The committee identified a need to provide education to the cannabis community and the general community by launching a safe use public information campaign. The campaign will focus on the surge in use of cannabis by people 21 and younger who don't have an underlying medical condition and on encouraging the safe use of cannabis among adult users.

After Commissioner Barker provided his report, Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso asked if the committee would also focus on providing education to immigrants and the undocumented population. Commissioner Barker agreed that this population will be included.

6B. PERMITTING & LICENSING COMMITTEE REPORT:

Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso provided a report on the Permitting and Licensing Committee. Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso discussed the process for extension request and the committee's observations of the extension requests that were issued in the last two months. The committee looked at who qualifies for the extension requests, namely 2019 RFA awardees, conditional license awardees, and annual license awardees. She also reviewed the process for extension requests and emphasized that applications must be submitted at least 15 days before the deadline. She also highlighted that approved entities must submit a mobilization plan. She advised that more information regarding the process is available for licensees on the NJ-CRC website.

Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso mentioned there were seven extensions that were approved in February and 46 approved in March. Of the 46 extension requests provided in March, 45 were made by adult use conditional licensees and one 2019 ATC permittee.

The committee observed that the need for extension requests are due to the following:

1. The lack of or delay with site control and real estate;
2. Municipal approval delays; and
3. Lack of sufficient funding.

She encouraged applicants to reach out to New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) to get information about the cannabis grant program which will launch on April 20th.

7A. CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATION FOR PERMIT OR LICENSE NAME CHANGES:

Executive Director Brown presented three name change requests recommended for approval:

1. Unity Rd. CJ 1 LLC to Unity Rd. Cannabis Shop LLC
2. Lady M NJ, LLC to Royal M LLC
3. Newton CB LLC to Skylands Herbal LLC

VOTE:

Chairwoman Houenou asked for a motion to approve the application to change the business names for Unity Rd., Lady M N and Newton CB. Commissioner Nash made the motion and Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso seconded. Hearing no discussions, Ms. Joanem called the vote:

AYES: Commissioner Barker, Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso, Commissioner Nash, Vice Chair Delgado, and Chairwoman Houenou.

NAYS: The resolution passed

7B. CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATION FOR PERMIT OR LICENSE LOCATION CHANGES

Executive Director Brown provided a summary for the license location change. He mentioned a proposal from Acreage CCF New Jersey to change their location from their site in Atlantic City on the Boardwalk to a site in Pennsauken. All documentation and fees necessary to request the location change has been submitted.

Discussion:

Commissioner Barker expressed his concern that the patient transition plan provided by Acreage CCF did not provide enough evidence that they would be able to assist patients with their transition to other dispensaries. He wanted to make sure that the community was adequately cared for during the transition. Chairwoman Houenou asked Executive Director Brown to clarify that Acreage CCF had not yet submitted a patient transition plan, but agreed with Commissioner Barker that the transition plan must be sufficient to provide adequate care. She proposed amending the resolution to make it very clear that the approval would be conditioned upon the entity submitting an adequate patient transition plan to the satisfaction of the commission.

Executive Director Brown confirmed that a new permit would not be authorized until a satisfactory patient transition plan is submitted and noted there are a number of medicinal locations in Atlantic City. He also agreed with Commissioner Barker's comment that the NJ-CRC's top priority should be in ensuring that the patients are taken care of.

Commissioner Barker expressed concern that there was a previously submitted transitioning plan which was denied and that he was concerned about moving forward without a revised patient transition plan before voting on the location change.

Chairwoman Houenou asked Executive Director Brown as to whether or not the patient transition plan was submitted and rejected by staff.

Executive Director Brown confirmed Acreage CCF had not previously submitted a patient transition plan. Rather, the commission was asking Acreage CCF to submit a plan with detailed information regarding the resources available to patients for finding a new location.

Commissioner Barker reiterated his concerns with ensuring that the entity is representing and evidencing that they are adequately transitioning patients. He did not know if every patient would be easily transitioned into a new location in or around Atlantic City.

Chairwoman Houenou confirmed that there are two parts to the successful transition plan. Part 1 would be a satisfactory transition plan would be submitted to the satisfaction of the commission, and part 2 is that the facility would undergo and pass an onsite assessment before any permit would be issued.

Executive Director Brown confirmed that is correct.

Vice Chair Delgado asked Executive Director Brown to confirm if there were two additional medicinal dispensaries in Atlantic City and Executive Director Brown confirmed.

Chairwoman Houenou also wanted to make it clear to the Board that there would also be labor requirements that would follow Acreage CCF to the new location.

VOTE:

Chairwoman Houenou asked for a motion to approve the application for location change for Acreage CCF New Jersey dispensary from Atlantic City to Pennsauken. Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso made the motion, Chairwoman Houenou seconded. Hearing no further discussions, Ms. Joanem called the vote:

AYES: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso, Commissioner Nash, Vice Chair Delgado, and Chairwoman Houenou.

NAYS: Commissioner Barker

The resolution passed

8. CONSIDERATION OF MEDICINAL CANNABIS APPLICATIONS:

Executive Director Brown summarized the process for satellite medicinal dispensary for MPX New Jersey with location in Gloucester, NJ. He stated that MPX of New Jersey is authorized under the statute to operate satellite dispensaries. He also stated they submitted all required SOPs and believe they are close if not already passed inspection for this facility. He also mentioned unlike other facilities that had all the requisite requirements and were approved by the Department of Health, they now require board approval. scoring criteria is slightly different for alternative treatment center licenses. He then stated that they had completed and submitted their application and are recommended for approval for this satellite medicinal dispensary at 581 Berlin and Cross Keys Road in Gloucester Township, New Jersey.

VOTE:

Chairwoman Houenou asked for a motion to approve the application for MPX NJ Medicinal Cannabis Satellite Dispensary in Gloucester Township. Commissioner Nash made the motion, and Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso seconded. Hearing no discussion, Ms. Joanem called the vote:

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

NAYS: Commissioner Barker,

The resolution passed

9a1. CONSIDERATION OF CONDITIONAL LICENSE APPLICATIONS:

Executive Director Brown provided a summary of the 62 conditional applications that are up for consideration, 12 cultivators, 11 manufacturers, and 39 retailers.

Executive Director Brown provided a breakdown for the license categories:

Conditional Licenses:

Social Equity Businesses	11
Diversely owned Businesses	35
Impact Zone Businesses	8

Conversion Licenses:

Social Equity Businesses	2
Diversely owned Businesses	1

Annual Licenses:

Diversely owned Businesses	5
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He explained the process used for assessing the applications and how they were scored and verified based on application type. Each application was verified based on the application information submitted and were assessed for completeness and scored. Each application was reviewed for limitations and qualifications, and initial financial and management agreements are considered. The Director of Licensing, Director of Compliance and Investigations, the Deputy Executive Director, and NJ-CRC's Legal Counsel also review the applications prior to presentation to the board. The applications are now recommended to the Board for approval.

Executive Director Brown also reminded the audience that the list of conditional businesses will be posted on the NJ-CRC website.

VOTE:

Chairwoman Houenou asked for a motion to adopt the resolution on conditional license applications for class one cannabis cultivator, class two manufacturer, and class five cannabis retailer licenses. Commissioner Barker made the motion, Commissioner Nash seconded. Hearing no discussion, Ms. Joanem called the vote:

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

NAYS: The resolution passed

9a2. CONSIDERATION OF CONVERSION LICENSES APPLICATIONS:

Executive Director Brown provides a summary of the three conditional license conversions to annual license applications that are up for consideration. He mentioned that the three applications up for annual conversions are retailers: Organic Farms, Simply Pure Trenton New Jersey, Inc., and The Cannabis Place 420 Corp. He stated they all have gone through the full process as outlined before and they are recommended for approval to the NJ-CRC board.

VOTE:

Chairwoman Houenou asked for a motion to adopt the resolution considering the applications to convert conditional license to annual licenses for class five retailer licenses.

Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso made the motion, Commissioner Barker seconded. Hearing no discussion, Ms. Joanem called the vote:

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

NAYS: The resolution passed

9a3. CONSIDERATION OF ANNUAL LICENSE APPLICATIONS

Executive Director Brown provided a summary for the process for annual license followed the same process as conversions. He stated each application went through the priority assignment verification, completeness review, scoring, and were reviewed for qualifications and limitations. Financial management agreements were reviewed and the NJ-CRC staff conducted quality control. He then mentioned that there's one cultivator, four retailers, and one testing laboratory applications that are recommended to the Board for approval.

Discussion:

Commissioner Barker briefly discussed his concerns about the limited applicants being proposed that reflect diversity and inclusion and represent communities most targeted. He noted that five out of six businesses are majority-owned by white persons. He further noted that none of the six are majority-owned by black and Hispanic persons. He wanted a better understanding of why more black-and-Hispanic-majority-owned businesses are not being proposed for annual and conversion awards.

Chairwoman Houenou referred Commissioner Barker's questions to Executive Director Brown and asked if he would be able to address these concerns.

Executive Director Brown mentioned that the NJ-CRC is scheduled for a quarterly data report and they are not able to provide that breakdown until the next board meeting. However, based on some preliminary numbers, which are inclusive of the proposed awards in April, he stated that 65% of conversion and annual awardees to date have been identified as either black, Latin, Asian, or other race observed by the State's minority certification. Additionally, 15% certified as black-owned. He then mentioned the list is still being finalized, and that the total breakdown of ownership will be provided at the next meeting.

Commissioner Nash stated that the numbers on paper are what they are, but that during their reviews, especially when you follow the money, the reality is that most of these minority-owned businesses are funded by very wealthy white individuals. She acknowledged that there was a lack of funding available and hoped the EDA monies would help some. She stated she does not know if this can be called true equity ownership, but the commission is cognizant of it.

Chairwoman Houenou mentioned the NJ-CRC and the board had no way to control who applies, or who individuals decide to partner with for funding. She stated the commission has done a great job working with the New Jersey Economic Development Authority to make grants available and with the New Jersey Business Action Center to make technical assistance available to New Jersey entrepreneurs so they feel empowered and ready to take on these business ventures.

Chairwoman Houenou stated that, in light of the numbers shared by Executive Director Brown, she is very encouraged about the prospects of the NJ-CRC’s work to set up prioritized application review for entities with the State-Certified minority-owned businesses.

Chairwoman Houenou also hopes to see more businesses, more minority-owned businesses that can self-fund. She also discussed the volume it speaks when people of color attend the meetings in person and be awarded their annual business licenses to be able to operate their business. She stated she looked forward to seeing more minority-owned businesses be awarded annual licenses.

VOTE:

Chairwoman Houenou asked for a motion to adopt the resolution of considering the annual cannabis business applications for class one cultivator, class five retailer, and class testing laboratory licenses. Chairwoman Houenou made the motion, Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso seconded. Hearing no further discussion, Ms. Joanem called the vote:

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

NAYS: Commissioner Barker

The resolution passed

9b. CONSIDERATION OF EXPANDED ATC LICENSE APPLICATIONS:

Executive Director Brown provided a summary of the entities which to expand into the adult-use market and their certification materials. He discussed the number of entities that have been operating in the medicinal market who have certified to the NJ-CRC to expand to adult-use operations. He also discussed first on the list is MPX of New Jersey which is a class one cultivator, class two manufacturer, and class five retailer. He mentioned that the NJ-CRC considers municipal approval, proof of sufficient supply to continue to meet patient needs after a proposed expansion, plans to ensure patient access and then as well corresponding plans for social equity and safety. In considering adequate supply, he mentioned that the NJ-CRC looked at their patient numbers, inventory, and patient enrollment. Executive Director Brown stated the NJ-CRC believes the evidence submitted does show that they can expand to support adult-use operations at both their cultivation and manufacturing site, as well as at their Atlantic City dispensary which is up for consideration for a Class 5 retailer. MPX New Jersey is recommended for approval to accept the certification to expand into the adult-use market. 5

Executive Director Brown mentioned the other three dispensaries that are requesting licenses to expanded ATCs which followed the same process with MPX. They are Sweetspots Dispensary in Vorhees, Holistic Solutions in Atco, and Valley Wellness in Raritan.

VOTE:

Chairwoman Houenou asked for a motion to adopt the resolution of considering MPX New Jersey to expand operations to AU.

Commissioner Nash made the motion, Vice Chair Delgado seconded. Hearing no discussion, Ms. Joanem called the vote:

Commission Members	MPX, NJ	Sweetspot Dispensary	Valley Wellness	Holistic Solutions
Motion	Commissioner Nash	Vice Chair Delgado	Commissioner Barker	Commissioner Nash

Second	Vice Chair Delgado	Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso	Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso	Vice Chair Delgado
Vote:				
Commissioner Barker	NAY	AYE	AYE	AYE
Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso	AYE	AYE	AYE	AYE
Vice Chair Delgado	AYE	AYE	AYE	AYE
Commissioner Nash	AYE	AYE	AYE	AYE
Chairwoman Houenou	AYE	AYE	AYE	AYE

The resolution passed

9c. CONSIDERATION OF ANNUAL LICENSE RENEWAL APPLICATIONS:

Executive Director Brown provided a summary for the annual license renewals, stating that the statutory and regulatory requirements are simple. ATCs that have expanded need to certify to the Commission to the continued material accuracy of their previously approved ATC license application and its compliance with the Act concerning cannabis or cannabis items. They also need to submit a new written approval from the municipality in which the expanded ATC is located approving them to continue cannabis operations as a cannabis business. He discussed that there are seven entities up for renewal and all of them have submitted the requisite documents requesting renewals.

Executive Director Brown further discussed the review process that NJ-CRC compliance staff looked at to make sure these companies were maintaining patient access, which are provisions they are required to adhere to as part of the final agency decisions that approved them to expand to adult use. Although there have been some infractions over the course of the last year, they have been issued violations and appropriately penalized and the course has been corrected. He also noted that there's no significant remaining considerations or issues related to those patient access provisions.

Executive Director Brown further noted that in total there are 29 licenses recommended for renewal today who have met the renewal requirements as required by statute and by the corresponding regulations. He mentioned the entities that are up for consideration and their classifications.

Executive Director Brown had Chief Counsel Mr. Riggs, Esq. to provide brief legal considerations to any or all of the annual license renewal applications. Mr. Riggs advised that they are all in accordance with the regulations and statute. He then stated that all the ATCs have submitted the requisite information and materials to continue their operations in adult-use. He then stated they've satisfied the criteria of N.J.A.C.17:30-9.4, and legal has reviewed the submissions and is satisfied.

Director McWhite provided the social equity assessments performed by his office on behalf of the entities. He discussed his office had received over 80 monthly reports and supplemental reports with over 500 pages of documented social equity, diversity, and inclusion work from those that are up for renewal today. Director McWhite discussed the countless number of meetings and email communications his office has had with each applicant.

Director McWhite discussed the reports his office received from each applicant on which New Jersey based non-profit entities have received donations and grants, employees hired from impact zones or economically disadvantaged areas of New Jersey, job and career fairs, expungement clinics across the state.

He continued to discuss that the expanded ATCs had reported to his office and verified that they had spearheaded over 350 expungement petitions filed or granted in the State of New Jersey and donated approximately \$775,000 to over 40 New Jersey based non-profits and organizations.

Director McWhite stated that even with all the work these organizations performed there are still areas needing improvement. He mentioned that one of those areas is the meaningful support for cannabis businesses. He further reminded expanded ATCs and informed the public that it is the responsibility of the expanded ATCs to provide updates to the NJ-CRC regarding the initiatives they placed in their original social equity plan at the time of expansion. He reminded the expanded ATCs that have a large national presence and national equity programs to mirror those programs in New Jersey so they have on-the-ground impact in New Jersey. Director McWhite stated that the office of Diversity and Inclusion is not recommending denials of any expanded ATC renewals but rather, seeking more time for collaboration and growth.

Executive Director Brown also confirmed the Office of the Executive Director, Office of Compliance and Investigations, Office of Legal, Office of Diversity and Inclusion have no concerns with moving this forward, and that all licenses that are slated for renewal are recommended for approval.

Chairwoman Houenou requested all the representatives from those entities seeking license renewal to share some brief remarks.

Acreage CCF:

Ms. Lynsi Sheckler advised the Commission that they submitted their application on March 16, 2023. She discussed all the work her company has done including partnering with the Hoffman Center to do 20 expungement petitions per month. She discussed they had partnered with the African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey to help identify diverse individuals in the community who are looking to get into cannabis and they anticipate hiring new employees who are residents of nearby impact zones. She highlighted their continued commitment to patient access and prioritizing access to medical patients. Acreage CCF has local support from Egg Harbor Township and Monroe Township which is where their sites are located.

Commissioner Nash asked Ms. Sheckler to identify their union, to which Ms. Sheckler advised the commission Ms. Lauren Fox would provide an answer to that question. Ms. Fox stated their union is UFCW.

Commissioner Nash reminded Acreage CCF representatives that an expanded ATC is required to enter into a collective bargaining agreement within 200 days of the opening if a majority of employees opt to authorize that union. Commissioner Nash inquired as to where Acreage CCF was with that obligation.

Ms. Fox stated that they had been engaged in negotiations with the union for about a year and are making good-faith efforts towards reaching an agreement. She provided that they have met with the union over 15 times and 8 of those instances occurred in 2023. She said that Acreage CCF and the union have met several times in the past month and have committed to continuing to finalize the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Chairwoman Houenou then asked representatives to discuss their plan on their commitment to social equity efforts. She mentioned there was a plan for a \$19 M program related to Social Equity.

Ms. Sheckler answered that the plans were not finalized and that they have spent a substantial amount of money with the Hoffman Center with the expungement clinics and they are looking to expand into different areas and continue their efforts moving forward.

Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso requested that Acreage CCF representatives discuss their budget for social equity initiatives in 2022. Ms. Sheckler indicated she did not have the numbers but could get back to the Commission with those figures.

VOTE:

Chairwoman Houenou asked for a motion to adopt the resolution of Acreage CCF of annual license renewal application for adult-use.

Vice Chair Delgado made the motion, Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso seconded.

Discussion:

Commissioner Nash made a statement that applied to all of the ATC's that are up for renewal. She said that New Jersey had a long history of protecting workers' rights. In fact, Peter J. McGuire, one of the founding members of the American Labor Movement and resident of South Jersey, fought for the rights of men and women through the nation. The principal behind the fight was to provide fair and inclusive working conditions and wages so that business owners and employees can fairly share in the success of a company. That is no different today in the evolving cannabis industry. She further stated that the New Jersey's Legislators recognized the importance of labor protections for workers when crafting the CREAMM Act. In doing so, the legislators explicitly included language in the CREAMM Act which Governor Murphy signed in 2021. The CREAMM Act requires cannabis businesses to maintain a labor peace agreement as a condition of licensure. Though there may be different definitions of what "maintain" may mean as it relates to the maintenance of a labor peace agreement, it means implementing the terms of the agreement, and to mandate that the collective bargaining agreement be obtained within 200 days of opening if the majority of the employees vote to authorize a union. She indicated that some of the NJ companies have followed the law and she thanked them for their cooperation. She added in her opinion there were other companies who have engaged in unfair labor practices and obstructionist activities and deviated from their responsibilities to engage in a CBA. She indicated that employees have testified before the board and explained their experience with these companies. She opined that practices that disregard the workers and their rights beg the question of how an authorization vote can be obtained if some unions and employers are not doing their part. She closed by saying that we needed to ensure that NJ workers are treated fairly so this problem can be fixed.

Hearing no further discussion, Ms. Joanem called the vote:

AYES: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso, Vice Chair Delgado, Chairwoman Houenou

ABSTENTIONS: Commissioner Nash

NAYS: Commissioner Barker

The resolution passed

Ascend Wellness NJ:

Mr. Louis Cohen discussed how their patient access has been maintained, including the patient hours, weekdays/weekend hours, parking, mobility concerns, order-in-advance timeline to elevate patient

journey. They have also signed CBAs in all their locations with unions they work with for both their dispensary associates and floor leaders.

Ms. Danielle Drummond, the Vice President of Social Equity for Ascend Wellness, provided that they have worked to achieve the social equity commitment goals that have been set before the Commission. She also stated that they are proud of their authentic partnerships with many grassroots organizations that they've developed over this past year. They have conducted four (4) expungement clinics. She discussed their partnership with Blaze who has helped them with their expungement clinics. She discussed the various community-based organizations they partnered with for community engagement to help sponsor social equity conferences and other workshops and educational events and programs. She discussed donations they collected for local shelters and partnered to pay for and serve 300 meals to seniors. She also stated that they've donated \$25,000 to the Minority Cannabis Academy to support their entrepreneurial class.

Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso requested details on what was their budget for social equity initiatives in 2022.

Ms. Drummond stated \$100,000.00 had been budgeted but that amount was exceeded as they had spent over \$200,000.

Chairwoman Houenou asked for Ms. Drummond to discuss outreach used to hire the five (5) individuals who are returning citizens.

Ms. Drummond stated they are former incarcerated individuals and they came to Ascend Wellness through partnerships with organizations who are particularly focused on that population. She mentioned organizations such as Scores Reentry and the NJRC. She also mentioned that the expungement clinics they had conducted offered a great opportunity for people looking for jobs and provide Ascend Wellness with resumes. They are looking to expand that process.

VOTE:

Chairwoman Houenou asked for a motion to adopt the resolution for Ascend Wellness NJ for annual license renewal application for adult-use.

Vice Chair Delgado made the motion, Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso seconded. Hearing no further discussion, Ms. Joanem called the vote:

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

NAYS: Commissioner Barker

The resolution passed

Columbia Care:

Ms. Kellie Rivera stated that Columbia Care had not received any violations since receiving its expanded ATC licensure. She also indicated that even though they had expanded into adult-use, their medical operations remains a focus of the company. They continue to have 14 patient-only hours, three (3) reserved parking spots for patients who have mobility issues, and express curbside and online ordering options and pickups. She stated that Columbia Care continues to meet all required inventory for medical products and has had no issues selling adult-use products simultaneously. Ms. Rivera mentioned that Columbia Care provides timely updates through this year to the NJ-CRC staff regarding new products, vendor agreements, wholesale agreements, and other required documentation.

Ms. Rivera continued by providing that Columbia Care was expanding into the City of Vineland and Deptford Township, which are both designated as impact zones. She stated that those communities and

surrounding communities have 150 employees and have a labor peace agreement. She further stated that they continue to support the Minority Cannabis Academy with monthly recurring sponsorship with Shiloh Baptist Church where they support the reentry program.

Commissioner Nash asked with which union they had their LPA. Ms. Rivera stated they currently have an LPA with Teamsters and are in an active and productive Collective Bargaining Agreement with UCFW at one of their locations.

Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso requested that Ms. Rivera discuss Columbia Care's budget for social equity initiatives in 2022.

Ms. Rivera stated that unfortunately she did not have that budget but would be happy to provide it by the end of today.

Chairwoman Houenou discussed there had been some concerns about Columbia Care demonstrating the work that they're doing to the NJ-CRC and asked Ms. Rivera to explain how they plan to communicate the work that Columbia Care is doing to the NJ-CRC staff so that it can be properly documented. Chairwoman Houenou stated that she is specifically looking for information with regards to Columbia Care's social equity efforts to recruit individuals and targeted individuals.

Ms. Rivera discussed in detail that all four (4) of Columbia Care facilities are in designated impact zones, and they participate in college fairs where they seek out individuals who are from varying backgrounds. For documentation purposes, she also stated that they can provide that information in the monthly report that is submitted to Director McWhite.

VOTE:

Chairwoman Houenou asked for a motion to adopt the resolution for Columbia Care for annual license renewal application for adult-use.

Vice Chair Delgado made the motion, Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso seconded. Hearing no further discussion, Ms. Joanem called the vote:

AYES: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso, Vice Chair Delgado, Chairwoman Houenou

ABSTENTIONS: Commissioner Nash

NAYS: Commissioner Barker

The resolution passed

Curaleaf:

Mr. James Shorris provided a summary of the work Curaleaf has been doing. He stated last year they launched two dispensaries, one in Edgewater Park and Bordentown in May and November. They've invested \$50 million in New Jersey to serve both patients and consumers. With the opening of adult-use, Curaleaf has continued to prioritize its medical patients at all its dispensaries with exclusive medical hours, and medical point-of-sale stations. To further expand and ease the access for New Jersey patients, they began offering home delivery service to their medical patients and caregivers throughout much of the state in December 2022. He advised that the sales from Curaleaf programs have contributed over \$5 million in tax revenue for the State of New Jersey and more than \$1.8 million to the local municipalities. They have also created good paying jobs in the communities in which they operate.

Mr. Shorris identified the UFCW as their bargaining representative for their employees at the Belmar and Edgewater dispensaries. He further discussed their support of Driving DEIB which includes hiring initiatives targeted toward the BIPOC community in New Jersey. As part of their continued support of

social equity, he stated they have partnered with Fab Five Freddie and Bernard Noble, who himself was previously impacted by the cannabis prohibition, to expand this black-owned brand throughout the state.

Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso asked about the Curaleaf social equity budget allocation for FY'22.

Mr. Rakim Okta stated those numbers are national numbers, their team oversees CSR across the country. He further stated last year it was about \$500,000 in strategic partners and roughly \$500,000 in donations to local organizations and the numbers were submitted to Director McWhite

Commissioner Del-Cid Kosso asked a question regarding the renewal certification submitted by Curaleaf. The firm answered "yes" to the question pertaining to facility modifications which is laid out in N.J.A.C. 17:30-9.2 and asked for clarification to that question because the board was later informed that they were winding down the cultivation operations at the Belmar, NJ grow site. Commissioner Del-Cid Kosso wanted to know whether Curaleaf executives knew about these plans when the renewal certifications were signed and submitted. Mr. Shorris was not familiar with the exact timing of the events and indicated that the changes were made as a result of changes in the cannabis business related to market demand and the desire to keep costs down. He said that he would get better dates to provide to the commission.

Vice Chair Delgado asked the Social Responsibility Officer if there was any information related to strategic partners in the State of NJ. They are working with From the Block to Board Room and Mercer Street Friends is the recipient of the Block to the Board Room programming. Curaleaf also works with Marijuana matters, Acute on Chronic, and Women Grow, and tries to work with all of the partners that worked with them last year. They are able to provide data on the impact of these partnerships.

Mr. Okta stated in terms of the people Curaleaf has served, they would provide that data at a later time.

Chairwoman Houenou asked if any Curaleaf facilities laid off any employees across the State. Mr. Shorris clarified that the majority of the employees impacted by the closure of the Belmar grow site were offered new jobs at other locations. There were five (5) employees that were not provided with alternative employment at other locations. Director Houenou also asked when the employees were notified of the reduction in force and Mr. Shorris provided the employees were notified in March.

VOTE:

Chairwoman Houenou asked for a motion to adopt the resolution for Curaleaf for annual license renewal application for adult-use.

Vice Chair Delgado made the motion, Chairwoman Houenou seconded. Hearing no further discussion, Ms. Joanem called the vote:

AYES: Vice Chair Delgado

ABSTENTIONS: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso, Chairwoman Houenou

NAYS: Commissioner Barker, Commissioner Nash

The resolution failed

Green Thumb Industries:

Ms. Rebecca Brown summarized their continued commitment to meeting the needs of medical patients, social equity, and their adult-use sales. She stated GTI serves medical patients at three locations in Paterson, Paramus, and Bloomfield. She further stated that GTI kept patients' top priority while it launched the adult-use sales by having the store manager closely manage the menu to make sure products were always available for patients first. She further stated that GTI offers home delivery for medical patients, patient-only parking, dedicated POS for patients at all business hours daily and dedicated patient-

only hours on a daily basis. She stated that while their Bloomfield and Paterson locations serve adult-use in addition to medical patients, their Paramus store remains medical only.

Ms. Brown also discussed GTI's commitment to social equity, noting that they decided to locate GTI's cultivation facility and first dispensary in Paterson, the third largest city in New Jersey and which is racially and socioeconomically diverse and is defined as an economically disadvantaged area. She further mentioned that GTI employs more than 300 people across New Jersey. She then touched on the diversity of the GTI workforce, indicating that 65% of their employees in New Jersey identify as Black, African American, Hispanic, Latino, Asian or two or more races, and 41% identify as women or non-binary. She further stated 36% reside in a municipality qualified as an impact zone and 29% live in a zip code qualified as an economically disadvantaged area. GTI has provided over \$150,000 in grants and donations to New Jersey organizations through the Good Green Grant program which is based on the sale of one of their products.

Commissioner Nash stated she understands that they are in negotiating with a union and to clarify the union and if they are aware of the 200 days.

Ms. Brown mentioned they were in negotiations with UFCW and feels they are close to a resolution since they have met with the union seven times and are working with the union to achieve a CBA. She agreed to provide the board with a status report on negotiations as requested by Commissioner Nash.

Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso requested information on their budget for social equity initiatives for 2022.

Ms. Brown stated that they had \$100,000 in direct grants and donated close to \$150,000 and anticipate continuing those partnerships this year.

VOTE:

Chairwoman Houenou asked for a motion to adopt the resolution for GTI for annual license renewal application for adult-use.

Commissioner Nash made the motion, Vice Chair Delgado seconded. Hearing no further discussion, Ms. Joanem called the vote:

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

NAYS: Commissioner Barker,

The resolution passed

TerrAscend:

Mr. Evan Kolakowski certified that TerrAscend has shown and continues to show full compliance in all facilities and departments across New Jersey in accordance with its regulations. TerrAscend values the ability to establish procedures, policies, and practices that are safe, effective, and have an intended outcome that gives relief to patients suffering from debilitating medical conditions. He stated that TerrAscend has continued to partner with Hoffman Centers for their community engagement and social equity efforts, and they finalized their membership with Minority Cannabis Business Association. He also stated they have entered into a social equity micro-business supply agreement with new and emerging cannabis businesses.

Ms. Chantelle' Elsner stated that TerrAscend has successfully converted all three (3) of their retail locations to adult-use. She further mentioned TerrAscend maintained their commitment to patient access by offering a reliable wholesale supply to the market and a wide assortment of products for medicinal patients and consumers.

Invited speakers and the public had the opportunity to share questions, ideas, and concerns with members of the commission.

Board Secretary Jolitha Joanem, called on members of the public who signed up to speak. All speakers were given three (3) minutes to speak. Ms. Joanem called on the invited speakers to speak first.

Chirali Patel: She flew back from Miami to be able to participate in the meeting today. She stated that the intent of the NJ-CRC guidelines is to make the process easier and to assess markets demands. She also mentioned the removal of the cap is hurting NJ cannabis small businesses even though that is not what it was intended to do. She would also like to see municipalities that opt-in to adhere to some sort of framework for reviewing extension requests, because municipalities are not approving them in a timely manner.

Connor Shaw: Business agent for Seed 420, a new national labor organization focused on cannabis workers, came to introduce themselves and answer any questions. They have about 15,000 members in the state of New Jersey. They currently have a contract with Ascend in Montclair.

Daniel Alexander Levine: He is a legacy patient and provider for about 21 years. He first learned about medical cannabis in New Jersey when he was a student at Rutgers in 2006 in a constitutional law class. He then found out that California had medical cannabis and it was legal for patients to grow cannabis and have cannabis and it wasn't legal in New Jersey.

Edward Lefty Grimes: a representative for SativaCross.org. He discussed fighting for cannabis patients' rights and for the rights of the disabled. He talked about wanting to attend the meetings virtually, and stated that during the pandemic, the NJ-CRC was able to provide zoom link for the meeting. He asked why they can't continue to do so now for the disabled patients and disabled veterans.

Domingo Rivera: Mr. Rivera wanted to thank the commission for their work in social equity and minority-owned businesses. He also mentioned his company is one of the first cannabis businesses to open in the city of Camden.

Edwin Robles: Co-owner of Empire Dispensary spoke on behalf of the Empire Dispensaries which is minority, women and disabled Vet-owned. He spoke about their long wait for their annual license. He said they believe they have done everything required by the commission and submitted all required documents to obtain their license but have yet to receive their annual license.

Hugh Giordano: UFCW representative, said they are the official labor union of AFLCIO and have 1.4 million members on a national level in the U.S. and Canada with allies in Europe and South America. He thanked the commission for speaking up for the little guys when no one else will. He said there are more people of color, immigrants, women, and veterans in the workforce than there will ever be in ownership. He also spoke about the various locations in New Jersey where he and his union have been, in order to show support for their members.

Jessica Marie Villars: Ms. Villars spoke on her company still waiting for a license. She stated her company Baked by the River Dispensary class 5 conditional licensee submitted their application on December 7th. She said she received communications from the commission advising her that her application was lost due to an error in the system. Her application was found on March 9th and according to the licensing board they were now considering her license application to be submitted on March 9th, which would cause a delay in her business. She said the delay in approving her application is causing financial hardship. She also said she is ready to start her business, and has everything the commission

required, such as municipal approval, and is ready to support social equity by providing jobs to people from disadvantaged communities. She asked for the commission to consider her application on the date she had originally submitted her application, which was on December 7th.

Kelly Gatto: President of Brute's Roots, one of the four vertically integrated awardees from the 2019 RFA process. She discussed her experience in receiving her license to operate her business. She wanted to thank the commission for their hard work on issuing her business license. She also wanted the commission to know her business Brute's Roots is not a multi-state operator but a South Jersey-based WBE company.

Michael Bajuz: CEO of Green Knight Cannabis. Mr. Bajuz a disabled vet spoke about wanting and needing the commission to look out for the small mom-and-pop cannabis shops that are being hurt by all the illegal cannabis stores in New Jersey.

Osbert Orduna: The Cannabis Place CEO and member of the National Hispanic Cannabis Council and the Service-Disabled Veterans and Cannabis Association. He thanked the commission for approving the Cannabis Place 420 Corp's business application. He mentioned that the work of the advocates and legislators that collaborated to pass the CREAMM Act was incredible.

Precious Osagie-Erese: Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Roll Up Life spoke about approval issues that are happening throughout the state with cannabis licensing approvals. Roll Up Life was denied a class 5 retailer business license even though they had the highest scored application. They held several classes and meetings with city council, members of the community in East Orange to teach them about the cannabis plant only to be denied their application by the city. She said there are many barriers to entry for people of color to participate in this industry.

Steve Cassidy: Owner and Founder of Daylite Cannabis, LLC. Located in Burlington County. He said his company is ready to hire and yet it's been 114 days since he submitted his conversion application and still has not been licensed to open and operate his business.

Virginia Papa-Horning: Represented the Jersey Shore Ventures Group, a mom-and-son small business. They started their application process on December 15, 2021, they were granted their conditional license on May 25, 2022. They began their lease on the business building on October 1, 2022, to demonstrate site control, received their municipal approval on November 28, 2022, and submitted their conversion application on November 30, 2022. Since they submitted their conversion application in 2022, they still have not received their conversion license to operate and said there has been a lack of communications with the NJ-CRC.

Tahir Johnson: Thanked the commission for approving business applications. He spoke to the members of the commission and the public about the hard work that the commission is doing in trying to get everyone's applications approved and knows it will take some time. He added that being able to obtain a cannabis business license is a long road and to trust the system.

11. NEW BUSINESS:

Chairwoman Houenou asked the commission before adjourning the meeting if there's any new business the commission needed to address.

Vice Chair Delgado stated that after hearing all the small businesses talk about their carrying charges and the amount of money, they're putting out month after month waiting on their cannabis business license, he would like to call for the May meeting to be put back on the calendar for a later date in May and

suggested May 18th. Vice Chair Delgado mentioned the meeting does not have to be on a large scale such as this meeting, and that it can be virtual.

Commissioner Barker stated that the Commission can have the meeting later than the suggested date of May 18th and maybe have it later in the month of May, maybe May 25th.

Chairwoman Houenou discussed the number of hours, manpower and work it takes to put a meeting together. She stated that it would not be beneficial to the applicants nor would it be productive to hold a meeting in May to only be able to issue 10 or fewer licenses. She further discussed that if a May meeting was to take place, it would take time away from staff to work on producing more licenses on a larger scale.

VOTE:

Chairwoman Houenou asked for a motion to adopt the resolution for the May Board Meeting to be on the calendar for a later suggest date of May 18th.

Vice Chair Delgado made the motion, Commissioner Barker seconded. Hearing no further discussion, Ms. Joanem called the vote:

AYES: Commissioner Barker, Vice Chair Delgado

NAYS: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso, Commissioner Nash, Chairwoman Houenou

The resolution failed

ADJOURNMENT

Chairwoman Houenou called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso made the motion to adjourn and seconded by Commissioner Nash. Chairwoman Houenou called the vote.

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

NAYS: None

The public meeting adjourned at 6:03pm.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes represent a true and complete summary of the public meeting held by the Cannabis Regulatory Commission on **April 13, 2023.**



Christopher Riggs
Chief Counsel

Date: 6/12/23



Jolitha Joanem
Administrative Assistant

Date: 6/15/23