



State of New Jersey
CANNABIS REGULATORY COMMISSION

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

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

CALL TO ORDER

The June 1, 2023, public meeting of the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission was called to order by Chairwoman Houenou at 1:05pm 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 were also posted on the CRC website. The meeting time and location have 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: 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. Vice Chair Delgado 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 2:05pm.

3. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING'S MINUTES

The open, public portion of the meeting began at 2:13pm. Chairwoman Houenou asked for a motion to adopt both the minutes and executive session minutes for the April 13, 2023 meeting, as well as those for the emergency meeting held on April 17, 2023 regarding Curaleaf's request for a stay. Ms. Joanem noted that the minutes were shared with the Commission members prior to the meeting. Chairwoman Houenou asked for a motion on the matter if there were no questions or requests for amendments to the meeting minutes. Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso made the motion, and Vice Chair Delgado 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 began by wishing everyone Happy Pride month and recognized the connection between the history of cannabis and the LGBTQ community.

She also reminded the public about the process the Commission uses to prepare for Board Meetings and to get applications ready for Board approval. She noted that the Commissioners are just as eager as the applicants to get applications approved so that New Jersey entrepreneurs could set up their businesses.

She explained that the Commission's priority is to ensure that applications are complete, and that the Commission staff performs quality control on the applications to make sure that all required components are satisfied. Chairwoman Houenou encouraged those that have received cure letters to promptly reach out to the Commission staff and address any deficiencies so that their application may move forward in the process. Once the Commission staff completes their review, the Board reviews all applications that are ready for approval. The Commissioners thoroughly review the voluminous application materials, which can sometimes take a few weeks. She reminded the applicants to double-check their application materials to make sure everything is completed accurately and that there are no outstanding deficiencies.

Finally, Chairwoman Houenou explained to the public that a list of applications that are up for consideration are posted on the NJ-CRC website in advance of the Board meetings. She noted that the

Commission is happy to keep posting the list because she knows that it brings relief and joy for applicants who are waiting for their approvals.

5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Deputy Executive Director Kelly Anderson-Thomas delivered the Executive Director's report on behalf of Executive Director Jeff Brown. First, she provided an update on license applications, stating that the NJ-CRC has received over 1900 applications submitted for review, of which only 61 still needs to be reviewed. She stated that the Commission staff continues to follow the timeframes provided at the last meeting for license processing. She also reminded applicants to promptly respond to any cure letters and requests for information received from a NJ-CRC.

She also indicated that there was an uptick in the number of conditional licensees applying to convert to annual licensees, and that over 300 conditional conversions have been submitted. Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas expressed a desire to see more applications from social equity and diversely owned businesses, and encouraged individuals weary of starting a cannabis business to reach out to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the New Jersey Business Action Center.

Finally, Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas reported that for consideration at the meeting are a total of 71 conditional applications, 29 conditional-to-annual conversion applications, and six annual applications. Finally, she noted that since the last meeting, four new medicinal dispensaries have opened, one ATC has expanded into the adult-use market, and the Commission has licensed the first recreational-only facility.

Director of Diversity and Inclusion Wesley McWhite, III, shared his report on the progress that the NJ-CRC has made in diversifying the cannabis industry in New Jersey. With respect to the self-identified majority ownership of conditional-to-annual and annual licensees, 28% are White, 18% are Black, 18% are Asian, and 11% are Hispanic or Latino. The remaining 14% are "other" and 10% have no majority ownership. When compared to the NJ-CRC's December 2022 data, these recent numbers mark a measurable increase across the board for Black, Asian, Hispanic and Latino majority ownership. Director McWhite clarified that those identified as "other" are entities who have applied for licensure or where majority owners have opted not to disclose race or ethnicity. He also noted that there are dual- or even triple-part ownership among different majority groups, which evidences flexibility and collaboration through business partners and agreements among different majority groups. Director McWhite also highlighted that New Jersey is doing a good job with respect to diversity of cannabis businesses when compared to national figures.

Director McWhite also provided a breakdown of the DORES Certifications, with minority-owned businesses constituting 21% of the total, women business enterprises at 23%, minority and women business enterprises at 16%, and disabled veteran-owned business at 5%. Looking at a national scale, Director McWhite stated that New Jersey was on track with the national trends, although there was room to grow. He encouraged applicants to seek and maintain their Division of Revenue and Enterprise Services certification so that they can be part of the NJ-CRC's priority review process. Overall, the Commission has awarded 729 licenses to minority, women, and disabled veteran applicants.

Finally, Director McWhite encouraged the public to get involved and reiterated that the NJ-CRC is excited to forge ahead with partnerships, outreach meetings, and expungement clinics. He also highlighted some of the programs that he hopes will encourage more diversity in the industry.

Chairwoman Houenou noted that she was encouraged by the numbers, and congratulated the Office of Diversity and Inclusion for ensuring that the numbers start strong and stay strong.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

6A. PERMITTING & LICENSING COMMITTEE REPORT:

Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso provided a report on the Permitting and Licensing Committee. Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso discussed the extension requests that were granted in April and May 2023, and shared updates on the new online form that has been adopted.

In April, 185 extensions were issued for conditional applicants. The Committee observed that applicants have sought extensions because of issues getting local approvals, real estate and site control issues, and lack of sufficient funding. Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso directed the public to the NJ-CRC website for more information regarding applicants that have been granted extensions. In May, 215 extensions were issued for conditional applicants.

Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso also summarized the new process that the NJ-CRC has adopted to streamline extension requests. She reiterated that only 2019 RFA awardees, conditional license awardees, and annual license awardees qualify for the extension requests. She emphasized that extension requests must be submitted at least 15 days before the deadline. Once completed, the extension request form should be submitted in accordance with the instructions on the form.

Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso encouraged the public to visit the NJ-CRC website and speak to a NJ-CRC staff member if they had any questions.

6B. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT:

Commissioner Barker provided a report on the Public Engagement and Education Committee. The committee provided an update regarding the safe-use public information campaign that was discussed at the last meeting. The campaign will focus on the surge in use of cannabis by people 21 and younger who do not have an underlying medical condition and will encourage the safe use of cannabis among adult users. The NJ-CRC solicited bids from various vendors, which were then reviewed by the Committee staff. Commissioner Barker stated that the Committee staff has a recommendation for a vendor that they believe meets the requirements for the campaign, and the recommendation will be presented to the Board for a vote. If selected, the Committee hopes to work with the vendor to launch the campaign in late summer or early fall, 2023.

Commissioner Barker emphasized that education was a critical and necessary tool to destigmatize and inform people about cannabis and looked forward to working with the public to help educate New Jerseyans about cannabis.

7. PUBLICATIONS FOR NEW JERSEY REGISTER

7A. NOTICE OF APPLICATION ACCEPTANCE FOR CLASSES 3, 4, AND 6 LICENSES

Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas provided a summary of the updates to the Notice of Application Acceptance with respect to classes 3, 4, and 6 licenses.

By way of background, she recounted that the Commission released the first Notice of Application Acceptance for personal use or recreational business in November 2021. The Notice of Application Acceptance advised the public of the upcoming acceptance of class 1 (cultivation), class 2

(manufacturing), and class 5 (retail) licenses along with testing labs. The Commission staff now request approval for the modification of the Notice of Application Acceptance to include three (3) new license types.

Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas explained that the Notice of Application Acceptance would propose a priority application process, pursuant to which for the first 90 days, or from September 27 through December 27, 2023, the Commission would only accept applications from social equity businesses. For the following 90-day period until March 24, 2024, there would be an exclusive acceptance of diversely owned business applications while the Commission would still accept applications from social equity applicants. Applications that are received that do not fall under either designation will be rejected and returned to the applicant for resubmission at the appropriate time. Following March 25, 2024, applications would be reviewed in accordance with the application priority list set forth in the amended Notice of Application Acceptance.

Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas highlighted some additional features in the amended Notice of Application Acceptance, including the lack of limits on the number of licenses the NJ-CRC will award, the scoring system that will be utilized, the different paths for licensure, and how applications will be prioritized.

Commissioner Barker moved to expand the exclusivity period for social equity businesses from the proposed 90-day period to 1-year. He articulated that social equity businesses have not been successful in going through the application and licensure process under the current framework and that expanding the exclusivity period would give them a greater opportunity to succeed.

Commissioner Nash seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Vice Chair Delgado agreed with Commissioner Barker, but suggested amending Commissioner Barker's proposed amendment to include language that the priority process will be reviewed by the Board after 180 days.

Vice Chair Delgado moved to amend the proposed amendment so that the Notice of Application Acceptance would expand the exclusivity period to one year for social equity businesses and that, after 180 days, the Commission would review and course correct, if needed, the process, Commissioner Barker seconded the motion.

Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso requested clarification from Commissioner Barker as to whether the extension of the exclusivity period applied only to social equity businesses. Commissioner Barker confirmed that the extension is limited to the exclusivity period for social equity businesses, explaining that since the time the Commission began awarding adult-use licenses, no social equity business had begun operating their business. He noted that other jurisdictions had longer exclusivity periods for social equity businesses, so there was precedent to extend their exclusivity period in New Jersey.

Although agreeing with the intention behind Commissioner Barker's proposed amendment, Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso stated that she believed the Commission needed to also consider women-owned businesses, disabled veteran-owned businesses, and other minority-owned businesses, and that she would support Commissioner Barker's proposed amendment if those businesses were taken into consideration.

Commissioner Barker explained that women-owned businesses, disabled veteran-owned businesses, and minority-owned businesses could all be social equity businesses, so extending the exclusivity period for social equity businesses could capture those businesses as well. Nevertheless, there are diversely owned

businesses that move through the process quicker than social equity businesses, and therefore, Commissioner Barker maintained that it would be fairer and more equitable to extend the exclusivity period for social equity businesses only.

Chairwoman Houenou clarified that women-owned businesses, minority-owned businesses, and disabled veteran-owned businesses are not necessarily also social equity businesses, and that the designations are terms of art under NJ-CRC regulations and should not be conflated. She explained further that if a business is both a certified minority-owned business as well as a social equity business, the entity is counted and reviewed as a social equity business. Chairwoman Houenou also clarified for Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso that extending the exclusivity period for social equity businesses to one year would necessarily preclude diversely owned businesses from applying during that time. Commissioner Barker agreed that there was a distinction between social equity businesses and diversely owned businesses; since social equity businesses reflect those most harmed, he reiterated that his proposed amendment would be limited to extending the exclusivity period of social equity businesses only.

Chairwoman Houenou noted that certified minority-owned businesses, woman-owned businesses, and disabled veteran-owned businesses will be prioritized in accordance with the NJ-CRC regulations, and while there are statutory benchmarks for the Commission to promote inclusion of these groups in the cannabis industry, the NJ-CRC has far exceeded those statutory targets because of the work of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

Chairwoman Houenou then asked the Commission staff to respond to the questions raised regarding the awards that have been given thus far to social equity businesses, and whether those businesses were operational.

Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas stated that just based on the NJ-CRC's last quarterly report, there were 947 applicants that self-identified as social equity applicants, and of those, 247 moved through the process and had been awarded licenses. She did not have the most recent data but offered to obtain that data for the Board. Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas explained while the Commission staff works with sister agencies to help build programs to assist social equity businesses become operational, certain factors impacting a social equity business's ability to open were outside of the NJ-CRC's control, such as issues with real estate and the ability to raise capital.

VOTE:

Chairwoman Houenou called for a vote on the motion to amend the proposed amendment to the Notice of Application Acceptance to expand the exclusivity period to one year and limit the exclusivity period to only social equity businesses, and after 180 days for the Commission to review and course correct the process, if needed. Ms. Joanem called the vote:

AYES: Commissioner Barker, Commissioner Nash, Vice Chair Delgado, and
Chairwoman Houenou.

ABSTENSION: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso

NAYS: None

The resolution passed

Chairwoman Houenou turned to the motion to amend the Notice of Application with the proposed amendment as amended, and asked if there was any discussion on that motion. Commissioner Barker requested that the Board consider increasing the scoring measures for the community and social responsibility factors for future applications because the scores currently allocated did not adequately capture the seriousness of those criteria. Commissioner Barker clarified that he was not suggesting an amendment to the motion, but rather a consideration for future applications.

VOTE:

Chairwoman Houenou called for a vote on the motion to amend the Notice of Application Acceptance with the proposed amendment as amended to expand the exclusivity period to one year for social equity businesses, and after 180 days for the Commission to review and course correct the process, if needed. Ms. Joanem called the vote:

AYES: Commissioner Barker, Commissioner Nash, Vice Chair Delgado, and Chairwoman Houenou.

ABSTENSION: Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso

NAYS: None

The resolution passed

8. CONSIDERATION OF SAFE-USE CAMPAIGN PROJECT

Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas presented a summary of the Safe-Use Campaign Project. The Commission solicited a vendor to create a public information campaign to educate the New Jersey public on the safe use of cannabis, the adverse effects of youth cannabis use, and the dangers of driving impaired. The campaign is aimed at children under 18 years old, 18- to –20-year-olds, and adults who currently use or are considering using cannabis, with a particular focus on Black, Brown, and Latin-mixed communities. The Safe-use Campaign Project was advertised to vendors in the T3067 Statewide Advertising and Public Relations Services contract on March 23, 2023. The Commission received six (6) proposals by the May 5, 2023 deadline. The proposals were evaluated according to the criteria set by the Commission, including a particular focus on the technical review of the bidders’ demonstrative approach to performing the requirements of the scope of work as specified in the engagement. Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas stated that based on her review of the supporting documentation and recommended proposal, she concurred with NJ-CRC staff’s recommendation to approve the award of the Safe-Use Campaign bid engagement to Princeton Partners.

VOTE:

Chairwoman Houenou moved to approve the resolution approving the NJ-CRC Staff Evaluation Committee’s recommendation to award contract to Princeton Partners for public information Safe-use Campaign. Vice Chair Delgado seconded. Hearing no further discussions, Ms. Joanem called the vote:

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

NAYS: None

The resolution passed

9. CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATIONS FOR PERMIT OR LICENSE CHANGES

Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas presented seven name change requests recommended for approval:

1. 1st Choice Health and Wellness, LLC to Alta Life, LLC
2. Community Wellness of New Jersey, LLC to RIPT Dispensary, LLC
3. Sanctuary Medicinals, LLC to Sanctuary Cannabis, LLC
4. A21 Health and Wellness, LLC to A21 Wellness Dispensary
5. Goldfinch Retail New Jersey, LLC to Goldfinch, LLC
6. Green Scientific Labs New Jersey, LLC to CRS New Jersey, LLC
7. Royal Highness Dispensary, LLC to Hello High Dispensary, LLC

VOTE:

Vice Chair Delgado moved to approve the application to change the business names for all seven entities. 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: None

The resolution passed

10. CONSIDERATION OF ADULT-USE CANNABIS BUSINESS APPLICATIONS

10A. CONDITIONAL LICENSES

Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas provided a summary of the applications that were up for consideration. She first explained the process used for assessing the applications and how they were scored and verified based on the application type. Each application was assigned a priority and verified based on the application information submitted and are then assessed for completeness and scored. Each application was reviewed for limitations and qualifications, and the initial financial and management agreements are considered. The applications are given an in-depth qualification review that includes a criminal background check and probative review. The applications are then reviewed for quality control prior to presentation to the Board. The applications are then recommended to the Board for approval.

Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas provided a summary of the 69 conditional applications that are up for consideration. She also provided a breakdown for the license categories:

Social Equity Businesses	13
Diversely owned Businesses	41
Impact Zone Businesses	4

Chairwoman Houenou also reminded the audience that the list of conditional businesses will be posted on the NJ-CRC website.

VOTE:

Commissioner Nash moved to adopt the resolution on conditional license applications for class one cannabis cultivator, class two manufacturer, and class five cannabis retailer licenses. Vice Chair Delgado seconded. Hearing no discussion, Ms. Joanem called the vote:

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

NAYS: None

The resolution passed

10A. CONDITIONAL LICENSE APPLICATIONS #2728 AND 2729

Chairwoman Houenou recused herself from considering the remaining conditional license applications. Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas provided a summary of two conditional applications for THC CBD, LLC, one for class 1 cultivator and one for class 2 manufacturer. She stated that both are social equity businesses, and that the Commission staff followed the same review process as set forth previously.

VOTE:

Vice Chair Delgado asked for a motion to adopt the resolution on the conditional license applications for class one cannabis cultivator and class two manufacturer for THC CBD, LLC. Commissioner Barker made the motion, Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso seconded. Hearing no discussion, Ms. Joanem called the vote:

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

ABSTENTION: Chairwoman Houenou

NAYS: None

The resolution passed

10B. CONDITIONAL-TO-ANNUAL CONVERSIONS

Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas provided a summary of the 29 conditional license conversions to annual license applications that were up for consideration. She mentioned that eight (8) applications up for annual conversions are class 1 cultivators, eight (8) are class 2 manufacturers, and thirteen (13) are class 5 retailers. She stated they all have gone through the full process as outlined before and they are recommended for approval to the NJ-CRC board.

Conversion Licenses:

Social Equity Businesses	13
Diversely owned Businesses	16

Discussion:

Commissioner Nash wanted to remind the public that it is important that applications are consistent, and that there are no discrepancies between what applicants report to the Commission in their disclosure forms and what they report in other forms. The Commission staff and Board perform a thorough review of the applications, so any such discrepancy can result in delays.

Commissioner Barker expressed his concern that the list of proposed awardees did not reflect businesses representing those most harmed by the war on drugs, and that Black-, Hispanic, and Indigenous-owned business applicants were not being recommended for approval at the same rate as other groups. While he acknowledged that the Commission had made great strides especially when compared to the national figures, he urged the Commission to do better.

Chairwoman Houenou asked Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas if she would be able to address Commissioner Barker’s concerns.

Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas clarified that one third of the awardees from this meeting were social equity businesses. She reiterated that the Commission was reviewing applications based on priority status, and urged applicants, including social equity business applications, to do their due diligence in submitting the proper paperwork, timely responding to any deficiencies, and providing the Commission staff with requested information so that the applications can move forward in the review process.

VOTE:

Commissioner Nash moved to adopt the resolution considering the applications to convert conditional license to annual licenses for class 1 cultivators, class 2 manufacturers, and class five retailer licenses. Vice Chair Delgado seconded. Hearing no further discussion, Ms. Joanem called the vote:

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

NAYS: None

The resolution passed

10C. ANNUAL LICENSES

Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas provided a summary of the applicants for annual license, which she addressed in two separate groupings. In the first grouping were five annual license applications, of which two were class 1 cultivators and three were class 5 retailers. All five were diversely owned businesses, and all recommended to the Board for approval.

VOTE:

Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso moved to adopt the resolution of considering the annual license applications for class 1 cannabis cultivators and class 5 retail licenses. Vice Chair Delgado seconded.

Discussion:

Commissioner Barker addressed the proposed awardees and encouraged them to put those most harmed in majority positions including Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous individuals.

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

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

NAYS: None

The resolution passed

10C. ANNUAL LICENSE APPLICATIONS #1299

Commissioner Nash recused herself while the Board considered the remaining annual license application for GSCC Management, LLC.

Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas provided a summary of the application, highlighting that the application was reviewed in accordance with the same process previously outlined. The annual license application for GSCC Management, LLC is for a class 2 manufacturer license. GSCC Management, LLC is a diversely owned business, and was recommended to the Board for approval.

VOTE:

Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso moved to adopt the resolution on the annual license application for the class 2 cannabis manufacturer license for GSCC Management, LLC. Vice Chair Delgado seconded. Hearing no discussion, Ms. Joanem called the vote:

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

ABSTENTION: Commissioner Nash
NAYS: Commissioner Barker

The resolution passed

10D. EXPANDED ATC CERTIFICATION

Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas provided a summary of the entities which seek to expand into the adult-use market and their certification materials. She discussed two entities that have been operating in the medicinal market who have certified to the NJ-CRC to expand to adult-use operations, specifically New Jersey Leaf, formerly known as Monmouth Wellness & Healing, in Freehold, New Jersey, and MPX New Jersey, LLC, in Gloucester. She 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 corresponding plans for social equity and safety. In considering these factors, she mentioned that the NJ-CRC looked at the entities' patient enrollment, inventory, sales, the canopy needed to serve the enrolled patients, and the production capacity.

Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas stated that New Jersey Leaf, formerly Monmouth Wellness & Healing, in Freehold, New Jersey seeks a class 5 retailer license. Their certification has been reviewed by Commission staff and has been confirmed to meet the standard. Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas stated the NJ-CRC believes the evidence submitted does show that they can expand to support adult-use operations and that there are no current legal matters of concern. New Jersey Leaf, formerly known as Monmouth Wellness & Healing, was recommended for approval.

VOTE:

Commissioner Nash moved to adopt the resolution for acceptance of certification for New Jersey Leaf, formerly known as Monmouth Wellness & Healing, to expand operations to the adult personal-use cannabis market. 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

Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas briefly discussed the expanded ATC certification for MPX New Jersey in Gloucester. She stated that that the certification was reviewed in the same manner as previously articulated. Their certification has been reviewed by Commission staff and was confirmed to meet the standard. Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas stated the NJ-CRC staff believed the evidence submitted does show that MPX can expand to support adult-use operations and that there are no current legal matters of concern. MPX New Jersey is recommended for approval to the Board to accept the certification.

VOTE:

Vice Chair Delgado moved to adopt the resolution for acceptance of MPX New Jersey, LLC's certification to expand. 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

10E. ANNUAL LICENSE RENEWALS

Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas provided a summary for the annual license renewals, beginning with an overview of the statutory and regulatory requirements. ATCs that have expanded must 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 operations as a cannabis business. She stated that there are four (4) entities up for consideration and all of them have submitted the requisite documents requesting renewal.

Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas further discussed the review process that NJ-CRC staff performed to make sure these entities were maintaining patient access, one of the provisions the entity is required to adhere to as part of the final agency decisions that approved the expansion.

Ascend NJ:

Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas stated that the first application recommended for approval to the Board is the annual license renewal application for Ascend NJ with respect to their Montclair, New Jersey location.

VOTE:

Vice Chair Delgado moved to adopt the resolution to accept the annual license renewal application for Ascend NJ, LLC with respect to their Montclair, New Jersey location. 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

Ayr Wellness NJ:

Next, Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas discussed the annual license renewal application for Ayr Wellness NJ, noting that the Commission staff performed the same review process as that done for other applications. She then requested that Director McWhite provide updates as it pertained to Diversity and Inclusion.

Director McWhite stated that the Office of Diversity and Inclusion met with all of the entities up for consideration for renewal, and that the expanded ATCs were looking forward to working closely with the Office as New Jersey entered its second adult-use year. He looked forward to establishing more areas of collaboration and partnership to benefit the communities and the cannabis industry in New Jersey.

With respect to Ayr, Director McWhite noted that it has met all of its good faith social equity effort requirements. Ayr has submitted all of its monthly social equity reports and holds quarterly expungement clinics with community partners. Additionally, it has established social equity career pipelines and

maintains a diverse workforce, while continuing to find ways to improve those numbers in all its locations. Director McWhite stated that he looked forward to working with them on all social equity efforts moving forward.

Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas listed the locations for which Ayr was seeking renewal, namely for a class 2 manufacturer in South Brunswick, a class 5 retailer in Woodbridge, a class 5 retailer in Union, and a class 5 retailer in Eatontown.

Chairwoman Houenou requested that the representatives from Ayr Wellness share some brief remarks.

Ms. Tenisha Victor, Director of Emerging Markets and Community Outreach, and Ms. Julie Winter, General Manager for the New Jersey Operations, presented on behalf of Ayr's renewal application. Ms. Victor first discussed how they have maintained patient access, specifically by way of dedicated parking spaces, outdoor shopping, point-of-sale stations, product offerings, counseling services, and continued local support. They have an active CBA with the UFCW since 2020 and continue to have a good working relationship with them. With respect to social equity, Ayr has dedicated \$150,000 to the New Jersey Equity Budget, which reflects a 12.5% allocation of their overall national budget. She also stated that Ayr has committed \$600,000 in funding for The Library, a social equity applicant, for the start of their business operations. Within the first year of adult-use sales, Ayr has been fully compliant with the NJ-CRC regulations and has not received any deficiency notices. In the medical markets, Ms. Victor noted that Ayr strives for quality product, an educational patient/customer experience, and on-going communication with the Commission staff.

Commissioner Barker requested clarification on whether \$600,000 was going only towards The Library. Ms. Victor stated that that was correct; the \$600,000 was allocated to help The Library become operational, and some of that money has already been given to The Library for their conversion application. Commissioner Barker asked if there were plans to continue that funding for equitable businesses. Ms. Victor responded affirmatively. While at the moment they want to focus on ensuring that The Library is successful, they will look to the NJ-CRC for continued guidance on how they can interact with other social equity businesses.

Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso asked for more information about the wait times for patients in Ayr's retail stores. In response, Ms. Winter stated that the wait times were between 10-15 minutes. While they have had a few complaints, their pharmacist, who is the head of patient care, personally reaches out to each individual to explain the process and resolve any issues.

VOTE:

Vice Chair Delgado moved to adopt the resolution to accept Ayr Wellness NJ, LLC's expanded ATC renewal for their three class 5 retail locations in Woodbridge, Union, and Eatontown Townships, and also their class 2 manufacturing site in South Brunswick. Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso seconded. Hearing no further discussion, Ms. Joanem called the vote:

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

NAYS: None

The resolution passed

TerrAscend New Jersey:

Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas next shared a summary of TerrAscend New Jersey’s application for renewal of its class 5 retailer license in Lodi. She stated that the Commission staff reviewed the application following the same review process previously outlined. There are no legal concerns and no additional updates from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion as it pertains to their diversity outreach.

VOTE:

Vice Chair Delgado moved to adopt the resolution to accept TerrAscend New Jersey’s expanded ATC renewal for their class 5 retail location in Lodi. Chairwoman Houenou seconded.

Discussion:

Commissioner Nash stated that she reviewed TerrAscend’s labor piece in totality and wants to see how the labor efforts are progressing. She will therefore abstain from voting at this time.

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

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

ABSTENTION: Commissioner Nash

NAYS: Commissioner Barker

The resolution passed

Verano NJ:

Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas summarized Verano NJ’s application for renewal of its class 5 retailer license in Neptune Township. The Commission staff reviewed the application following the same review process previously outlined. There are no legal concerns and no additional updates from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion as it pertains to their diversity outreach.

VOTE:

Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso moved to adopt the resolution concerning the renewal of the adult-use cannabis business license for expanded ATC Verano NJ in Neptune. Vice Chair Delgado 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

Testing Laboratories:

Finally, Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas addressed the renewal applications for testing laboratory licenses. She stated that for renewals, each laboratory had to ensure accuracy of all of the information submitted in its previous application on file. Deputy Executive Director Anderson-Thomas explained that each licensee also had to submit a copy of their most recent assessment from an accredited body as well. There are two renewal applications for testing laboratories for consideration: from Trichome Analytical LLC for its testing laboratory license in Mount Laurel, and the from Green Analytics East LLC for its testing laboratory license in Hamilton. Both Trichome Analytical and Green Analytics

East submitted the required documentation, which the Commission staff has reviewed. The Commission staff have confirmed that both entities continue to utilize the processes and procedures in place at the time their licenses were initially awarded, and now recommend that each of the testing laboratories' licenses be renewed.

VOTE:

Commissioner Nash moved to approve the resolution for consideration of renewal applications for testing facilities. 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

11. CONSIDERATION OF VACATING AWARDS FOR NON-PAYMENT OF LICENSING FEES

Chairwoman Houenou stated that this agenda item pertained to the license awards for Harmony Foundation of New Jersey, Inc. The Commission previously awarded Harmony four (4) adult-use cannabis business license awards on December 22, 2022: two class 1 cultivator licenses for Secaucus and Lafayette, one class 2 manufacturer license for Lafayette, and one class 5 retailer license for Secaucus. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 17:30-7.17, the expanded ATC's certification fees for these four licenses totaled \$800,000, which was due at the time of the award. On February 10, 2023, after no payment had been made, Executive Director Brown sent Harmony a final notice letter advising that if the full payment was not received by April 11, 2023, the licenses will not be issued, and Harmony will be required to submit a new request for expansion to the Board for its approval.

Harmony made a payment of \$100,000 on February 21, 2023 for the class 5 retailer license, and the Commission issued that license on February 24, 2023. No additional payments have been submitted towards the remaining \$700,000 balance. Because no payment has been made for the two class 1 cultivator licenses and the class 2 manufacturer license, Chairwoman Houenou recommended that the Board vacate its December 2, 2022 decision to award Harmony these three licenses for failure to pay the requisite fees pursuant to N.J.A.C. 17:30-7.17.

Chairwoman Houenou clarified that under the recommendation, Harmony would still be considered an expanded ATC with respect to its retail operation in Secaucus because the retailer license has been paid for and issued. Thus, the portion of the December 2, 2022 Board action relating to the class 5 retailer license in Secaucus would remain untouched. She further clarified that while Harmony may continue to sell adult-use cannabis products from other entities, it may not grow or manufacture any adult-use cannabis. If Harmony wishes to pursue the class 1 or class 2 license, they would be required to start anew and submit new expanded ATC certification materials for the Commission's consideration.

VOTE:

Commissioner Nash moved to approve the resolution vacating the prior awards for expanded ATC Harmony Foundation of New Jersey. Commissioner Del Cid-Kosso seconded.

Discussion:

Commissioner Barker sought clarification as to why Harmony was able to pay for and maintain the class 5 retail license in Secaucus when Executive Director Brown's final notice letter advised that if the full payment of \$800,000 was not received, all the licenses would be rescinded.

Chairwoman Houenou explained that the December 2, 2022 Board approval awarded Harmony four different licenses, including the class 5 retail license. Three licenses were awarded but not paid for by Harmony, and those awards are the subject of the instant recommendation. Because Harmony paid for the class 5 retail license, and the NJ-CRC issued the license to Harmony, it is not subject to the instant recommendation.

Commissioner Barker maintained that the outcome from Harmony's payment did not align with the language in the notice sent by Executive Director Brown.

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

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

NAYS: None

The resolution passed

12. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairwoman Houenou reminded the public that they can submit their comments to the NJ-CRC before, during, or after the public meeting in writing via the NJ-CRC website at nj.gov/cannabis/meetings by 5:00pm on June 2, 2023. The Chairwoman reminded the public that all submitted questions and comments are shared with the commission members and are made public along with the minutes.

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.

Aslan Zadeh: Good afternoon, Commissioners, Madam Chairwoman. Thank you so much for having me. My name is Aslan Zadeh. I am the CEO of Jersey Smooth, one of the annual license holders that was awarded annual license today. Thank you very much. And I've been watching from day one. And it's so wonderful to be here. And I can't speak any more highly of all of you. I'd like to take this time to just go on record to give a shout out to my lead investigator, Joseph -- Mr. Joseph. Sorry. I'm a little excited. Genova. Joseph Genova. He was an incredible, very thorough, and respectful lead investigator. I'd also give shout out to Mr. Jim Borasia. He was absolutely very helpful. I'd recommend any conditional license holders to reach out to them if they need help, especially Mr. Borasia. He's been very responsive and wonderful. I wanted to ask you next -- perhaps next meeting or the meeting after if we could go over how the budget for the CRC is created because in my personal opinion as wonderful of a job as you are doing, we need more resources for the CRC. I believe there's some disgruntled potential license holders. And they're just taking it out on the wrong people. I think if you were to kind of make that public information known who is the legislative that determines the budget, perhaps these disgruntled people could, you know, join forces and we can go after them to get you the money that you need because the numbers are staggering. I mean, I'm really happy I have made it out of the investigation and into license, annual license status, but that is only going to get harder and harder. You know better than anybody how many conditional licenses are out there. And I really believe the CRC needs more resources. I have truly enjoyed

the changes you've made. Today was incredibly exciting. The way you guys automated the extension request, I think that's going to take off a lot of weight from your investigative staff. And there was a few other things that you did today that I really believe it's taking us in the right direction of utilizing these resource that you have, but we need more. And that's all I want to say. But I wanted to emphasize thank you so much for the annual license.

Danielle Jones: Good afternoon, Madam Chair and Commissioners. My name is Danielle Jones. And I am a councilwoman for the Borough of Eatontown located in Monmouth County, New Jersey. I just want to say -- want to thank you for this opportunity to be able to come and speak to you. The reason why I wanted to speak, because, one, I want to commend you all for the work you're doing. I think it's very important that we -- make sure that we incorporate social equity and racial justice with the work that we're doing. Yes, we are trying to be -- we want to make money. We want to be -- we want to see economic growth in our towns, but it's important that we consider racial justice and social equity with the work that we do. So I would -- I do want to commend you for the work that you're doing. I know it's not easy, especially being elected official trying to convince people what you're doing is good because we know that public trust in government is kind of at a low right now. So I just want to commend you all for the work that you're doing. What my concerns are is -- and understand, especially with the review process that you guys have, we have a lot of applications not only in my municipality that are waiting for to be reviewed. So I just wanted to make that comment on the record. I do not want to expedite those processes because I want to be respectful of your processes and what your categories of what you're looking for, but I wanted to make that public because there are opportunities, especially for cultivation and manufacturing. And they're waiting for approval. And I heard from them. I told them just keep following up with the CRC, make sure you're doing your due diligence with your investigations and everything else. But I just want to make that a record. But I think it's also very important because one of the things that I did start working on I had to put aside because, unfortunately, I had Covid last year. I'm working on doing a workforce development program for the cannabis industry because I think a lot of focus is being done on retail, but we can talk about how to become a cultivator, how to become a manufacturer, how to be involved with distribution. And then we can also expand those and expose those people who were affected by the war on drugs and everything else to get those good paying jobs. So I think at the end of the day we can still talk about racial justice and social equity, but we could still talk about pocketbook issues. So I wanted to make that clear. So do I want to, once again, thank you for this time and this opportunity. I really do appreciate all the work that you do. And I'm happy to be a resource, especially on the municipal level. So thank you for your time.

David Nicholas: Hello, everyone. My name is David Nicholas. I'm a social equity applicant. Well, now annual licensee. First, I want to start off by thanking everyone from the CRC for granting Prolific Growhouse their annual conversion. I, myself, am 24, two years out of college. Just graduated from Rowen. I'm actually going back for my MBA in cannabis. I just wanted to touch on a few things. First, there's a question about my manufacturing application. I submitted it at the same time as my annual conversion for cultivation. It seemed today that it wasn't on the agenda, so I had a question about that. I reached out to my CRC investigator about this matter. He said that he didn't have any control of when our applications would go in front of the Board. So I just want to point that matter out. Manufacturing is important for my company to excel as a social equity company also. Lastly, as a social equity applicant, funding has been one of the hardest things for us. I have tried putting in grant applications left and right with NJEA and the different entities that New Jersey has that have grants available. And as far as the EDA goes, my last application that I submitted, when I clicked my "submit" button, it went to a blank screen because of technical difficulties that was going along at the EDA on their end. I reached out to the CRC, the EDA. I haven't gotten any comment back about this. Funding, once again, is important for us as social equity applicants. I just wanted to voice that out there. And then lastly, the things that I'm doing

along with my company on the educational side, I want to be the face of social equity for New Jersey, you know, creating different programs through Rowan University. Right now I'm doing a fellowship program. I'm currently submitting my application this week for that. I want to be able to have the kids from the schools be able to have mentorship, work-related opportunities, and, you know, being involved within the cannabis space even if they're not even -- even if they're not owning a business, but be involved in the business and put their degrees to use. And that's all I have to say. Thank you for everyone for listening to me and taking the time out today. That's all.

Jaraun Khaim Wright: Good afternoon, everyone. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Jaraun Khaim Wright, co-owner and managing partner at The Banc Street Collective, action advocate for environmental justice in New Jersey. Today I stand before you with the purpose to address an issue of great significance that is undermining the very fabric of our society, corruption in local municipalities and its diverse impact on the cannabis industry in New Jersey. The establishment of the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission represents a milestone in our pursuit of social justice and equity. The Commission's mission as outlined on their official website is to promote and ensure public health, safety, social justice, and equity in the regulation of cannabis. However, our quest for these values is being challenged by practices that undermine their very essence. There's no secret that there are municipalities within our great state that have succumb to the darker side of this lucrative industry. Recent investigation such as those reported by aj.com -- nj.com -- excuse me -- have shed light on corruption, bribery, and manipulation of the licensing process to name a few. This corruption is not just a blatant violation of trust, it's direct contradiction to the Commission's core principles. What we are experiencing today is a tragic paradox. On one hand, we have a regulatory body aiming to facilitate the cannabis industry's growth in a way that promotes social justice and equity. On the other hand, we're facing a reality that these noble intentions are being stifled by the very people entrusted to uphold them. For too long our industry has been marred by these malpractices, and the consequences are glaringly evident. Marginalized communities, the ones who are supposed to benefit the most from this new industry, are being pushed to the sidelines. The lack of transparency and integrity within these municipalities has created a stifling environment for cannabis businesses, hindering their growth and perpetuating inequality. It is disheartening to witness the veil back from dealings and hidden agendas that prevent aspiring entrepreneurs particularly from marginalized communities from securing real estate and converting conditional licenses. This is not equity. This is not justice. The key to solving this problem lies within each one of us. We must foster a culture of transparency and accountability in our interactions. We must demand stricter enforcement of regulatory standards coupled with severe penalties for violations. We must stand together as a community to root out the corruption that is jeopardizing our industry and stifling our growth. Let us remember that the purpose of legalizing cannabis was not solely economic gain, but rather it was envisioned as a path to rectify past injustices and create opportunities for those who have been disproportionately affected by the war on drugs. Today let us pledge to ensure that this vision is not lost in its greed and corruption. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that the industry is shaped in a manner that truly serves its original intent, to ensure public health, safety, social justice, and equity. Thank you.

Kevon Carter: Good afternoon, esteemed members of the Commission. We are truly honored to be given a chance to speak for a few minutes here today. My name is Kevon Carter, co-founder of Plant Base, LLC. My business partner, Prince Abidoeye, and I put together what we believe is an outstanding Black-owned company in Teaneck. As we received consideration to service our town of Plainfield and the state of New Jersey as a class five retail licensee, we want to exude our mission of education, community, and excellent service through the industry. Although we did not take the conditional-to-annual-licensing route, we are one of the applicants who represent true social equity. We pride ourselves on being one of the few Black-owned cannabis companies while understanding that there needs to be more plant-based aspires

that help New Jersey's cannabis industry flourish with inclusivity and an emphasis on entrepreneurship and small businesses to come. Excuse me. With that being said, as a company, we look to be an ally to the CRC in the state and continuously shape legislation and policy. We can give those who have been affected by the war on drugs a chance to build wealth by demanding an equitable industry. To the city of Plainfield, we want to thank you for believing in our vision and giving us this opportunity. We are committed to the town and the success of our business being a staple of Plainfield's growing economy. We have very thoughtful plans to ensure we stay motivated towards a successful business and safely serving the needs of the community. We understand this is only the first step. On behalf of the Plant Based team, the African American commerce, and our attorney team, I want to thank you again for the time and consideration.

Ron Wollner: Good afternoon, everyone. How are you today? My name is Ron Wollner obviously. I'm a landlord in Eatontown, New Jersey. And I also run the business committee for the town. Danielle Jones is one of the councilwomen in town, so I'm familiar with her. But watching -- this is the first time I've been to one of these meetings. And I'm very impressed with what I see. And I do see the issues. Right? So social equity is a big problem. And about a year ago, I had a social equity candidate come up to me and said, you know, we want to open a cultivation business in your building. And it wasn't really the first thought in my mind to let someone come in and runs this, but I've become very good friends with these people. And I'm on a mission now to get them into my building. And what I see is all the challenges that these social equity people are running into. First, it's almost impossible to find a building. My building is the golden goose. It's zoned for four -- four categories, cannabis, high warehouse ceiling, perfect location. And these guys are the perfect candidate, social equity. The one individual's been in prison for 27 years. Here he is, his opportunity to make something of his life with this facility. And I said look, I'm going to do everything in my ability to get this over the line. Here we are eight months into this, still nothing. He's burning cashing. You know, if it wasn't for me behind him to keep this going, he would have given up a long time ago. And there's a lot of people like this now. They're social equity candidates. They're trying to make this work. They can't find a location. They can't get the financing. And it drags on, on, and on. So if there's something we can do -- if you're serious about pushing social equity, let's get these things across the finish line. You know, I was -- I was hoping I was going to be here and their name was going to be on that board. You know, imagine all the money that goes into building one of these businesses out. It's expensive. Who wants to put the money in without knowing you have the license? So it's a real challenge for these people. And I hope these people will be considered hopefully in the near future because it's become very difficult this thing dragging on as long as it has. So that's all I have to say. If you're really serious about social equity, let's take a look at these people. Let's get this thing over the finish line. Thank you.

Hugh McGee: Thank you. Hugh McGee. Hugh McGee from Eatontown, New Jersey. Ron Wollner was from Eatontown, New Jersey. The Ayr people are from Eatontown, New Jersey. So we're putting a push on the Commission for Eatontown, New Jersey. In 2019, I sit on a Board that's an advisory capacity to the Mayor and Council. And the question came up should we support this cannabis idea. And I said at the time, yes, I think we should because there's a lot of benefits to cannabis that maybe we're not aware of. Maybe it requires more delving into by the governmental bodies, by the pharmaceutical companies, and the like. So as a committee, we recommended that the borough of Eatontown support cannabis operations. At this point it was, as you may recall, medical. And considering the fact that Eatontown because of Fort Monmouth and because it's a pretty much the crossroads of Monmouth County, it's a very diverse community. It's middle class, it's hard working, and you could even say blue collar. There's a lot of folks there who are interested in having the ability to purchase cannabis. But more importantly than that, because of the veteran community there, too, and consider Fort Monmouth was around before World War

1, it's got a history. And the people are very loyal to the community. So the medical aspect of this with the vets was very empowering. And they came to us. And a lot of people who are supporting the idea of cannabis said, look, we want the community to support this. Mayor and Council put it on the vote. And the community voted it in. So it was a big, big step towards that. And in working with the community at whole and in talking with the mayor who was a nurse, who is a nurse, supports the idea of the medical, not so much recreational, but the thinking has changed. And with Ayr, and they were the first ones to open up in Eatontown, it's worked out very well for them. It's worked out very well for the community. So we're saying, look, we have -- we have a positive attitude. And most importantly, we have three-and-a-half-million square feet of industrial space when Industrial Way East and West have zoned for cannabis, whether it be any one of the five categories. And one of the councilmen said, you know, we don't mind being known as the Silicon Valley of cannabis in New Jersey. So there's a focus here that we'd like to get more businesses open. And as Ron Wollner just said, we have a group that wants to open in his facility. And it's social equity. So we would appreciate your support. And if you see something come across the line that says Eatontown, New Jersey, know we're pushing for it. Thank you so much. And I was impressed.

Sean Brown: Good afternoon, Madam Chair, and Commissioners, staff, guests, you, too. I really am in many ways piggybacking on what the previous speakers said. And so I had some accommodation, recommendations, questions, and suggestions. And I'll wait in the future in some format to get an answer. So just for background, I worked in municipal government for a period of time. And I was able to get 14 letters of support pushed through on that role. And now I'm a business owner. But I'm speaking more so as an activist in this world than anything. So first is, is there a way the CRC can support continued education to municipal governments including zoning boards, planning boards, and council? I think previous speakers did a good job of articulating specific reasons of why, but there still seems to be misinformation. Some municipalities in New Jersey have municipal elections every year. So some of the people who sit in those seats today are not the same that may have approved applications in the past. Obviously, there's still some stereotypes and weird questions that I hear myself that applicants get asked. I believe that some municipalities are going too far and too deep into what they're asking. And it's in part because one of the things that I realize is that sometimes what the information that the administration collects and supports in order to push forward its recommendation to the council members, there's a mismatch and once the information's shared. So I saw in my hometown where council members weren't aware that there was a required security plan. They weren't aware that there was a required smell mitigation plan, that there's an inspection, that there's severe quality control, that they -- I hear multiple anecdotal stories of the question of proof of funds being at a level that I would cross over to being extreme. Also, echoing what I heard earlier, there's some landlords who are saying that the only way they'll agree to the place being there is with CRC approval first, but as we all know in this room that that's, unfortunately, not how this business works. Landlords and municipalities are also assuming that every single applicant will become multimillionaires in their first year. And that, too, is just -- it's just not true. So with that said, just a few more things. If you could share -- I also suggestion if you could share the list of the most common Cure requests or issues that come from Cures so that we in the public and the applicants can be aware of those common issues to have a solution ready for it. I also wanted to bring your attention that as far as I know -- someone correct me in this room if you have additional information -- that currently there's only one bank in the state of New Jersey that's allowing a company to open up a bank account. And I think we should be nervous by that and note that a lot of that is because of a fear that banks have of a mismanagement of funds. I know my time's up, but just one last thing because I heard a lot of people reference this. The New Jersey Business Action Council as -- Ms. Nash was at a press station as well where we heard this. They're doing a great job of beginning the stages of educating anyone who wants to be involved in the cannabis industry. Everyone that I know that comes to my attention that wants

to get a job in the industry, I'm pushing them to them because they're the experts that can do the training properly taking the burden off of new companies that are forming. So thank you for listening. I look forward to having a continued dialogue.

Shannon Farrell: Hi. How are you? I time myself, so I'll really try to keep this under three minutes. Hi, everyone. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak this afternoon. My name is Shannon. And I've been in the state's medical cannabis program for a little over two years. In that time, I found cannabis has decreased my need for half the pharmaceutical medicine prescribed to me for anxiety and panic disorder. That is something that I'm very proud of. And my story is not isolated. So you all should be proud of the work that you're doing for people like myself. The confidence to sit here before you today did not always exist. This plant has truly changed my life and given me a voice and the strength to start recently my own ancillary cannabis brand with the purpose of de-stigmatizing and de-criminalizing. But I'm here today because I'm also a parent to a nine- and two-year old, both girls. And like most parents, our children end up coming in tow with us on errands, whether we like it or not. However, the end of last year I had learned the hard way that our medical dispensaries do not facilitate the ability for parents to pick up their medicine in person. I would like to encourage you all to set a standard amongst the state's dispensaries operating under medical along with locations that are in conjunction adult-use a system in place for parents to pick up their medicine in person without bias, shame, or intimidation attached to running a simple errand. Bias, shame, and intimidation are just a few words I could use to describe my experience at one of our state's largest MSO's last fall. It's taken that long to feel comfortable publicly sharing my experience again. And I'll save you the details because I only have three minutes, but on a day when I had absolutely run too low, I had no choice but take my girls with me. In the short time I've used medicinally, I've built an age-appropriate knowledge and understanding for my children on momma's medicine. And the shame and stigma does not follow or will not live under my roof. But allowing that shame and stigma to follow parents and patients into a dispensary, well, that is the antithesis of what this should all be about. I recognize that our state's process to come this far has not been easy, many of you working firsthand. And there are certainly a lot of you who recognize we still have a ways to go. So my point is, if I can take my kids to Walgreen's to pick up my Lexapro, the liquor store to get my favorite wine, or let me tell you about having to take my once two-year old with me to my annual OB GYN exam, then I should not feel any bias when I go to a dispensary operating the umbrella of a medicinal dispensary. We do not have dispensaries operating with the proper information. There -- many are misinformed and not willing to challenge the ideas that is contradicting to allow parents to get their medicine. I can tell you that after weeks of emails, higher chains of command, tears, more bias, and gaslighting, I eventually worked with that particular MSO's regional manager to implement a policy for their New Jersey locations. So I know that this opportunity is there, but I believe it has to come from the top down. I stopped going to that dispensary because I physically didn't feel comfortable. Not to mention -- please let me finish. Not to mention, medical patients still spend quite a lot of money. So I'm of the mindset that I will give my money where it is deserved. Let me also add changing dispensaries or strains is not easy. Many of you wouldn't want to change your barber or find the hassle of getting new birth control. So it's kind of the same. I visited other medical dispensaries and have continued to inquire about how parents like myself can purchase, and I'm constantly left disappointed with the same, "We just can't do that here", citing regulations that technically aren't there. Since education is elevation, we cannot elevate the truth about cannabis without educating those at our frontline. Thank you again.

Steve Cassidy: Hi, everyone. Good afternoon. My name is Steve Cassidy. I'm the owner of Daylite Cannabis. We're a retail licensed, now annually licensed retail business in Mount Laurel, New Jersey. Quickly -- I'm speaking off the cuff here. I just want to give a shout out to my team who is watching at home. The ownership team, our future employees, we are so excited to get started. And thank you to the

Commission. So I wanted to extend, first of all, my sincere thanks for approving our license today. Most people in this room or listening at home or who will watch this later know how challenging the process has been to get to this stage, new hurdles, challenges, every step of the way. Not just CRC challenges, local ones, behind the scenes ones, financial, all kinds. It's all worth it, though. It's a major accomplishment all awardees should be proud of. We certainly are. As a micro business, this means a lot for us. We're out there grinding on the side, hustling to make this work. We're making this dream a reality. And we're so close to the finish line. That's why I'm here to speak today. Very few businesses, to my knowledge, if any, have been awarded a license while having a fully built property. We have a fully built dispensary. I'm here to ask that you work with us to expedite the final steps. Kind of the unknown for us. Our conditional license took close to a month from being awarded to being in hand. We were one of the first conditional retail licensees. And I understand that maybe the process took a little bit longer in the beginning. So I'm asking that you work with us on the next steps in our process to invoice our business so we can pay for our license, to issue that license, to perform our site inspection, and allow us to do the things that we need to do to move closer to opening up our doors. We've gotten 10 awesome, amazingly talented people on standby, like I said, listening at home, many of them ready to put in their notice at their current place of employment and come work for us. I can't wait to bring them on board. I would love to get their badges issued or processed, everything that we can do to move things along so two weeks, three weeks from now we can open up our doors and we're ready. I know that there's steps involved over the next few weeks to get credentials for metric, to send you over our wholesale agreements. All are ready and in place. We're ready to enter the New Jersey cannabis market, but we cannot do it without your help in the next steps of the process. So I'll be here after the meeting if there's an opportunity to speak to anyone about our next steps. And I wanted to thank you again for issuing our license today. Many thanks.

Thomas Ginefra: How you guys doing? My name is Tom Ginefra. I'm currently trying to develop a cannabis delivery service in the Union County area. My original question was answered, but I had a new question after hearing the new updates based off the class six. I know that Mr. Barker said that, you know, they would like to give more consideration to social equity applicants. And I'm all for that, absolutely. And I think he makes a very good point. In addition to minority businesses as well. The only thing I would just -- I'm requesting that you guys give it a possible chance to possibly amend that to maybe put a limit on the amount of class six delivery licenses in the state because I have worked tirelessly to try and create this business. And words can't describe it. And, you know, hearing that I'm going to have to wait even longer because I am not currently a social equity applicant or a minority-owned business man. And you know, I don't come from a bunch of money either. And so, you know, it hurts and it's frustrating, but I understand, you know. If just possibly consider maybe adding a cap to the amount of class six delivery licenses. I'm currently trying to apply for a micro conditional. And with this new amendment, I would have to wait a lot longer to be able to start. And like I said, I'm all for, you know, social equity applicants getting a chance at business, but, you know, this amendment also, you know, affects my business as well, you know, and how -- you know, and my chance to have business. And so I just -- just possibly, you know, consider. But once again, I totally understand it. I genuinely do from the bottom of my hurt because if I was a social equity applicant, I would want the same priority given to me. So I just want to say thank you for your time. And it was nice meeting you guys.

Chief Vincent Mann: How are you? My name is Chief Vincent Mann. I come from the Ramapo Lenape Nation and specifically the Turtle Clan. That's what I do as part of my life. But I'm not here as Chief Vincent Mann. I'm here as a member of the Ramapo Lenape Nation, one of three state-recognized tribes that have been left out of this equation. There are over 20,000 native Americans in this state. There's three nations within the state of New Jersey who have been left out. We hear Black and Brown. We don't hear Red. I applaud you, Mr. Barker, because what you said today twice is the only time it's been said.

Executive Order 122, Governor Corzine, I have mentioned to this [sic] to you guys in our meeting that we had over Zoom, it requires you by law to have conversations with us. That has failed. You're not doing it. It means you're in violation of the law of the state of New Jersey. Right? Because you're supposed to have these conversations with us because we're the ones who represent the Indigenous people of the state of New Jersey. You can't just lump us into "minority". You can't just lump us into "social equity". We have had the most social equity for the last 400 years in this land that our ancestors. My great, great grandfather, Chief Manus, before this was even the Constitution of the United States existed, before the Continental Congress, before World War I as we heard mentioned before. Our people continue to suffer. The numbers that you showed before, Wesley, are not completely accurate. Where is the one that says zero? Where is the one that said zero? It's not there. Right? It should be. If I have to actually take time to drive two hours down here and two hours back every single time there's a meeting even after we either get our license or don't get it, I'm going to do it. Because as far as I see it there's two people up there that I actually will commend. And Mr. Delgado, you are one of them because last month should not have been removed from this meeting. And the reason why it shouldn't have been removed from the meeting because he is right. And Mr. Barker was right. And we anticipated because of what you stated, Chairwoman, that you guys were going to be able to put all that stuff on the table. And didn't happen. I'm glad that Baked By the River got their license. Right? We have words in here from Jeff Brown stating from February, your license has been in for 60 days; you're ahead of everybody else; it's been 170 days. We're not ahead of anybody. We have had to pay \$5,000 at the end of last year for our license which is by law in the town of an Andover, New Jersey. \$5,000. Where do we get this money from? Because for us, Michaeline and I, Munsee Three Sisters Farm, right, we support the Turtle Clan community who is living in a federal Superfund site. This is unbelievable that this has not been a priority here. It's not been a priority, Wesley. It has not been a priority, Mr. Jeff Brown. And it has not been a priority to that Board. Just like Massachusetts. We know what happens up there. Just look at that. Just change it. Don't be afraid to say no. Don't be afraid to say yes. There are people hurting in the state of New Jersey, not just our people. They need the help. They need the money. Reference to the \$10 million, we applied. And guess what? Same exact thing. We are the most underserved people in the state of New Jersey. And for us not to even be included on that board right there which represents several different races is racist. It's racist, Wesley. If your job is inclusion and diversity, then you stand up and you do it regardless if it means you lose your job because that's how important this is. Not just to us, but to the state of New Jersey. Because when people look at this state they're going to sit here and say, huh, why is this not there? There's a great opportunity here for the state of New Jersey to do wonderful things. And I support all of them. I think that you guys do do a good job. Right? And if I have to sit here and separate myself from the Red, the Brown, and the Black, the Purple, the Pink, then I'll do it only to be a louder voice. I appreciate you giving me the extra time to speak my words. Right? Because even as a child I understood what racism was. I'm Black. I'm Brown. I'm White. I'm Hispanic. I'm Native American. They told me I would never even be able to speak when I was a child. This was not something I would ever do. And I only do it because there are so many people even the ones sitting behind us right now and out there that don't have the ability to do it. That don't have the money or a car to even drive here to be in front of everybody. Those are the people that really need to be thought about here. And I'm going to commend you over and over and over and over and over again, Mr. Barker. Don't stop. Thank you.

13. NEW BUSINESS

Chairwoman Houenou asked if there was any new business the Commission needed to address.

