

Dear Residents,

There has been a call from some residents for the Selectboard to prevent cannabis cultivation at a site on Beaman Road. Emails to the Board state that Princeton residents don't want it. It doesn't fit in with the character of our town and our neighborhoods. We would like to take this opportunity to explain what is and isn't allowed in Princeton and why. We will also explain what the process is that we have been and will be following.

Princeton does not have any bylaws that regulate where cannabis can be grown or how many cultivators we allow. However, we did pass an amendment to our Site Plan Review bylaw that adds the requirement for a site plan review for "Any use involving commercial cultivation, processing, distribution, or sale of marijuana." In Princeton, cannabis cultivation is considered to be an agricultural pursuit and, per our zoning, is allowed anywhere in town.

Town Counsel recommends that if we want to ban or limit any particular type of establishment (such as manufacturing or cultivation), we should do so with two bylaws: a general bylaw and a zoning bylaw. The process would be to pass the general bylaw by a simple majority at a Town Meeting and then to have it approved at a regular or special Town election. The zoning bylaw would need to be referred to the Planning Board which would hold a hearing before Town Meeting. The hearing must be preceded by notice published once in each of 2 successive weeks, the first publication not less than 14 days before the hearing. Voters would need to pass the zoning article with a 2/3 majority at Town Meeting and at the polls.

The Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) requires that potential growers or retail operations hold a Community Outreach Meeting. The CCC specifies how the company should provide notice of the meeting to residents and abutters. The purpose of the meeting is to allow the community the opportunity to ask questions and air concerns. The town, in Princeton the Selectboard, and the company also must discuss and sign a Host Community Agreement (HCA). As with Red Cardinal at Mechanics Hall, the Board begins discussions on the HCA before the outreach meeting but doesn't finalize and sign the agreement until after. It is important for the Board to understand the concerns of residents and agreements of the company before the HCA is complete.

The process so far on this cultivation proposal has followed these steps. The Town Administrator (TA) was approached by Candid, LLC, a grower that proposed a farm on Old Colony. Candid scheduled the Community Outreach Meeting for August 18, 2021 and the town began work on some of the terms of the HCA. The Board was asked whether or not we would be open to three or four growers sharing the acreage. The CCC allows multiple licensees, each with their own negotiated HCA, to share land. This was of interest to Candid because each farmer is restricted to about two acres of cannabis. If four farms shared the land, more could be

grown and the costs of the operation would be shared four ways. The Board expressed willingness to consider this option. Recently, the town was notified that the four growers had decided to go forward with a proposal for a different, larger, parcel on Beaman. They were interested in the larger parcel since it had fewer site constraints, was larger, and addressed some residents' concerns with buffer space and proximity to the mid-state trail. The four growers scheduled new public outreach meetings (four hour-long meetings to be held sequentially on November 22, 2021). The Board has discussed some terms of the HCA (there will be four, all with basically the same terms) but will be discussing the HCA several more times, including after the outreach meetings, before signing them. By law, we cannot refuse to allow a cultivation facility simply because it is a cultivation facility, since the Town has not gone through the Town Meeting and election process that would be necessary to enact such a ban. However, we can work to negotiate an HCA that addresses resident concerns. The public outreach meetings are required by the Cannabis Control Commission. They are scheduled and run by the growers making the proposal.

What can residents do? We encourage you to attend the Community Outreach Meetings, and attend Selectboard meetings to hear the discussion. Residents are welcome to address the Selectboard for up to three minutes during our public comment period.

Here are some links that may be helpful:

<https://masscannabiscontrol.com/community-outreach-meeting/>

<https://masscannabiscontrol.com/state-local-government/>