

TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE
TASKFORCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE REGARDING CANNABIS BUSINESS

EVALUATION REPORT

**APPLICATION FOR RESOLUTION OF LOCAL SUPPORT FOR THE SUITABILITY
OF A CANNABIS BUSINESS WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE –
CANNABIS CULTIVATION AND MANUFACTURING - MICROBUSINESS**

Overview

The Township of West Orange Taskforce and Advisory Committee Regarding Cannabis Business (the “Taskforce”) presents this Evaluation Report for the evaluation of the application submitted by Peace of Mind Construction Group, LLC (“Peace of Mind”) seeking a Resolution of Local Support for the Suitability of a Cannabis Business (“Resolutions of Local Support”) consistent with N.J.A.C. 17:30-5.1(g) of the regulations promulgated by the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission (the “Commission”). Peace of Mind is seeking a Resolution of Local Support as part of its application to operate a Cannabis Cultivation and Manufacturing Microbusiness within the Township of West Orange (the “Township”).

On January 31, 2022, a notice was published in the Star Ledger advertising to prospective applicants that the Township of West Orange (the “Township”) had prepared and issued a Request for Application (the “RFA”) for the issuance of Resolutions of Local Support for operation of a Cannabis Cultivations and/or Manufacturing within the Township. As set forth in the notice and in the RFA, applications were due on February 14, 2022 at 2:00 P.M. (the “Application Submission Deadline”). By the Application Submission Deadline, Peace of Mind was the only applicant who submitted an application in response to the RFA.

In its initial application Peace of Mind identified a primary location with a potential secondary location. The primary location was at 429 Valley Road and Peace of Mind originally expressed its intent to apply for a use variance to operate at that location. However, after being advised by the Taskforce that the primary location was not suitable based on the zoning, Peace of Mind advised that it would proceed with its secondary location at 76 Ashland Avenue which has the requisite zoning for the proposed use.

By letter dated March 10, 2022, the Taskforce invited Peace of Mind to revise its application with a new proposed location. On March 16, 2022, Kemistry provided a Letter of Intent to Lease for the property at 24 Park Avenue advising that this location was the new proposed location for the proposed Cannabis Retail Microbusiness. On April 12, 2022, Kemistry submitted an updated set of proposed drawings reflecting the new proposed location.

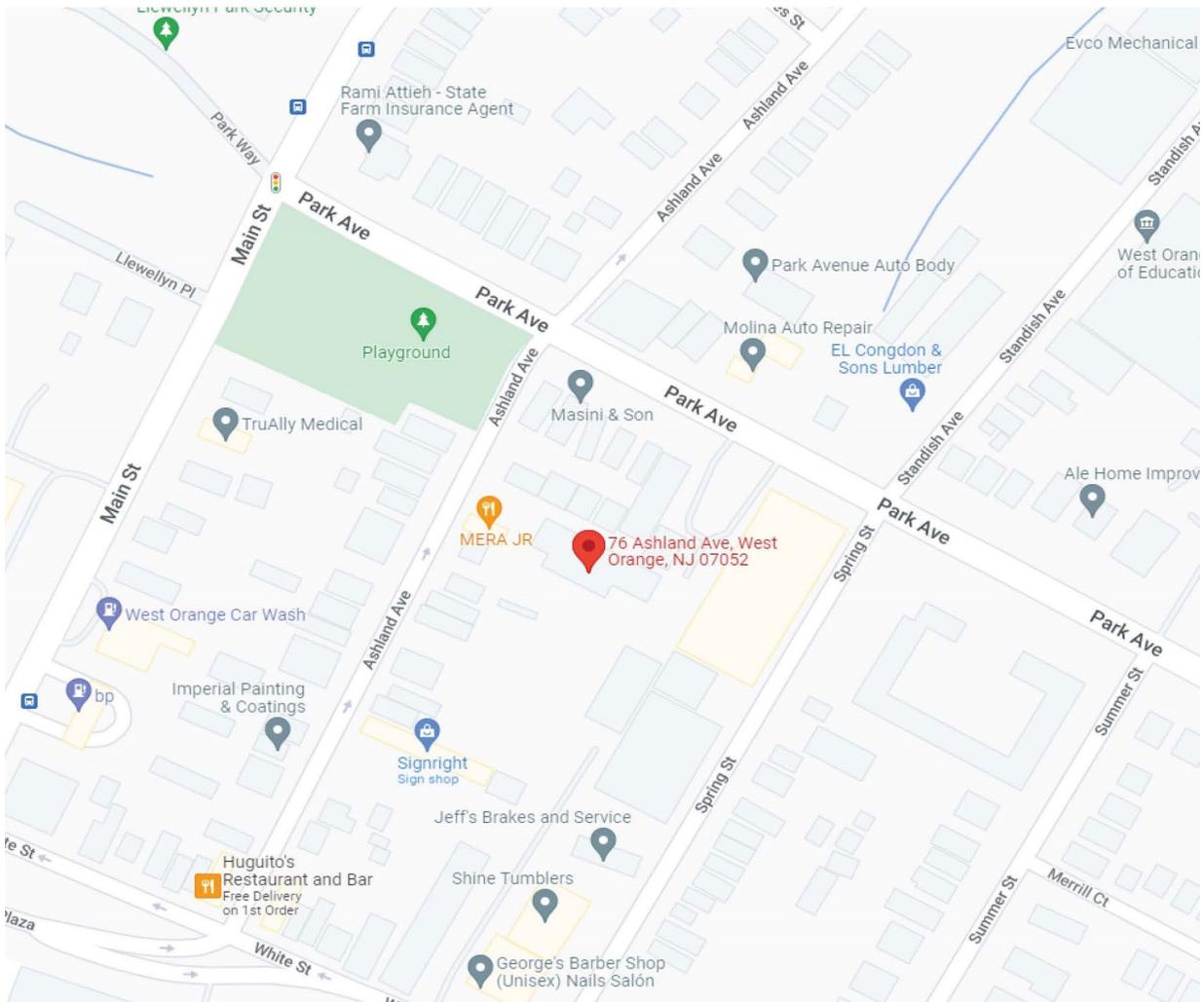
On the evening of April 12, 2022, the Taskforce conducted meeting via Zoom video teleconference with Venice Lluen, the majority owner of Peace of Mind and Paula Savchenko, the other owner of Peace of Mind to discuss the application for a Resolution of Local Support.

In addition, the Committee utilized a legal advisor to assist in evaluating Peace of Mind's application and preparation of this Evaluation Report: Mark Y. Moon, Esq. from the office of the Township Attorney, Richard D. Trenk, Esq.

Evaluation

	<u>NAME</u>	<u>PROPOSED LOCATION</u>
	Peace of Mind Construction Group, LLC	76 Ashland Avenue

Peace of Mind proposes the operation of a Cannabis Retail Microbusiness at 76 Ashland Avenue. The location is within an I Zone which includes Cannabis Cultivation and/or Manufacturing as conditional uses within the zone.





The Taskforce determined that this proposed location was suited for the proposed Cannabis Cultivation and/or Manufacturing based on the industrial use of the property that exists currently at the location. The space has large loading areas that could accommodate loading of products as needed. In addition, this proposed location's proximity to one of the proposed retail businesses could create a good symmetry between the two proposed operations without creating an adverse impact, because one would operate as retail while the other would operate solely as cultivation and/or manufacturing.

Currently the proposed location has a two-story building with a parking area also located on the property. Recently, the Township has received complaints regarding large commercial vehicles idling at or near the location and obstructing on street parking in the area. This proposed cannabis cultivation and/or manufacturing could also address and alleviate these complaints as the limited scope of the microbusiness operation would not necessitate the need for large commercial trucks as are currently used at the location.

The building offers access to the loading area in the back of the building through an access off of Park Avenue. Peace of Mind has advised that they have engaged in discussions with the owners of that property on Park Avenue to be allowed access through that property.

The Taskforce has since been advised that the Commission has already granted a conditional approval for Peace of Mind which demonstrates that this applicant has been successful in navigating the complicated process through the Commission's application process.



Peace of Mind is also a Certified Women owned and Diversely Owned Business by the State of New Jersey.

During the meeting with the Taskforce, Ms. Lluen confirmed that she was a Township resident and new mother who is raising her family in the Township with the hope of building long term roots both physically within the Township and as a contributing member of the Township community. Ms. Lluen addressed some of concerns expressed by the Taskforce regarding the potential impact that legalized cannabis would have on the youth in the Township and expressed that as a new mother, she was committed to insuring that Peace of Mind would comply with all of the regulatory requirements of the Commission and the Township, including any and all age restrictions related to access to Peace of Mind’s proposed facilities. More importantly, Ms. Lluen stated that Peace of Mind was committed to contribute to the public’s education, including education for young persons regarding cannabis and cannabis product.

The Taskforce was also impressed with Ms. Lluen’s goals of providing a model for young people of color to own, operate, and participate in their own business ventures, not necessarily in the cannabis industry.

In addition to the qualifications of Ms. Lluen and Peace of Mind, the Taskforce also expressed its desire to diversify the types of Cannabis Businesses within the Township. As the lone applicant seeking to operate a Cannabis Business that would not include retail, the Taskforce was hopeful that Peace of Mind’s success would also buttress the other cannabis businesses to operate in the Township.

The fact that Peace of Mind has already obtained a conditional license from the Commission demonstrates a strong likelihood of a viable operation moving forward.

Therefore, based on these reasons, the Taskforce recommends the issuance of a Resolution of Local Support for Peace of Mind.

Conclusion/Recommendation

Based on the Taskforce's review and evaluation of Peace of Mind's amended application and for the reasons set forth in this Evaluation Report, the Taskforce recommends to the Township Council that it adopt a Resolution of Local Support for the Suitability of a Cannabis Business consistent with N.J.A.C. 17:30-5.1(g) to the Peace of Mind.

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