

# ATTACHMENT NO. 9

## **Sweet Flower Culver City**

Community Meeting #1

Oct 15, 2019, 7-9pm

Veteran's Memorial Auditorium, Garden Room

7500~ notices sent

47 Attendees

## **Sweet Flower Owners present:**

Tim Dodd, Mike Thomson

## **Introduction by Andy Weissman**

### **Tim - History of Sweet Flower**

- Highest Scoring Applicant in Culver City
- Focus on Values - Trust & Transparency, give back to our Community, Compliance & Public Safety
- Culver City Headquarters since Oct 2018

## **Q&A**

**Community Member:** Lincoln resident - traffic on street can difficult

- Concerns expressed re Limited parking; May get congested but valet would be helpful

### **Sweet Flower Response:**

- Comply with City on Parking Reqs.
- Valet every hour of store operation, parking onsite, behind the building.
- Reroute traffic back onto Culver instead of into neighborhood.

**Community Member:** what is organizational structure and main office?

### **Sweet Flower Response:**

- Tim & Mike
- office is at this location, 10000 Culver Blvd,
- Office is upstairs once the store opens.
- The door is always open, stop in and say hello.

**Community Member:** Local resident – believes City has a Residential Corner prohibition - from corner parcels adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Understands that the location is on a corner that is on major thoroughfare and that building is zoned commercial zone - not residential.

- What will you do to be considerate of residential community with children, elderly, etc.?

### **Sweet Flower Response:**

- Both our Studio City & Melrose locations are extremely residential.
- We have done a good job working with community & council members to make sure everyone is comfortable.
- Zoning Req is 45 ft setback from residential. We are 54 ft.
- We want to fit in with the Community with little to no effect.

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- Congestion and parking – within reason, we would like to cure any of those issues, pushing traffic back onto Culver, through managed valet.
- Mitigate excess traffic flow.
- Loitering – More a perceived issues, don't happen with frequency. Improve landscaping on corner.
- Improve street lighting. Asked DBA to be brought into their organization, and we will work to light trees, similar to the rest of Downtown Culver.
- Bike parking. Alternative transportation will alleviate.
- Considered asking city for pedestrian crossing to One Culver.
- Open to suggestions. Want to be a good neighbor

**Community Member:** Lincoln Ave Concerns - How will Valet determine who is a SF customer and who is a resident? More traffic and more parking on the street.

**Sweet Flower Response:** we have sufficient on site parking to code

- Studio City lot holds 15 cars - and it's never full.
- Stores aren't fully trafficked by cars – .
- Building something very compliant, valet is a step further.
- Question predicates that we are going to be full. I don't think that's going to be the case.

**Community Member:** Is Valet complementary or will you be charging?

**Sweet Flower Response:** It's complementary.

**Community Member:** Will you host more events?

**Sweet Flower Response:** We may have a launch event with the City's permission, but we were originally using the events only to introduce ourselves within the Community.

**Community Member:** Realistically we will get traffic, what can we do now to prevent it?

- Options to look into: 1-2 ft of red curb at driveways.
- Customers want to use products on the street: Have more patrol the first few months asking people not to smoke/park in the neighborhood.

**Sweet Flower Response:** Great idea.

- The City are the people to talk to about painting the curbs, not us, but we are certainly supportive.
- In our security plan we plan to have patrol around the store, not just inside.

**Community Member:** Curious what your plans are for making sure the jobs at this location are good, safe jobs?

**Sweet Flower Response:** Working with UFCW.

- Have LPA across all of our stores.
- Offer jobs that are entry level, all the way through inventory clerks, compliance.
- Assistant sales managers are important, most of our stores have 3, and a store manager.

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- Provide jobs at all levels with professional path through the company. We have moved people around, Managers from Studio City to Melrose, opening Arts District, provide paths for progression, not just in SF, but in the industry.
- Job function is to mentor people through the company.
- Job Fairs - Launched Melrose, SC, hired 60% of our associates through Culver City Job Fair - and will do the same for DTLA, WW, and Culver.

**Community Member:** Resident on Madison - Exit only going north towards Culver?

- Can you work with the City so you cannot make a right hand turn?
- Can you make Lincoln residential parking only - with a pass?
- Residents can petition the city (with Public Works Dept)

**Sweet Flower Response:** The City would have to approve residential parking only.

- In terms of turning only left – good idea, and no objection, but we have to work with the City.
- Have to work with land owner and City but seems like a fair request.

**Community Member:** Are you a profitable business?

- Do you have a sale price?

**Sweet Flower Response:** Yes we are profitable – No we are not for sale.

- Mike and I started SF a year ago.
- Build something sustainable, that we can be proud of and create a legacy around it.
- There's a gap in LA retail.
- We're hyper local and focused on building the business here.
- There are restrictions in transferability of a license. Every local jurisdiction has restrictions.

**Community Member:** Logistical Question - Predominantly cash business - how do you deal with all the cash.

**Sweet Flower Response:** Accept debit & cash. Debit is ~ 40% of sales.

- One of very few companies with transparent banking.
- Roll armored cars once a week to federal reserve and put into our bank. So we won't be sitting on cash.
- Because we've taken inventory exchange away, and have downtown LA, what has been traditionally a cash exchange at the store, we have removed that from the equation in Culver City.

**Community Member:** How much is this costing you vs how much you've donated to the City?

**Sweet Flower Response:** Been occupying the building for a year. .

- It's hard to put a ballpark figure on it,
- Overall number, fit out, security, compliance is not cheap. Not minor undertakings, but focused on doing well for the city and community

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**Community Member:** Why does Culver City need a store like this?

**Sweet Flower Response:** We are responding to Culver's request for applicants.

- One of 23 applicants. One of 8, then 1 of 3, the highest scoring applicant due to community engagement and operations.
- Looked at other locations - Culver was number 1.
- Only location we've applied and moved team into the city way before – almost a full year - before we knew if we would get our license.

**Community Member:** Why this spot? There's other locations No objections to Cannabis in Culver, concern is adjacency

**Sweet Flower Response:** City is very prescriptive about planning process and locations.

- Looked at every location possible. Spent significant time looking.
- Part of application was detailed zoning, setbacks to schools, parks, sensitive receptors.
- Location is locked, through the process.
- We are 100% compliant with the zoning ordinance.
- Comes down to doing things compliantly, and sensitive to neighborhood.
- Bent over backwards to help.
- Not just giving money but time and resources to charities.
- Advisory board of 5013cs in Culver. Happy to add a local resident
- Picked up mantle of the City. Extremely responsible member of the community

**Community Member:** What type of Community Involvement will you be doing as a Dispensary

**Sweet Flower Response:** Culver Education Foundation, Upward Bound House, Hosted north culver chabad for high holidays, Rosie's Foundation, black coop investment fund in Inglewood. Exchange Club. Quite a list. Sponsored local book clubs.

- Have a community room which we will make available to local groups that want to meet in our store during business hours.
- Don't believe in just writing checks. We want to do more than that.
- Committed percentage of sales each year to continued investments.
- Not our intention to determine who receives the funding. Advisory Board will channel those funds.
- Efforts in Culver City may be addressing issue different than issues that arise in Melrose & DTLA, etc.
- We are happy to have a neighborhood liaison join our Advisory Board. A seat at the table on an ongoing basis.
- Won't hang green crosses, won't look like a dispensary.
- Invite anyone to come to Melrose, pop in, doesn't smell. Doesn't read like a dispensary.

**Community Member:** How do you plan to do Marketing?

**Sweet Flower Response:** Most is digital. No billboards in Culver City.

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- Strict regulations - highly targeted to age-appropriate, not traditional communication methods.
- Get the word out through social media.
- Specific digital websites, age-appropriate over 21, apps for people to find dispensaries.

**Community Member:** Who are your customers?

**Sweet Flower Response:** People like the people in this room.

- No particular type. Open to everyone. People self-select, they don't go there if they are a certain type of customer.
- A lot of people coming in, older than you'd expect, who aren't coming in to get high. They can't sleep. Injury, pain relief, topical to help
- We don't have a serious contingent of people "coming in to get high". There are many stores to serve that crowd and that's not Sweet Flower.
- They're all kinds of people. Usually just coming in for treatment they find they can't get from percocet or oxycontin.
- Licensed goods - tested, and compliant.

**Community Member:** Book Club uses your space - all 12 of us. Saves the neighborhood space. We've had the club for 10 yrs. Thank you

**Sweet Flower Response:** Trying to mitigate our impacts. Thank you!

## **Sweet Flower Culver City**

Community Meeting #2

July 29, 2020, 5-7pm

Virtual Meeting - ZOOM

7500~ notices sent

18 Attendees; 3 speakers

### **Sweet Flower Owners present:**

Tim Dodd

#### **Tim - History of Sweet Flower**

- Highest scoring applicant in Culver City
- Opened four LA stores since Culver City process began – over 1600 5 star customer reviews
- Focus on Values - Trust & Transparency, give back to our Community, Compliance & Public Safety
- Culver City Headquarters since Oct 2018
- *Addressed all community concerns since prior community meeting 1 via direct engagement with community members*

#### **Q&A**

**Community Member:** Culver Blvd. resident - traffic on street can difficult

- Concerns expressed re removal of Culver Blvd. street parking for valet stand

#### **Sweet Flower Response:**

- Complaint based on misunderstanding of valet; valet is on Lincoln in current loading zone and will not take street parking on Culver
- Noted that street parking is public parking, not reserved
- Noted that Culver Blvd is commercially zoned; community member agreed
- *Dodd followed up repeatedly with this community member after meeting to address her misunderstanding of the valet parking proposal*

**Community Member:** Local resident – asked about average in store duration; thanked Sweet Flower for working with Upward Bound House

**Sweet Flower Response:** Appreciated the thanks; average in store visit is 15-30 minutes

**Community Member:** Noted he was a fan of Sweet Flower and was looking forward to our opening