

**From:** Knights of Columbus #41 <grandknight41@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Sunday, January 28, 2024 7:34 PM

**To:** AT&T Mail Service <oceanvu222@sbcglobal.net>; Capp, Lesley <LCapp@StamfordCT.gov>

**Subject:** Re: ZB Application #223-45- AYR Wellness Inc., 417 Shippan Ave.

Hi Al,

I sent the news article to all members and I informed Father Peter at Star of the Sea. Everyone needs to be informed to appear with facts for the Zoom presentation on Tuesday night.

Regards,

Vito Quivelli

Grand Knight

Saint Augustin, Council 41

Stamford, CT 06902

Grandknight41@gmail

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**From:** AT&T Mail Service <oceanvu222@sbcglobal.net>

**Sent:** Sunday, January 28, 2024 5:05:54 PM

**To:** lcapp@stamfordct.gov <lcapp@stamfordct.gov>

**Subject:** ZB Application #223-45- AYR Wellness Inc., 417 Shippan Ave.

Dear Members of the Planning Board,

I am a member of the Knights of Columbus and a resident of Shippan Point. My family and I are opposed to the above application. Our Community Center at the Knights of Columbus holds many events for families and children weekly.

The Cannabis Industry is trying to invade all neighborhoods and we do not want them at 417 Shippan Ave. Stamford, CT. Customers of the Cannabis Industry have several locations in Stamford and do not need another one.

Some of the people who are customers of these locations are of Questionable character. Let me ask all of you, would you want another Cannabis Location in your neighborhoods? Enough said.

Al Koproski & Family

222 Ocean Drive East

**From:** Michael Molgano <mike\_molgano@att.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 28, 2024 8:43 PM  
**To:** Capp, Lesley <LCapp@StamfordCT.gov>  
**Subject:** ZB APPLICATION #223-45 - AYR WELLNESS, INC. - 417 SHIPPAN AVENUE

Dear Chair Theresa Dell, Vice-Chair Jay Tepper, Board Members Michael Buccino, Jennifer Godzeno, Michael A. Totilo, and Alternates William M. Levin and Stephen Perry:

I am writing to strongly urge the Planning Board oppose ZB APPLICATION #223-45 - AYR WELLNESS, INC. - 417 SHIPPAN AVENUE, referred to the Board by the Zoning Board. This pertains to the request for a special permit to operate a hybrid cannabis retail facility servicing both medical patients and adult-use consumers at 417 Shippan Avenue.

Besides the obvious elephant in the room: the Federal Government maintaining cannabis to be classified as a Schedule I substance and the American Bar Association clearly stating, "Arguably, a lawyer advising a cannabis company is advising the violation of law and breaking the professional oath they took upon being sworn into the Bar,"<sup>1</sup> my concern is how this location could ever have been proposed from the onset.

The proposed location of 417 Shippan Avenue is in very close proximity to several recreational facilities used by children, including Cummings Beach, softball and Little League fields and soccer fields. It is virtually right next door to the Knights of Columbus, who frequently hold events for children.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports<sup>2</sup>:

- 3 in 10 people who use marijuana have marijuana use disorder.
- People who have marijuana use disorder may also be at a higher risk of other negative consequences, such as problems with attention, memory, and learning.
- Marijuana use directly affects brain function - specifically the parts of the brain responsible for memory, learning, attention, decision-making, coordination, emotions, and reaction time.
- Recent marijuana use (defined as within 24 hours) in youth and adults has an immediate impact on thinking, attention, memory, coordination, movement, and time perception.
- Marijuana affects brain development.
- Smoked marijuana delivers THC and other cannabinoids to the body, but it also delivers harmful substances, including many of the same toxins and carcinogens (cancer-causing chemicals) found in tobacco smoke.

These are just a few of the many health effects of marijuana.

It is quite evident the negatives to using marijuana far outweigh the positives, but sadly, the enticement to revenue prevailed over whatever little commonsense remains in Hartford.

If it is Stamford's intent to establish cannabis retail facilities throughout the City, they should never be located anywhere near where children live, play or recreate. If anything, 417 Shippan Avenue and its surroundings should be declared a DRUG FREE ZONE.

Sincerely,  
Michael L. Molgano  
10 Hazelwood Lane  
Stamford, CT 06905

<sup>1</sup>Kellogg, A, Anderson, C, Michiels, M. (2022, March 21). A Cannabis Conflict of Law: Federal vs. State Law. [https://www.americanbar.org/groups/business\\_law/resources/business-law-today/2022-april/a-cannabis-conflict-of-law-federal-vs-state-law/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/business_law/resources/business-law-today/2022-april/a-cannabis-conflict-of-law-federal-vs-state-law/)

<sup>2</sup>CDC (2021, June 2). Health Effects of Marijuana. <https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/health-effects/index.html>

From: Sarah Black <sarahoblack@yahoo.com>  
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2024 5:17 PM  
To: Capp, Lesley <LCapp@StamfordCT.gov>  
Subject: Ayr Wellness at 417 Shippan Avenue

To Whom it May Concern-

I would like to express my deep concern about the cannabis retail facility proposed for 417 Shippan Ave. I think this is a terrible place for this type of facility very close to the beaches where children and the community gathers. Adult users will make their purchases at this retail facility and then go smoke at the beaches. The beaches and parks will smell of weed, which will affect others enjoyment at the parks. Stamford does not need to bring this to our community. It is only bring adult users of cannabis down into our community. Cannabis is just a gateway drug that will only bring harder drug use to our area.

Thank you for your consideration.  
Best,  
Sarah Black



David M. Cohen  
dcohen@wrkk.com | 203-433-0519

January 30, 2024

Planning Board  
Stamford Government Center  
888 Washington Blvd., 7th Floor  
Stamford, CT 06901

Re: 417 Shippan Avenue

Dear Planning Board Members:

Please consider this opposition to the proposal for a Special Permit to operate a cannabis retail facility selling to adult-use consumers as well as medical patients to be located at 417 Shippan Avenue. My wife and I reside at 1499 Newfield Avenue in Stamford. I serve on Board of Directors of Building One Community ("B1C"), which is located adjacent to the premises under consideration at the same address, 417 Shippan Avenue, and I am frequently at this location as part of my responsibilities on the Board. I am a practicing attorney, but I write in my personal capacity and not on behalf of any client.

When a business seeks approval from the Stamford land use boards for a new use requiring specialized approval, it has become customary for the enterprise to communicate with neighbors in advance to discuss its plans in an effort to harmonize them with the neighborhood concerns. In this case, AYR Wellness, which seeks to share not just the neighborhood but a building with B1C, never communicated anything in advance of this application. Without a doubt, AYR Wellness realized that its plans are absolutely incompatible with the needs of a child-centered and family-centered public service agency like B1C, to the extent that any discussion was pointless. This cynical assessment was entirely accurate.

You may be aware that B1C is the nonprofit organization with the responsibility for integrating immigrants into the Stamford community since 2011. It has served 17,000 immigrants from 124 different countries during its existence through the efforts of its paid staff and hundreds of volunteers. It offers English language learning and adult literacy training, citizenship education, vocational programs, immigration legal services, family and individual support and counseling and school services. In late 2022, the agency opened its new 2-story headquarters at 417 Shippan Avenue, adjacent to what was then a Bank of America branch that shares the same building. AYR Wellness seeks to replace the bank branch with a cannabis dispensary. The application before you refers to the B1C facility merely as office space, which is not accurate. The B1C facility houses educational programs, legal services, school tutoring, job training



and placement, family programming, lectures, and a host of other in-person services every day. A retail business dispensing marijuana to walk-in customers is inimical to the health, safety, and peaceful enjoyment of B1C in its new home and also its clients, families, staff, and volunteers on numerous grounds, including the following:

- B1C serves the needs of children at all times, and its facility is devoted to families with children in many respects. It has 35-40 students in its headquarters for homework help and tutoring on a daily basis. It offers child care for young children while their parents are attending classes or are in B1C headquarters for other reasons. Many of its clients are families who bring their children with them when they come for training or counseling or vocational services because they lack child care elsewhere. Placing a retail marijuana dispensary adjacent to a child-centric family service agency is directly contrary to the public interest. The regulations forbid this type of use proximate to a school; schoolchildren are entitled to comparable protection when they visit B1C.

- B1C is able to meet the needs of its large group of clients because it has the benefit of hundreds of volunteers, among whom are approximately 200 youths from Stamford and surrounding suburbs who provide homework help, tutoring, and other services. Most parents of these youth volunteers, and many schools they attend, will not be willing to send adolescents to perform public service to a facility like the applicant's, whether or not there are lines of customers waiting outside as has been evident with similar facilities in our community. Experience has taught that having youth volunteers brings extraordinary benefits not only to the foreign-born young people who receive help, but also to the children learning public service by providing it. Disrupting this dynamic in the manner proposed by the applicant will destroy untold student relationships of which Stamford and B1C have been proud to create.

- B1C is not the only child-oriented service at this location. The application has ignored not only the significance of B1C's presence but also that of the AmeriCares Free Clinic of Stamford and the Child Guidance Center, both of which are located at 401 Shippan Avenue, the adjacent building that shares the same parking lot as 417 Shippan Avenue. Similarly, Stamford Martial Arts, which is focused on classes for young people and is located at 379 Shippan Avenue, at the other side of the common parking lot.

- It is troubling not only that the applicant has chosen to place its business among so many child- and family-service agencies, but also that it will be positioned directly across the street from the basketball and tennis courts and baseball and softball fields of Cummings Beach. Young people fill the park throughout the spring, summer, and fall, and B1C's summer youth program walks its children to the park – directly in front of the proposed dispensary – every summer day. It is not unfair to question



whether this location has been selected by the applicant because it will be an attractive nuisance for young people who frequent Cummings Beach and its playing fields.

- An important B1C client group is Stamford's substantial population of day workers, who line up for casual employment near I-95 daily and, in the winter months or when they cannot find work, walk to B1C for educational and work training programs, computer access, companionship and warmth. Those day workers, for whom B1C offers a lifeline, are barred from access to B1C's programs if they are under the influence of drugs, including marijuana. In other words, a day worker patronizing AYR Wellness and using its products will be barred from a wealth of vital educational, social, and vocational services offered by its neighbor. B1C counsels day workers with drug issues to take advantage of the rehabilitation services provided by Liberation Programs – placing a marijuana dispensary directly on their path to B1C's door is tantamount to cruelty.

- Cannabis sales have been legalized in Connecticut, but under federal law, possession of marijuana is a crime. Noncitizens who admit to having possessed marijuana – even if it is legal in their state of residence – can be found inadmissible, denied entry to the United States, or have their application for lawful status (a green card) or naturalization as a citizen denied and, in some circumstances, can make a lawful permanent resident deportable, even if no crime has been committed. Possession of product dispensed by AYR Wellness, in other words, will sabotage the lawful status that immigrants come to B1C and often struggle for years to achieve.

This application represents the antithesis of good planning for the lawful uses in the Stamford community surrounding the property, all of which will be injured by an approval. Under the circumstances, a recommended denial to the Zoning Board is absolutely in the public interest.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,  
Wofsey, Rosen, Kweskin & Kuriansky, LLP

By:   
David M. Cohen

**From:** Don Strait <DStrait@B1C.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 30, 2024 3:22 PM  
**To:** Capp, Lesley <LCapp@StamfordCT.gov>  
**Subject:** Letter concerning application at 417 Shippan Avenue

Dear Ms. Capp,

Building One Community respectfully submits the attached letter to the Planning Board from Anka Badurina, PhD, executive director, concerning the proposed cannabis store at 417 Shippan Avenue, which is on the Planning Board's meeting agenda for tonight. Our organization, Building One Community, has its main office in the same building. In addition, Karen Gottlieb, Executive Director of Americares Free Clinics, asked us to submit the following statement:

"Americares services clients at our office adjacent to the proposed site of the cannabis retail facility (401 Shippan Avenue). It is a non-profit organization providing vital health care to the community's low-income, uninsured residents. Americares Free Clinic of Stamford provides direct medical care to those 18 years and older who are often accompanied by family members. We support the statements made by B1C and share their concerns."

Sincerely yours,

Don

**Don Strait**

**Consultant – Advocacy**

Pronouns: he/his ([what's this?](#))

B1C office days: Mon-Fri



**Building One Community**  
*The Center for Immigrant Opportunity*  
**NEW** 417 Shippan Avenue, Stamford, CT 06902 &  
75 Selleck Street, Stamford CT 06902  
Tel. 203-674-8585  
[www.B1C.org](http://www.B1C.org)

[Here's What's Happening in January at B1C | Volunteer Today!](#)  
[You Can Transform Lives - Support Our Annual Appeal](#)



January 30, 2024

Planning Board  
City of Stamford  
Stamford Government Center  
888 Washington Blvd., 7th Floor  
Stamford, CT 06901

Re: Application 223-45 – AYR Wellness Inc, 417 Shippan Avenue, Special Permit

To the Members of the Planning Board,

I am writing in reference to the above-captioned Application for a Special Permit, referred by the Land Use Bureau to the Planning Board for an advisory report. We recognize that the Planning Board's rules do not provide for public comment at its meeting tonight, but we respectfully wish to correct a misimpression that may have been created by the Application, as explained below.

Building One Community's (B1C) main office is located at 417 Shippan Avenue, in the same building in which the applicant seeks to operate a cannabis retail facility. B1C is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to advance the successful integration of immigrants and their families. A significant component of our work is to provide academic enrichment to Stamford Public School children through daily homework support every afternoon, and an intensive summer program. Part of the activities of our summer program involve taking the students to the park across the street from where the cannabis store is being proposed. In 2023, B1C served at least 95 children directly in these and other programs. In addition, clients for our other services often come to our office accompanied by their children.

We believe the proposed cannabis facility would have a serious detrimental impact on the children we serve. Each child visiting B1C would be within feet of the cannabis store and its patrons. (In our submission later to the Zoning Board, we will also describe potential impacts on our adult clients.)

Unfortunately, the application does not recognize these potential impacts, only stating in paragraph 2 that "the immediate area is characterized by a variety of commercial uses including a bank, funeral home, restaurants, catering center, self storage facility as well as others." This statement fails to mention B1C, which is in the *same small building* as the proposed cannabis store. B1C's and the cannabis store's entrances would be immediately adjacent to one another and the cannabis store's emergency exit would empty into our main entrance.



In addition, the social service organizations Child Guidance Center and Americares serve clients in the building next door to 417 Shippan Avenue. We also note that Cummings Park, one of Stamford's largest public parks and site of many playing fields for children, is across the street from the proposed store.

Connecticut and Stamford laws and regulations recognize the importance of protecting children from excessive exposure to cannabis, by prohibiting the siting of cannabis facilities near schools. Our organizations, like schools, educate and serve children and families. We believe siting a cannabis store at the proposed location would be harmful to those we serve and contrary to the intent and spirit of our laws.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anka Badurina". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Anka Badurina, PhD  
Executive Director