

From: John McCowen
To: COBSupport
Date: 5/7/2018 1:37 PM
Subject: Fwd: Request to Change Dispensary Set-Back Policy

FYI: Board correspondence sent to the Board but not the full distribution list.

>>> Martin Lewis <mwlewis4241@gmail.com> 5/7/2018 1:16 PM >>>

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

Ukiah CA 95482

May 7, 2018

Dear Honorable Board Members:

My name is Martin Lewis and I am a member of the board of directors of Love In It, a cannabis dispensary located in the village of Mendocino. I am writing to urge you to consider removing or reducing the county's policy of 1,000-foot set-backs from churches so that our dispensary can be relocated to a new building on Main Street.

The aim of the board of directors is to transform Love In It into an up-scale dispensary, to be called Sol de Mendocino, that will showcase the products of artisanal cannabis growers in Anderson Valley. Just as the climate of Anderson Valley allows the cultivation of high-quality pinot noir grapes, so too it enables the production of premier cannabis. This is not a matter of potency but rather one of flavor and aroma: the warm days and cool nights provide an ideal environment for the generation and retention of the aromatic terpenes that impart desirable tastes and smells. We are currently working with a group of local farmers to take advantage of this unique climate by branding and labeling superior Anderson Valley products that can sell at a premium price.

With full legalization seemingly pending even at the national level, the cannabis industry is undergoing rapid market differentiation. The Anderson Valley cultivators with whom we are working think that their only hope of economic survival is moving to the higher end of the market. Like local wineries, they cannot compete on price with Central Valley operations, but they can compete on quality. If our plan succeeds, Anderson Valley could become a celebrated niche producer of premium cannabis, with Sol de Mendocino serving as its local showcase. We believe that a dispensary with such an orientation would prove beneficial to the Main Street business community. Our current store already attracts many affluent consumers from both the local region and the Bay Area, and since adult-use was legalized in January we have seen a significant influx of foreign tourists. These customers have been enthusiastic about our service, feeling that it enhances their Mendocino experience.

The planned transformation of our dispensary depends on our ability to relocate, as we are currently jammed into a tiny facility in an out-of-the-way location. In fact, our very survival probably requires a move, as our existing store does not have a back entrance and is thus non-compliant with state regulations. We have looked for alternatives, but they are almost impossible to obtain. The proposed Main Street location, purchased by Mark and Renee Gander expressly for this purpose, would, on the other hand, be ideal, allowing us to create an upmarket dispensary geared to a high-end clientele, as befits a business on Main Street in the village of Mendocino.

I must admit that I am not currently a full-time resident of Mendocino County, as I am employed as a senior lecturer in world history and geography at Stanford University. I do, however, spend an average of three days a week in Anderson Valley, where my wife and I own property and maintain a home. When we retire in a few years, we will move north. My relationship with Mendocino county, moreover, goes back to the early 1960s, when I was a young child. My parents then purchased a very small share of a very large ranch (29,000 acres) on the Middle Fork of the Eel River near Covelo, in hopes that the planned Dos Rios dam would create valuable recreational property. Although my parents were disappointed when the dam was cancelled, I was thrilled, as the happiest times of my childhood occurred when camping on the Eel River. When my wife and I moved back to California in 2002, after living for years in North Carolina, we immediately purchased property in Mendocino county, as we knew that it would be our eventual retirement destination.

If allowed to relocate on Main Street, Sol de Mendocino could become a destination dispensary, noted for its choice product line offered in a beautifully appointed store, attracting customers from across the state, country, and world. As such, we think that it could prove to be a significant asset both to the county and village of Mendocino.

Sincerely,
Martin Lewis