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Dispensary River Edge

April 22, 2026

Borough of River Edge
705 Kinderkamack Road
River Edge, NJ 07661

Re: Updated Signage Approval for Sweetspot River Edge LLC

1. Introduction:

The purpose of this Letter is to provide the Board with review of the signage request for the property known as 75 Rte. 4, River Edge, NJ 07661 for “Sweetspot Dispensary”. The Planning Board granted the initial approval by resolution on October 9, 2024. Sweetspot Dispensary is looking to obtain approval for updated signage on the property to (i) erect a main sign, (ii) erect secondary signage on each other ends of the building, and (iii) erect additional wayfinding signage on a pre-existing ground sign. *Attached please find the pertinent land use board planning application pages, proposed signage, and update site plans.*

2. Zoning Regulations:

The applicant is requesting a number of (c) variances from Chapter 416 the zone code of the Borough. Article X sets forth the regulations for signs as applicable here. The following details the specific regulations:

- a. § 416-53. C (3) sets forth a maximum of 20 square feet. It states that signs may not be “*larger than 20 square feet: A sign composed of individual letters applied to the building itself, measured by the smallest rectangle which encloses the letters, figures and symbols (logo, design, etc.)*.” The proposal requires variances from this section.
- b. §416-53C(7) states that “*each retail or other permitted establishment may have one sign and a second sign on the building if located on a corner lot. The main sign shall be located on the wall surface of building's principal frontage or facade. The second sign shall be located on the wall facing the other street.*” It should be noted that Section 416-54(C) permits each business or establishment shall be allowed one secondary identifying sign at its rear/corner or secondary entrance. This sign shall not exceed one square foot, shall not be illuminated and may be of the same design and style as the establishment's identifying sign. It further states that all main, identifying and secondary signs shall comply with all other regulations of these ordinances.
- c. §416-53C(8) *All signs shall be Uniform in style and design, except that no second sign, if allowed, shall exceed 50% of the size of the main sign.*
- d. §416-55(A) Multiple-tenanted building may, upon approval of the Planning Board, be granted a variance to the maximum regulations set forth in the sign ordinance (number of signs and sign area.). § 416-55(C) States that in applying comprehensive sign design, the Planning Board shall consider but will not be limited to such factors as:
 1. The extent of variation to the regulations of this chapter;
 2. The effect of the sign on neighboring properties;
 3. The proportion of sign area to the proportion of wall area where the sign is to be located;

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4. The positioning of the sign within the architectural framework of the building.
- e. Main Signs: Shopping Center. This section of the ordinance is the basis for the review of the original approval granted by the Planning board in 2007. Section 416-54. B. States that the shopping center may have either a single main sign containing the names (and/or trademarks) of each establishment located therein, or individual main signs, one for each establishment. Should the shopping center have one main sign, each business or establishment shall be allowed one identifying sign. § 416-54(2)(a) States that this is a sign on a wall or facade surface adjoining the establishment thereby identifying each establishment's location within the shopping center. The area of such sign shall not exceed one square foot for every five feet of the establishment's frontage and shall not exceed the maximum areas set forth in §§ 416,53B and C(1) through (3) of this chapter, as noted above the applicant requires a variance from section 416-53C(3).

3. Wayfinding Signage

As reflected in the prior Resolution adopted by the governing body, the Council expressly recognized that additional wayfinding signage is appropriate for this property and serves an important safety function. Specifically, the Resolution states: “The proposed additional wayfinding signs would help the Property function better than strict compliance with the conditional use standards. “The subject property presents unique operational challenges. The building is located approximately 250 feet from the designated entrance, and that entrance occurs immediately following a turn along Route 4, a high-speed roadway.

Customers have consistently reported difficulty identifying the correct point of entry, creating both operational inefficiencies and legitimate public safety concerns. The proposed updated wayfinding sign (as shown on the PDF) is intended to provide clear advanced notice, allowing drivers sufficient time to safely position themselves in the appropriate lane prior to reaching the entrance. The proposed sign location has been informally reviewed with the River Edge Police Department.

Accordingly, the Applicant is seeking formal Board approval for the proposed updated wayfinding signage. The Applicant’s plan is to position the sign underneath a pre-existing ground sign (The Regency), ensuring that it does not interfere with sightlines or create any traffic safety hazard. The requested wayfinding signage is narrowly tailored, safety-driven, and fully consistent with both the intent of the prior Resolution and the purposes of the Municipal Land Use Law, as it will materially improve site functionality, traffic flow, and public safety without creating any adverse impacts.

4. Statutory Criteria - C Variances.

The applicant has requested variances pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70(C). The applicant requesting a variances pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70(C)2, commonly known as a “(C)2” variance. An applicant requesting a C(2) variance must prove the following: 1) that the granting of the variance will advance the intents and purposes of the Municipal Land Use Law; 2) that the benefits of granting the variance substantially outweigh any potential detriments; and 3) address the negative criteria. Pursuant to court decisions concerning the C(2) variance, the applicant must show how the proposal represents a better zoning alternative for the property than the existing requirements of the district. In addressing this issue, the applicant must show how the deviation would benefit the surrounding neighborhood or community as a whole.

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- a. How would the strict application of the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships inconsistent with its general purpose and intent?

Sweetspot requests a variance be granted for the square footage of the main sign (50sq/ft requested) and secondary signs (25sq/ft each) in order to be allowed to use signage that is clearly visible to traffic.

The literal application of the zoning regulations limiting the total square footage of the signage, reducing the visibility and limiting the recognition of the building and customer entrance. By clearly identifying the building, it will help with traffic flow on route 4 and help to utilize their allotted parking stalls to reduce overcrowding in adjacent parking areas.

The requested variance is the minimum variance necessary to allow the signage to be clearly visible to traffic. The proposed signs will allow Sweetspot to have an easily recognizable image for their customers and will maintain the design intent of the Resolution to provide a sign that is in keeping with the design of the building and does not detract from the surrounding buildings. The variance as requested is specifically contemplated by the Comprehensive Sign Ordinance.

- b. Are there exceptional circumstances or conditions applicable to the property involved or to the intended use or development of the property that do not generally apply to other properties in the same zone or neighborhood?

Not Applicable – for reference, other properties in the zone have significantly larger signage.

- c. What are the benefits of the proposed application and how would the benefits substantially outweigh any detriments?

The proposed signs are of the same type which the Applicant utilizes at its stores throughout the United States. Given the size of the building, the signs are entirely appropriate and are within the intentions of the Zoning Ordinance.

Granting the variance would not grant any significant privileges, which are denied to others in the Borough, but would allow Sweetspot Dispensary to utilize appropriate sized signage, similar to already approved by the Borough for other businesses. The variance would not result in a sign that interferes with road or highway visibility or obstruct or otherwise interfere with the safe and orderly movement of traffic. The variance such as requested is specifically contemplated by the provisions of the Comprehensive Sign Ordinance. The proposed sign plans are being submitted herewith, and are further shown in the pdf.

Respectfully Submitted,

Benjamin Herbst