



City of Gardner - *Executive Department*  
Mayor Michael J. Nicholson

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March 29, 2023

Hon. Elizabeth J. Kazinskas, Council President  
And City Councilors  
Gardner City Hall, Rm 121  
95 Pleasant St  
Gardner, MA 01440

Mr. Mark Schafron, Chair  
And Planning Board Members  
Gardner City Hall, Manca Annex, Rm 201  
115 Pleasant St  
Gardner, MA 01440

RE: Written Testimony: Item #10893: An Ordinance to Amend the Code of the City of Gardner, Chapter 675 thereof, entitled "Zoning," to amend Section 1070 thereof, entitled "Marijuana Establishments" to increase the quota allowed by the Code of the City of Gardner

Dear Madam President, Councilors, Mr. Chairman, and Planning Board Members,

I am writing in support of the aforementioned zoning amendment proposal.

When the retail sale of cannabis products was legalized in the Commonwealth in 2019, several municipalities, including Gardner, took steps to heavily regulate the industry since we didn't really know what would happen once the cannabis industry became legalized.

Since then we have seen that commercial enterprises like these do not cause as much of a strain on our services as we had originally been concerned about and have not been a public safety concern at all for us.

This proposal seeks to loosen the market constraints in the City and simply let the economic market be the market. If the City does not have the capability of handling more up to four (4) retail cannabis stores, then the market will correct itself for that.

An example of this can be seen with the regular tobacco/vape smoke shops that used to exist in the Downtown area. These businesses, unregulated in terms of number of facilities that could open in the City, were not marketed by the City and simply opened and then consolidated from five (5) to one (1) on their own because that was all the market was able to carry.

The purpose of this amendment, while it also provides a financial benefit to the City through statutorily required sales tax and host community agreement fees, is simply to relax some of the regulations placed on this industry and let the City's economy play itself out. This does still regulate the retail cannabis industry to four (4) locations, but it at least loosens the restriction of only being able to allow two (2) locations in the City.

Respectfully,

Michael J. Nicholson  
Mayor, City of Gardner