Neighborhood Responsibility Plan--Proposed

A Neighborhood Responsibility Plan is a two-way document outlining agreements between potential applicants and community councils in which the businesses are seeking special land use permits. The intent behind a neighborhood responsibility plan is to establish a reasonable process of communication between proposed business owners and community councils in order to support the successful establishment and operation of cannabis businesses in Anchorage while protecting the interests of local communities. In order for these emerging businesses to successfully integrate into existing neighborhoods, it is reasonable to establish performance expectations of proposed businesses as well as of community councils.

With proper planning and communication, it is fair to expect that preventable conflicts that might from time to time arise between businesses and neighborhoods can be anticipated and avoided. Should more complex issues arise, having an established and pre-negotiated process to manage conflicts can ensure fair and efficient resolution of any but the most challenging of problems.

A well-developed Neighborhood Responsibility Plan can go a long way to ensuring the development of thriving businesses in healthy communities.

Someone who wants to open a Cannabis Business should make notice to the council in writing as soon as they know that they have located the likely facility. An applicant cannot make application for a local license until it has hosted a community meeting. In order to begin the application process, it is recommended that a potential applicant should attend and participate in the regular business of the local community council.

In advance of the 21-day public notice period, the applicant should provide the following information in writing to the board:

- Name of Business
- Name of Owner
- Address of proposed location
- Contact info for owner
- Type of Business (Cultivator, Producer, Testing Facility, Retail Store)
- Estimated/Preferred date of application

Once the Board has received the request to be included on the agenda, if possible, the Council will place the matter on the next regular meeting agenda or schedule a special meeting to meet

the 21 day response requirement. If the council is not responsive, the applicant must host a public meeting advertised to those within 500 feet of the proposed location. An Invitation shall also be sent to the community council.

While the law requires a public meeting, it does not require a meeting with community councils. If a community council desires to have input in the application process, it has a responsibility to provide the opportunity for a potential applicant to be heard in a fair and reasonable manner. It is important to note that the power of a community council is advisory in nature. It can share its opinion with the Mayor, its representatives on the Assembly, or the various commissions but it does not have the authority to block or ban an operation. In order for a council to fairly exercise its authority, its process must be fair and reasonable.

The following describes the basic information that should be included in a well-developed Neighborhood Responsibility Plan:

A Neighborhood Responsibility Plan is a narrative document agreed upon by both the Applicant and the Community Council that shall at the minimum address the following:

(A) Establish a point of contact, whose name and contact information shall be clearly posted on the outside of the store.
(B) Establish the preferred method of communication to the Community Council including point of contact and how to contact them.
(C) Provide a schedule of outreach to the surrounding area (residents and property owners within 500 feet) and the community council, to be not less than one contact per year.
(D) Provide a dispute resolution process: how problems/issues/disputes brought forward by neighbors will be addressed, such as meeting with the complainant or discussing the issue at a community council meeting.
(E) Establish two individuals who are formally allowed to speak for the business at a Community Council meeting.
(F) Identify the frequency the applicant will attend Council meetings. It is recommended at least once every six months.
(G) Other matters of concern identified by either the applicant or the council.

The intent and purpose of the Neighborhood Responsibility Plan process is to help applicants and communities to establish communication in advance in order to avoid potential pitfalls and to establish a process for working through challenges that may arise from time to time. The thoughtful time invested by business owners and communities will pay dividends in the establishment of thriving businesses in healthy neighborhoods.