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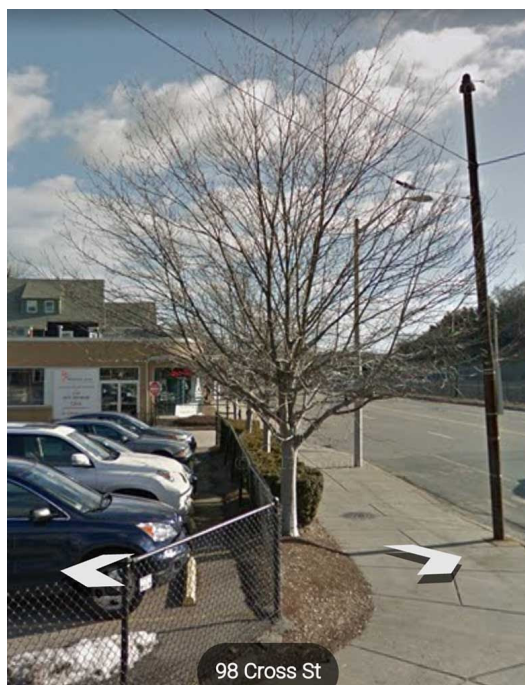
Community meeting on West Newton retail marijuana Thursday, July 18, 7pm at First Unitarian Church

1 message

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Wed, Jul 17, 2019 at 5:48 AM

Community meeting on West Newton retail marijuana store, Thursday, July 18, 7pm, First Unitarian Church



I said I wouldn't deluge you with frequent emails, but for those not on the West Newton Neighborhood or Unite! West Newton Google Groups, I wanted to make sure you knew about Thursday night's community meeting hosted by Ascend Mass, LLC, the applicant to open a retail marijuana establishment at the former Beacon Hill Athletic Club building at 1089 Washington Street, also known as 58 Cross Street, one block east of Trader Joe's.

The meeting will be at the First Unitarian Universalist Society in Newton, at 1326 Washington Street, and is part of the process required for applying for a special permit for retail marijuana. [Here is the notice](#) now posted on the Electronic Posting Board at newtonma.gov, which explains what the meeting

will cover.

For background you may want to read [Mayor Fuller's April 30, 2019 Update](#) (scroll down near the end) about her decision to proceed with a provisional Host Community Agreements with Ascend Mass. One factor appears to be its ample parking lot. The city's marijuana ordinance, and more information on the Host Community Agreements, are available on [this page](#) on [newtonma.gov](#).

The property is still owned by the same LLC that's owned it since 1992, so either Ascend plans to lease the building, or the purchase is too recent to have shown up on the Assessors Database, or the purchase is contingent on the special permit being approved. Under the just released Washington Street Vision Draft #4, this parcel is envisioned as "low height" allowing up to three stories, although just a block west, Trader Joe's is envisioned as "medium" allowing up to six stories. So if retail marijuana stores ever become unnecessary, e.g. supplanted by home delivery, Ascend or whoever owns it might make another killing on the real estate.

Like Garden Remedies at Court Street, Ascend would directly abut residential properties. In addition, since the prior/current owner cut down the trees that were in and bordering the parking lot (but paying what they owed into the Tree Preservation Fund), Cross Street has no buffer for noise from the Mass Pike. Whatever other conditions are imposed if this special permit is approved, one condition should be not just meeting, but exceeding, parking lot landscaping requirements of perimeter screening, and one interior tree for every ten parking spaces. Not waiving landscaping requirements, as happens too often, for example, at Washington Place, and the new Starbucks in Auburndale Square.

Newton's ordinance states that no marijuana retailer shall exceed 5,000 square feet of floor area. This building is 8,328 square feet, according to the Assessors Database, so one question would be how the other 3,328 square feet would be eliminated or restricted.



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