

**Government of the District of Columbia**  
**ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3F**  
**Van Ness ▪ North Cleveland Park ▪ Wakefield ▪ Forest Hills**

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August 22, 2022

Mr. Fred Moosally, Director  
Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration  
2000 14th Street, NW  
Suite 400 South  
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Director Moosally:

This letter is regarding the consideration of a proposed cannabis dispensary at 4215 Connecticut Avenue in NW DC (registration number ABRA-121392). ANC3F solicited feedback from Van Ness Main Street (VNMS), the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) and the community at-large regarding the application by Uxolo. The public comment period was from July 22<sup>nd</sup> to August 22<sup>th</sup> 2023. ANC3F held a public meeting on August 18<sup>th</sup> 2023, at which representatives of Uxolo were present to provide information and answer questions.

In particular, ABRA requested ANC3F's input on two areas: (1) the potential adverse impact of the proposed location to the neighborhood, and (2) the overconcentration or lack of facilities in the affected Ward. This letter addresses each of these areas and our decision for a final vote.

### **Community Feedback on the Potential Impacts of a Dispensary in ANC3F02**

ANC3F solicited public comments from the community via Google survey and received a total of 38 responses through that process. Of the 38 comments, 16 respondents were in favor and 22 respondents were opposed to a dispensary at 4215 Connecticut Avenue. Public comments in favor of the dispensary revolved around three key themes. First, a desire for access to a convenient dispensary in Ward 3:

“It would be wonderful to have a convenient storefront that sells high-end/high quality cannabis products. Only medical grade and higher quality flower, cartages, and edible products.”

Second, the desire for a regulated dispensary to address chronic health issues for older populations:

“I am a 75-year-old resident of Ward 3 and have used medical cannabis for several years to help with pain. I have to travel to Takoma Park to buy it and would find it much more convenient to have a dispensary in Ward 3. It is reassuring to have a regulated dispensary and trust the products that they sell.”

Finally, access to a dispensary without having to travel to other Wards:

“Currently, the closest facilities are in DuPont which, while near the north Metro entrance, is not terribly convenient, and @ 17th & Rhode Island, also less than convenient unless you happen to be downtown. A dispensary in Van Ness will be very convenient. Medical cannabis dispensaries are

small, quiet businesses that service the medical cannabis using community in accordance with ABRA requirements, including checking IDs.”

Public comments by opponents of the dispensary centered on two major themes. First, concerns regarding safety:

“The crime rate in the PSA 203 where the site is located has experienced some of the largest crime increases in the City. By some metrics PSA 203 has seen THE highest increase. Some of the worst violent crimes to take place in this City in the past 12 months have occurred within 200 feet of this location (mass shooting, stabbings, kidnappings, armed car jackings, etc.). In fact, this VERY location was the site of an armed robbery on November 29, 2021.”

“We have enough problems here in Van Ness/Forest Hills without adding to them with more drugs, and marijuana, while salutary in some ways and for some people, is also abused and often harmful.”

The second set of concerns were based on the proximity of the proposed dispensary to the Edmond Burke School. While the location in Uxolo’s application complies with the requirements set forth by ABRA, residents expressed concerns about a dispensary being near school children. Current guidelines state that the dispensary may not be located with 300 feet of a preschool, primary or secondary school or recreation center. The Edmund Burke School is located 528 feet from the proposed 4215 location

“The close proximity to a middle school/high school (Burke) and preschools (CommuniKids and Franklin Montessori). In California, the most progressive cannabis state, all dispensaries must be at least 1000 feet from schools. This site would be a nonstarter in most states for this reason. Locating a dispensary at this location may also prevent a new educational tenant from considering the former Intelsat/Whittle location.”

“The location is practically in the backyard of two universities -- UDC and Howard, not to mention several other schools and recreation centers frequented by children in the area. The sale of marijuana in the vicinity could have a negative impact on the students at these institutions, particularly the primary and secondary school children in the area.”

### **Feedback from Van Ness Main Street and UDC**

ANC3F solicited comments from VNMS, which is responsible for promoting, growing and supporting businesses in the Van Ness neighborhood. VNMS held a board meeting on August 18<sup>th</sup> to discuss the potential impacts of a cannabis dispensary at the 4215 Connecticut Avenue location. The VNMS board, which includes representatives of UDC, voted in support of a retail, street-level location of a cannabis dispensary in ANC 3F02. During the public town hall, VNMS stated However, because Uxolo does not currently have a secured lease at 4215 Connecticut Avenue, the board did not express specific support for Uxolo at this time. If another location is secured in ANC3F, the VNMS board would consider supporting Uxolo in the Van Ness neighborhood.

### **Feedback from ANC3F Commissioners**

ANC3F Commissioners voted on the motion: “Does ANC3F support Uxolo at the 4215 Connecticut Avenue location?” The vote total was as follows: 0 in favor, 5 against, 2 absent.

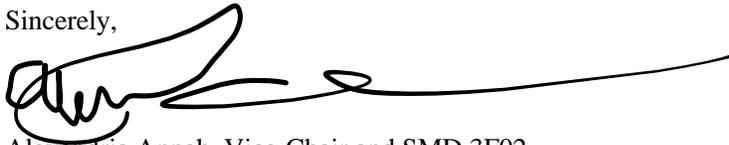
Three Commissioners who voted against Uxolo did so because Uxolo does not currently have a secured lease at 4125 Connecticut Avenue. Similar to a liquor store, if the location was not secured, these Commissioners could not fully assess the impact of the business in the community. These Commissioners are not opposed to

the opening of a cannabis dispensary in ANC3F02 if there was a secured lease. If another location was available in ANC3F in the future, the Commissioners would welcome revisiting this application.

The remaining two Commissioners who voted against Uxolo did so because they believe such a facility will have an adverse effect on the area. The Van Ness commercial corridor continues to struggle to fill vacancies and reach stability. If the Van Ness commercial corridor was more vibrant and stable with fewer vacancies these Commissioners would be more supportive in the future.

Overall, ANC3F and the community found Uxolo to be professional, thoughtful and willing to address the community's concerns around safety, security and responsible consumption. However, due to the reasons stated previously, ANC3F does not support this business at this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Appah', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alexandria Appah, Vice-Chair and SMD 3F02