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Dear Honorable City Council,

I am writing on my own personal accord to object in the highest manner to a spot zoning petition that lay before you regarding the expansion of the medical marijuana overlay district.

First and foremost this proposal is not valid as it seeks to expand the existing MMD-1 and MMD-2 districts to one parcel that lays between Harvard and Central Square and would be considered "spot zoning." Spot zoning occurs when there is a "singling out of one lot for different treatment from that accorded to similar surrounding land indistinguishable from it in character, all for the economic benefit of the owner of that lot."¹ Whatever your individual politics may be regarding the validity of medicinal marijuana as a form of treatment, the zoning petition as written is invalid.

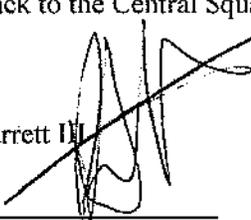
Further, Central Square currently has 24 wellness facilities within its boundaries.²The Mayor's Red Ribbon Commission ("RRC") and the Central Square Advisory Board ("C2")study that followed, highlights this fact. Since the conclusion of the RRC in 2011 and C2 in 2013 none of the recommendations have not been implemented, discussed, voted on, vetted, and an economic feasibility study is still pending. It seems unconscionable that any discussion about the further expansion of wellness services in Central Square should be considered when none of the hard work contributed by local business owners, residents, and families that live within Central Square has been considered by this council, the city, or community development.

Additionally the city has just embarked on a city wide master planning process that will most likely include Central Square. In recognition of the hard work done during both the RRC and C2 public processes and in order to create any validity to this latest community building endeavor I do not think it prudent to expand services in Central Square or Harvard Square without considering the city as a whole and to not exacerbate an already under funded, under supported, and seemingly forgotten area of the city that houses 90% of its most demanding social services.

The MMD-1 and MMD-2 districts are large and have many properties that could be considered for this type of service. That the petitioner has found a willing absentee landlord to accommodate their need does not sway me nor should it sway this council. The issue of medical marijuana is an important one and should be addressed seriously. However this petition seeks to codify the exact type of NIMBY mentalities that has rendered Central Square a destination for addicts, drug dealers, alcoholics, and has decimated the local business landscape and has decimated the residential quality of the surrounding neighborhoods. Until the city starts applying the millions of dollars sitting within the vault of community benefit funds that Central Square has largely contributed to, and that money is applied directly to the impact felt by Central Square for existing services and construction, none of you should consider any petition that includes Central Square until you validate the work of the RRC, C2, and demand that the city start giving back to the Central Square community that has given far beyond any area of this city.

Respectfully,

Patrick W. Barrett III



¹Whittemore v. Building Inspector of Falmouth, 313 Mass. 248 , 249 (1943)

²CENTRAL SQUARED: The Mayor's Red Ribbon Commission on the Delights and Concerns of Central Square (pg. 17)