From:	Jason & Chelsie Daughtry
To:	Marijuana Licensing (CED sponsored)
Subject:	Wasilla Christian Church objection to Marijuana Retailer and Grow facility at 2301 S. Knik Goose Bay Rd
Date:	Monday, September 18, 2017 3:48:21 PM
Attachments:	matsu.borrough.planning.response.pdf

To Whom it may concern,

I was advised by Jed Smith at the Alcohol and Tobacco office to formally submit a public notice about the reasons why we object to a Retail and Cultivation license for Marijuana being given to our neighbors at 2301 S. Knik Goose Bay Rd. I've attached our churches response to this email.

In Christ,

Jason Daughtry
Associate Pastor
Wasilla Christian Church

To: Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission

From: Wasilla Christian Church

Subject: Conditional Use Permit for Marijuana Cultivation Facilities at 2301 S. Knik-Goose Bay Rd., Suite 2 and Suite 1 (dba: Happy Harvest Company) (dba: Green Degree)

Greetings,

It has been brought to our attention that our neighbors would like to obtain a conditional use permit to grow marijuana in two different suites within their building. The first permit is for suite #1 at Green Degree and the second permit is for suite #2 at Happy Harvest Company. As a church whose main mission is to Love God and Love People we are not against people who choose to use marijuana and our intention is not to be bad neighbors. However, we do have very legitimate concerns about not only the existing marijuana retail facility, but the possibility two cultivation facilities in the property next to ours.

Ethically we are at odds with the existing facility located at 2301 S. Kink Goose Bay Rd Suite #1, which already has a conditional use permit for retail marijuana. The reason is not because they are bad neighbors per say. However, the church owns both driveways into our main church building and the driveway that our neighbor uses at 2301 S. Knik Rd. This access was granted to our neighbor in good faith, years before marijuana was legal, because they did not have access to their property. As good neighbors we granted them access to use our second driveway. This being said we share two driveways with each other that both belong to the church. Incidentally, we are beginning to see an increase in traffic from people using our main drive way and cutting across to access Green Degree. The cars driving through our church parking lot have a tendency to drive more recklessly than normal. We are concerned because our church hosts youth group on Wednesday evenings, addiction recovery groups on Tuesday evenings, a prayer ministry on Monday evenings, worship rehearsals on Thursday evenings, and two services on Sunday. We could not imagine the tragedy that would be on our hands if someone driving under the influence of marijuana happened to hit a church member or youth in our parking lot.

We are also opposed to the borough granting conditional use to these two cultivation facilities because of the short term planning. The Department of Transportation (DOT) has plans and a budget in place to widen Knik Goose Bay Rd. We have attached a schematic of this design to this document.[1] When this occurs we

[1] Department of Transportation and Facilities Central Region, "Knik Goose Bay Rd: Centaur to Vine Expansion." http://dot.alaska.gov/creg/kgb_cv/index.shtml. Accessed September 13, 2017.

have been told by DOT that much of the easement in front of our property will be removed, and therefore there will be a very narrow drive that goes right in front of our main church entrance. DOT also plans on extending Endeavor from the North of KGB to run South perpendicular to the church on the East of the property. Here DOT will install a stop light and grant the church easement for being able to have a drive way coming off of S. Endeavor Street. When this happens the two driveways the church owns will be a right hand turn only due to a median, which will divide KGB. Our neighbor's clientele will then be forced to drive through the church parking lot with a reduced easement right in front of the entrances to both main buildings. This is a major safety risk for our members as well as the children. There is much more at stake here long term then just granting a license so taxes and revenue will increase. By all means do what you will to improve the economy but must is be in a place where it compromises the safety of children and church members?

Morally we are at odds with the existing business "Green Degree" and the proposed businesses of "Happy Harvest Company" being located in such proximity to the church. A marijuana cultivation facility makes it difficult for the church to protect those who are most innocent in life. Our mission is to love people, love God, and live to serve. However, it becomes increasingly difficult for us to love our youth by protecting them because they will be exposed to the temptation of drugs at such a young age. One of the arguments of the pro-marijuana legislation is that marijuana is not as harmful as alcohol, yet no one disagrees that like alcohol marijuana should have an age limit. It has been studied and verified by the University of Duke and Dunedin in New Zealand that consumption of marijuana or alcohol before the age of 18 lowers I.Q., is a higher indicator of chemical dependency in adulthood, and has negative effects on memory in adulthood.[2] On the contrary, when adults consume marijuana and alcohol the long-term effects are not as profound, because their brains are developed.[3] Minors, or youth, by their very nature are not emotionally or physically mature enough to exercise discipline and self-control in partaking of alcohol or marijuana. Having this facility so close to our youth group makes marijuana fashionable and desirable. This became one of the arguments used by the 48 states who sued the 4 largest tobacco companies for Medicare costs in the 1998 Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement. There needs to be greater separation from our youth. Furthermore, the church has an addiction recovery ministry where people are recovering from an addiction to marijuana. If your family member were an alcoholic would you bring a bottle into their house and drink it in front of them? Is this not the very reason why a marijuana facility is not allowed within 500 feet of a correctional facility? Yet if you allow a marijuana cultivation facility next to the church the smell from the marijuana flowers could provide the perfect trigger for someone who is in recovery.

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[2] Bates, Carl. "Adolescent Pot Use Leaves Lasting Mental Deficits" in Duke Today, August 27th, 2012. https://today.duke.edu/2012/08/potiq Accessed on Sept. 12, 2017.

[3] Ibid.

Legally, we are opposed to not only the existing retail facility, but also the two new proposed cultivation businesses. Our church has been praying and fundraising to build a new sanctuary for the last 4 years, because of the explosive growth that we have witnessed. Finally, last month we broke ground on our new worship sanctuary. The only suitable place to build this sanctuary was next to our existing church sanctuary on the west side of our property. This new building entrance will be within the legal distance that a retail or cultivation store can have in proximity to an organized religious facility. Alaska regulation of marijuana industry states the following:

> The board will not issue a marijuana establishment license if the licensed premises will be located within 500 feet of a school ground, a recreation or youth center, a building in which religious services are regularly conducted, or a correctional facility. The distance specified in this subsection must be measured by the shortest pedestrian route from the public entrance of the building in which the licensed premises would be located to the outer boundaries of the school ground, the outer boundaries of the recreation or youth center, the main public entrance of the building in which religious services are regularly conducted, or the main public entrance of the correctional facility.[4]

Since, we also have such a large youth group who often use our sanctuary as a conference center it is arguable that our entire facility should pertain to being used as a youth center. This last summer we hosted a VBS of 120 kids who used the lower parking lot as their recreation area for games. This parking lot is less than 100 feet from the retail store (Green Degree) and the two proposed cultivation facilities. Our "outer boundaries" so clearly defined would include our property line. We challenge the Matsu borough and the State of Alaska to do its due diligence in investigating this matter. An accurate measurement needs to be obtained to assure the law is clearly followed.

One could construe the comments that I have made to be about the law only but it is so much more than the law that I argue. I appeal to you planning commission and Alaska Alcohol and Marijuana Control Office to please think about that family member or friend you know who struggles with addiction. Think about holding a joint or a drink right in front of his or her face. Is that right? It may be your right, but is it an act of love? I do believe that we want to allow people freedom, but should we exercise our "rights" against the law of love, which is much greater? It is our prayer and hope that you will see this as not an attack against

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[4] Alaska Alcohol and Marijuana Control Office, 3 ACC 306.005 Regulations, "*Regulation of Marijuana Industry*," chapter 306, p. 1134. https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/amco/MarijuanaRegulations.aspx. Accessed on Sept. 12, 2017.

marijuana for that would be foolish and counter productive. This is a plea to protect those who aren't old enough to protect themselves and those who are too weak to say "no" without boundaries. In the end we ask for one thing that if the facts do add up and the distance between the recreational marijuana facility, and the proposed cultivation sites is less then 500 feet from our new sanctuary that you would not allow the new proposed sites and you would not renew the license for the retail store (dba Green Degree).

God bless you and thank you for your time.

Jason Daughtry
Associate Pastor
Wasilla Christian Church

Addendum

Picture of Future expansion and loss of use for driveways to turn left onto Knik Goose Bay Rd. The red line is a median. The road running to the south of the church is a new road that will be built by DOT. The only Left and Right turn access for the church and our neighbors will be going straight across the front property of the church.