

**Purpose: 11/4/2024 Pre-Application Review**

**Location: 1460 Post Rd. East**

**Applicant: Bluepoint Wellness of Westport LLC – Nicholas Tamborrino**

### **Planning and Zoning Meeting Overview**

Bluepoint Wellness of Westport, located at 1460 Post Road East, has been operating in town since 2019 dispensing medical marijuana. The business operates in a professional and compliant manner which has had no negative impact on town activities or traffic. Bluepoint treats many Westport residents, helping alleviate symptoms associated with their debilitating condition. In 2021, the Planning and Zoning Commission passed text amendment #799/ PZ-21-00587. Since that time, there have been many changes to the local, state, and federal level regarding retail cannabis. The main objective of this non-binding forum is to consider the recent changes and have a dialogue to discuss a potential text amendment to the Zoning Regulations.

Since July 1<sup>st</sup> at the local level, package stores are now allowed to sell cannabis infused beverages. Adults 21 years of age and older are currently purchasing cannabis infused beverages at Westport package stores. Being a medical-only retailer and due to Zoning Regulations, the current landscape has restricted Bluepoint from selling the same cannabis infused beverages to adults 21 years of age and older. This is negatively impacting our business. The fact that this recent business practice is occurring in town gives us a disadvantage.

Currently, Connecticut has 50 adult-use cannabis retailers. Bluepoint Wellness of Westport is the only dispensary operating as a medical-only retailer in the state. In 2021, there were concerns about traffic due to the limited number of adult-use dispensaries. However, having 50 cannabis retailers throughout Connecticut has decreased the amount of business each location sees and eliminates any traffic issues or concerns.

On May 21<sup>st</sup>, the Department of Justice proposed to transfer marijuana from schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act (“CSA”) to schedule III of the CSA, consistent with the view of the Department of Health and Human Services. On Aug. 27, the DEA announced that it will hold a hearing before an administrative law judge on the cannabis rescheduling proposal. At the federal level it is becoming more accepted as the government is considering rescheduling cannabis to schedule III. This hearing is currently scheduled for Dec. 2, 2024.

Due to the changes mentioned above on the local, state and federal levels and the amount of time that has passed since Connecticut rolled out adult-use cannabis, it may be the right time to consider a text amendment. This would allow Bluepoint Wellness to continue servicing medical patients with the addition of adult-use sales. We strongly believe that there will be no change in the current quality and professional standards held at Bluepoint or impact on the town in any way. Rather it will lend the opportunity for the town of Westport to participate and benefit from the 3% municipal cannabis sales tax. We believe that enough time has passed to really know and understand the impact cannabis retailers have on hosting municipalities.