



City of New Bedford

IN COMMITTEE

April 13, 2023

The Honorable City Council
133 William Street
New Bedford, MA 02740

Dear Honorable Members of the City Council:

The Committee on Appointments & Briefings, at a meeting held on Tuesday, March 21, 2023, considered a WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Gomes, Baptiste, Giesta, Carney, Morad and Markey, requesting, that the City Council go on record against granting any zoning change, or the establishment of the proposed downtown Recovery Connection Centers of America at 268-270 Union Street; and further, that the City Council work with the owners of the Recovery Connection Centers of America to assist them in finding a location for their proposed services (To be Referred to the Committee on Appointments and Briefings, the Zoning Board of Appeals, with a letter to the ZBA stating that the Council is against any zoning change and that Rule 40 be Waived.) (Ref'd 10/13/2022) and a COMMUNICATION, Michael J. Livingstone, Esq. to the New Bedford City Council regarding the ZBA Application concerning 268-272 Union Street (Ref'd 10/13/2022).

On motion by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Giesta, the Committee VOTED: To recommend that the City Council take "NO FURTHER ACTION" on the WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Gomes, Baptiste, Giesta, Carney, Morad and Markey, requesting, that the City Council go on record against granting any zoning change, or the establishment of the proposed downtown Recovery Connection Centers of America at 268-270 Union Street; and further, that the City Council work with the owners of the Recovery Connection Centers of America to assist them in finding a location for their proposed services and the COMMUNICATION, Michael J. Livingstone, Esq. to the New Bedford City Council regarding the ZBA Application concerning 268-272 Union Street. This motion passed on a voice vote.

IN COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS & BRIEFINGS

Councillor Naomi R. A. Carney, Chairperson

NRAC/at



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

CITY COUNCIL

October 13, 2022

WRITTEN MOTION

Requesting, that the City Council go on record against granting any zoning change, or the establishment of the proposed downtown Recovery Connection Centers of America at 268-270 Union Street; and further, that the City Council work with the owners of the Recovery Connection Centers of America to assist them in finding a location for their proposed services. (To be Referred to the Committee on Appointments and Briefings, the Zoning Board of Appeals, with a letter to the ZBA, stating that the Council is against any zoning change and that Rule 40 be Waived.)

Brian K. Gomes, Councillor at Large

Derek Baptiste, Councillor Ward Four

Maria E. Giesta, Councillor Ward Two

Naomi R.A. Carney, Councillor at Large

Linda M. Morad, Councillor at Large

Brad Markey, Councillor Ward One

Michael J. Livingstone, Esq.

261 Union Street, Suite 218
New Bedford, MA 02740

**New Bedford City Council
133 William Street, Room 215
New Bedford, MA 02740**

October 7, 2022

Re: ZBA Application Concerning 268-272 Union Street, New Bedford

Dear City Council Members

I am writing to you today to express my total opposition to the proposal on the Zoning Board of Appeals agenda of October 20, 2022, for the licensing of a Methadone Clinic at the location of 268-272 Union Street in the heart of downtown New Bedford.

It appears that the building is for sale and under agreement with a Providence Company that is designed to run Methadone Clinics. Approval of the Methadone Clinic at this location appears to be the contingency of the sale, although I do not have access to the actual documents.

New Bedford now has at least 7 Methadone Clinics in operation, at least 2 of which are open 24 hours per day.

- 1. Health Care Resource Centers New Bedford
8 Kilburn Street, NB 508-979-1122**
- 2. Gifford Street Comprehensive
34 Gifford St, NB 855-434-4597**
- 3. South East Regional, Inc
100 North Front Street, NB 508-997-0475**
- 4. High Point
68 North Front Street, NB 508-717-0550 &
108 N. Front St., NB 774-628-1000 (open 24 hours)**

- 5. Anchor Medical Group
376 Nash Road, NB 508-951-0847**
- 6. Clean Slate Outpatient Addiction
92 Grape Street, NB 774-202-2264**
- 7. Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Treatment Center
110 Kilburn St., NB 413-667-6188 (open 24 hours)**

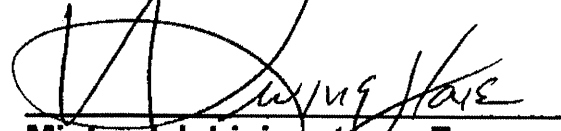
New Bedford has been struggling to maintain a downtown business center for at least the last 40 years, in which I have been personally involved. I owned the former Brown Pharmacy Building at 222 Union Street for over 10 years. I put on a new roof, all new aluminum windows spent hundreds of thousands of dollars rehabilitating many of the interior offices, corridors, and bathrooms, and advertised the rental space every day in the ST for years at nominal rates and could not attract tenants, losing \$50-\$100K per year in operating costs trying to make it work. I finally sold it to a Chinese Group getting Green Cards from the US Gov't based upon investments in depressed areas of the country. They built the NB Hotel there, but I doubt that they will ever turn a profit, but profit was never their purpose. Green cards were.

I have a storefront tenant and pet shop at 255 Union Street, selling dog and cat food and collars, etc. who approached me last week to be relieved of their 5-year lease term as they cannot make a go of it even though they have for years been running the exact same store in Bristol, RI which is wildly successful. They spent a ton of money in my building doing it over for their pet store just a few years ago and are now forced to bail out in the face of having to file bankruptcy and possibly lose their other successful store as well. I know this is true as I have seen it happening for many months now. I have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars at 255-261 Union Street, including a new roof, new aluminum windows, repointing, a new boiler, sprinkler system, every office, bathroom, and corridor, including handicapped accessibility for my tenants and their clients and customers. If I had not been fortunate enough to secure long term tenants years ago, I would not be able to afford my real estate taxes, insurance, repairs, and upkeep of my remaining building downtown. Those residential tenants will not stay with a Methadone Clinic in their immediate neighborhood, and neither would you nor I.

In addition, NB wants to attract residents to live in the downtown area. How is that supposed to happen with a Methadone Clinic at this proposed location? People would not knowingly move into the area, and those who live and work here now will simply leave, creating further vacancies in a struggling downtown. Without business and people downtown, it cannot survive. I believe that a Methadone Clinic in the heart of downtown would be the straw that breaks the camel's back.

I respectfully urge you to request that the New Bedford Zoning Board of Appeals votes "NO" on this ill-advised proposal at their upcoming hearing. Thank you for your time and consideration

Very truly yours,



Michael J. Livingstone, Esq.
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Mjlivstone@aol.com