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SMMB Dispensary License Renewal-Supporting Documents Section

Before I begin, I respectfully request that the full text of what I am about to read be included verbatim in the supporting documents and official minutes of tonight's meeting.

I am grateful to be here this evening and I appreciate the opportunity to speak.

At this point, the question is no longer whether Pound Ridge should have a cannabis retail dispensary—it is already here. The real issue is the Town Board's initial decision not to hold a public hearing or seek resident input before declining to opt out of allowing such a business under the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA).

Although I have only heard this second-hand, there are now serious questions about the legality and completeness of SMMB's original license application. One would expect the Board to have obtained and reviewed a copy of that application before deciding to conduct a public hearing on the renewal of the license.

Yet here we are: the Board is now holding a public hearing on the renewal—even though state law does not appear to require one—seeking resident input that was never solicited when it mattered most. This raises an obvious question: Why hold a hearing now, when one was not needed, but not when it would have been in the best interest of constituents who elected a Board to seek and represent the voice of the people?

The most plausible explanation is that the Board wishes to publicly endorse the renewal process. But does the state require the Board's endorsement for renewal? It does not. So, one must ask: What purpose does this hearing serve, other than to signal the Board's approval?

The Board may argue that public input was not legally required for the initial opt-out decision, and that it was up to the Board to determine whether a public hearing was necessary. If that's the case, then the earlier decision not to hold a hearing was also a deliberate choice—one the Board felt comfortable making without burdening residents with the question of opting out. In other words, the Board believed it was in a better position to decide for the entire town.

That pattern is troubling: when public input would have been the most meaningful and would have benefited residents, it was bypassed; now that input is not required, the Board suddenly decides to solicit it.

You get what you vote for. For those of you sitting here this evening or attending via Zoom, stand up and be heard—even if it is simply to say you agree with what I have read tonight. Your voice matters. Silence equals consent. Thank you