**Meeting Minutes for the First Meeting of the Cannabis Social Equity Advisory Board**

**Friday, April 28, 2023**

**4:00PM**

**Board Members in Attendance via Remote Access:**

* Keisha Brice (Chair)
* Meaka Brown
* Aaron Goines
* Chris Fevry
* Phil Smith

**Meeting Minutes:**

Welcome and Introductions

* Chair Keisha Brice called the meeting to order at approximately 4:01pm. She provided brief introductory remarks and roll call and members of the Cannabis Social Equity Advisory Board (Board) introduce themselves.
* Christopher Fevry indicated that he is an appointee of the State Treasurer, Deborah Goldberg and CEO of Your Green Package. Mr. Fevry indicated his interest and expertise in finance.
* Aaron Goines is the appointee from the Attorney General’s Office previously worked with Board Member Chris Fevry to start the Massachusetts Cannabis Association for Delivery.
* Meaka Brown is a joint appointee (i.e. Governor’s office, Treasurer’s office, and Attorney General’s office).
* Phillip Smith stated that he is the Chairman and CEO of the Freshly Baked Company and a joint appointee on the board.

Overview of CSEAB & Open Meeting Law

* Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED) General Counsel, Jon Cosco, presents “Overview of the CSEAB & Open Meeting Law” related to the board’s purpose and objectives and an overview of the conflict of interest, public records and open meeting law.

Presentation from Cannabis Control Commission

* Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) Executive Director, Shawn Collins, provided introductory remarks and presented “Introduction to Massachusetts’ Cannabis Landscape" describing the history of Legal Cannabis in the Commonwealth, license types in the commonwealth, the licensing process and licensing applications, output and performance data

the commission and its work, and overview of the Social Equity Program and open data platform.

Discussion of Core Objectives

* Chair Brice discussed guiding principles to inform the work of the Board, noting that the legislature created the Cannabis Social Equity Trust Fund to encourage the full participation in the commonwealth's regulated marijuana industry of entrepreneurs from communities that have been disproportionately harmed by marijuana prohibition and enforcement. The fund will provide financial assistance, in the form of grants or loans, to eligible social equity program participants and economic empowerment priority applicants. EOHED and the advisory board will deploy money from the fund consistent with the legislative intent to help entrepreneurs from disproportionately impacted communities. However, EOHED nor the advisory board has any role in the actual licensing process, which has been and will continue to be overseen by the Cannabis Control Commission.

Open Discussion

* Chair Brice opened the meeting for general discussion.
* Board members discussed the types of potential applicants the funds could be used for, including those in the earlier stages of the licensing process and those have made it through the licensing process and are currently out in the market.
* Board members discussed the potential use and types of funds. Chair Brice offered that she believes the Board should help entrepreneurs get access to tools and resources they need for how they may define success for their own independent business ventures. Board Member Meaka Brown stated the Board has a unique opportunity in creating grants versus loans, particularly within the 2 categories of provisional versus operational and that it could be broken out as grants are issued to provisional and loans are issued to operational licensees.
* Rory O’Hanlon (EOHED) explained the Executive Office of Administration and Finance is actively working with the Massachusetts Comptroller’s office to formally set up the Cannabis Social Equity Trust Fund. He said that an initial transfer is expected shortly after the fund is set up.
* Chair Brice discussed the frequency of board meetings.
* Board members indicated the importance of working with the Cannabis Control Commission (CCC).
* Discussion between board members and EOHED staff about what the Board’s role will be in the application process.
* Members of the public offered comments about deployment of funds and issues they are facing within the industry.
* Shannon O’Brien, Chair of the Cannabis Control Commission, offered comments about the CCC’s role and willingness to work collaboratively.

Adjournment

* Chair Brice called for a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was made and seconded. All members present voted in the affirmative. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:03pm.