



**EAST PROVIDENCE WATERFRONT SPECIAL
DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT COMMISSION
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

Date: November 15, 2021
To: Hearing Panel
RE: Recommendation to the Waterfront Commission for Agriculture, Indoor (excluding plants with THC) as a conditional use

Applicant: Rhody Farms, LLC
Owner: Bourne Holdings LLC – Phillipsdale Landing
Location: 310 Bourne Ave, Building 14
Assessors: Map 302, Block 1, Parcel 3
Zoning: Phillipsdale Sub-district
Proposed use: Indoor Agriculture (excluding plants with THC)

Rhody Farms proposes to use Building 14 in Phillipsdale Landing as an industrial hemp growing and extraction facility—a conditional use in the Phillipsdale sub-district of the East Providence Waterfront Special Development District. The proposed facility would take up the entire building—a total of 29,565 square feet of space. Building 14 is the four-story brick building located in the rear of the development.

The space in Building 14 will be utilized in phases as stated below:

- Floor 3: 8855 sq. ft. To be built into an interior enclosed hydroponic hemp farm/grow room. This runs on an 11 week harvest cycle. (roughly) The space will be 100% secured and sealed in a completely sterile environment.
- Floor 2: 8855 sq. ft To be built also into an interior enclosed hydroponic farm/grow room. This floor will be for a different phase of growth of the actual hemp plant so you can have a perpetual grow/harvest.
- Floor 1: 8855 sq. ft. Basically, the same as floors 2 & 3.
- Floor 4: 3000 sq ft. Will become office space, drying area, potentially lab space (if approved as testing facility), packaging, marketing etc.
- There will be approximately 700 square feet of office space on-site, included in the 4th Floor square footage listed above.

Hours of operation will be from 8am – 11pm while they start up and start planting seeds/ get the grow operation established. Once plants are established, they expect to operate on normal business hours. They will have access to a loading dock and anticipate needing 10 parking spaces for employees. Parking requirements, based on the 700 square feet of office space, would require one spot per 300 square feet of office space. The parking provided should be sufficient for what is required. There is not expected to be any extra traffic generated due to the business not being open to the public.

Water will be supplied on-site and will be self-contained. Once the fully detailed grow plan is finalized, it will be self-contained and self-sterilized for the specific needs of growing hemp plants in this environment. There are no anticipated noise issues and air quality will be closely monitored. Interior walls will mitigate any potential smells escaping the space in addition to

using negative air pressure, odor ionization and activated carbon filtering systems to mitigate odors. Their initial operational build out incorporates the use of closed cell foam, coated with a vapor barrier paint on all exterior walls and ceilings. This will help in controlling the internal atmospheric conditions and ensures that no air is freely entering or leaving the facility.

Growing hemp will allow Rhody Farms to supply businesses and vendors with hemp for their products. Once they have an approved hemp license from the State of Rhode Island, they intend to apply to the State of RI to become a state-approved testing facility, which would entail testing of the RI hemp, cannabis and medical marijuana in the area. This testing would be a Phase II for Rhody Farms. There will be no retail at the location, as they will function as a manufacturer and supplier. They are also planning on a future where Rhode Island legalizes recreational marijuana and will apply for a cannabis growing license if that does happen. This would require an amendment to the East Providence City Ordinance to allow for recreational cannabis growing and another approval by the East Providence Waterfront Commission.

Sec. 19-479 of Article IX of the East Providence Zoning Ordinance, addresses conditional use provisions:

(e) Conditional use provisions shall be limited to those which ensure the convenience and welfare of the public and do not substantially or permanently injure the value of neighboring property.

The applicant's testimony will demonstrate that the conditional use of indoor agriculture will meet these requirements.

(g) In reviewing any application for a deviation or conditional use provision on any site, the commission may consider, among other factors, the following:

- (1) Protection of adjoining properties and other parcels in the waterfront district from any detrimental use on the site.

The use is compatible with uses otherwise allowed by right in the Phillipsdale sub-district because it is similar to other light industrial and manufacturing uses allowed.

- (2) Convenience and safety of vehicular and pedestrian movement within the site in relation to adjacent streets, properties, improvements and in conformance with the express design intent.

Rhody Farms traffic movements on Bourne Avenue and within the complex of buildings at Phillipsdale Landing will not adversely affect the convenience or safety of vehicular and pedestrian movement within the site.

- (3) Adequacy of the methods of disposal for sewage, refuse and other wastes, and methods of drainage of surface water.

Water used in the hemp growing process will be in a closed loop system, with none being added back to the municipal water supply. The existing building and its mechanicals can provide sufficient power and water for this process. The system will have an HVAC plan that will provide proper air flow as well as odor remediation.

- (4) Provisions of off-street loading and unloading of vehicles incidental to the servicing of the buildings and related uses on the site.

The applicant will have a loading dock. The loading dock will be sufficient for the applicant's needs and will not unduly burden other tenants who share the use of the loading dock, as Rhody Farms will be the only tenant in the building.

- (5) Adequacy of all other municipal facilities and services to meet the needs of the site.

Municipal facilities and services appear adequate to meet the needs of the site. Fire prevention upgrades and water line improvements by the property owner throughout the Phillipsdale Landing complex at 310 Bourne Ave help assure that municipal services are adequate.

- (6) Achievement of overall design objectives of the development plan.

The proposed use is consistent with the 2003 East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan. Specifically it is similar to the continuation of light manufacturing uses identified in Chapter 6, Proposed Land Uses, for this property.

Recommended Action

As executive director I recommend that the Hearing Panel vote to send a positive recommendation to the Waterfront Commission to grant indoor agriculture, excluding plants with THC, as a conditional use requested by Rhody Head Farms for Building 14 at Phillipsdale Landing.



Chris Martin, Executive Director

cc: Waterfront Commission
Applicant: Rhody Farms, Robin Robinson and Bill Hurley