

Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke Board of Zoning Appeals was held in Council Chambers on Wednesday July 1, 2026. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present:

Chair: Kelly Miller

Members: Tommy Gladding, David Strauss, Marcus Collins

City Manager: Brandy Matthews

Attorney: Andrew Illuminati

City Clerk: Lacey Merritt

Call to Order

The Chair called the public hearing to order. Quorum has been established with all members present.

Approval of Minutes from April 1, 2026

It was noted by Tommy Gladding that his name was spelled incorrectly and needs to be adjusted. On a motion made by Mr. Gladding, and seconded by Mr. Strauss, the minutes were approved as amended.

Approval of Minutes from June 2, 2026

It was noted by Tommy Gladding that his name was spelled incorrectly and needs to be adjusted. On a motion made by Mr. Gladding and seconded by Mr. Strauss, the minutes were approved as amended.

Public Hearing

Request: Request for conditional use separation distance relief authorization of a Cannabis Business (dispensary) on properties located south bound Route 13 of Pocomoke City in the B-2 Business District at 1621 Ocean High Hwy District 01 Account Identifier 009796 Tax Map 0092 Grid 0002 Parcel 0199 and Ocean HWY District 01 Account Identifier 010921, Tax Map 0092 Grid 0002 Parcel 0200

Attorney Illuminati swore in the applicant Kal Shah for testifying.

The written staff report was submitted into the record.

Mr. Shah testified:

1. He is a Worcester County Cannabis License Holder.
2. The request is for a separation distance from the property line of the proposed dispensary to the property line of an existing place of worship 'New Beginnings.'

3. That cannabis is a permissible use based on the zoning regulations and that he is before the board to request relief from the separation distance requirement of the Zoning Code.
4. That Mr. Shah is under contract to purchase 1621 Ocean Highway. He intends to develop and operate a cannabis business (dispensary).

After hearing from Mr. Shah, discussion with the Board ensued. Discussion topics included: taxes, safety and security measures, State regulations and Policy guidance, other locations, parking, the existing deceleration lane and entrances, hours of peak demand, Maryland cannabis growers, demographics of users, product tracking, secondary benefits to the community, concerns with children accessing product and State laws including ID checker tools, employment opportunities with the dispensary, deliveries, product labels, and timelines for opening if approved.

Several people were in attendance for the purpose of testifying in opposition to the application. Dr. Lynn Duffy was concerned about juveniles accessing the product and the proposed location within the City Limits. Commissioner Caryn Abbott recommended carefully considering the application in terms of the property's highest and best use; compatibility with the Comprehensive Plan, planned residential development, road capacity and parking, effects to existing businesses, code enforcement and location.

The Board members discussed tabling the formal vote until the next meeting in open session. It was established that there will not be another formal hearing and that the hearing is closed, so no new information can be provided.

Upon a motion made by Board Member David Strauss and seconded by Board Member Kelly Miller, the Board of Appeals approved the request with Board Member Tommy Gladding voting in opposition.

Adjourn

A motion was made by Kelly Miller to adjourn at 8:07 p.m. and seconded by Marcus Collins.

Approved _____

Kristen M. Tremblay, AICP
Planning Director