



San Diego City Attorney Jan I. Goldsmith

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 13, 2014

Contact: [Gerry Braun](mailto:gbraun@sandiego.gov), Director of Communications: gbraun@sandiego.gov (619) 533-4782

Repeat Offenders' Marijuana Dispensary Closed

Defendants tried moving their operation from Bankers Hill to Mission Valley

San Diego, CA: The City Attorney's Office today obtained a court order to close a Mission Valley marijuana dispensary that was operating in violation of San Diego zoning regulations.

The dispensary, Green Circle Cooperative, opened on Hotel Circle South last month -- shortly after the City Attorney's Office shut down a Bankers Hill dispensary where the same individuals operated under the name Crown Patients Group.

Since September 2011, when the City Attorney's Office began aggressively filing civil lawsuits against property owners and dispensary operators who violate zoning regulations, more than 200 unpermitted marijuana dispensaries have been shut down through enforcement action by the City Attorney's Code Enforcement Unit.

On occasion, the operators violate the court order by moving their inventory to a new site where they renew operations, again in violation of zoning laws. In these cases, the City Attorney's Office will seek a court order shutting down the new location, and then has the ability to seek enhanced penalties. In one such case last summer, a repeat offender in Pacific Beach was assessed civil penalties of \$120,000. The funds go to the Code Enforcement Civil Penalties Fund, and are used to enhance code enforcement programs.

In the case heard today, Green Circle Cooperative was ordered to close its doors within 24 hours. The defendants include Michael Yono, the president of Green Circle; the Green Banner, Inc., which was operating the former dispensary; Lance Paul Kachi, the president of Green Banner; and Robyn Barrett, the owner of the property, located at 1235 Hotel Circle South.

Green Banner and Kachi had previously operated the unpermitted dispensary Crown Patients Group at 2107 Third Avenue until it was closed in October 2014. Yono was observed by investigators working at the Third Avenue dispensary with or for Kachi and Green Banner.

"Dispensary operators will pay a high price when they ignore city zoning laws and then defy a judge who tells them not to reopen without proper permits," City Attorney Jan Goldsmith said. **"We'll hit them in the pocketbook as often as it takes for them to get the message. Like any other business, marijuana**

dispensaries must conform to zoning regulations designed to protect neighborhood standards and safety. There is a process for legally zoned dispensaries, and that process should be followed.”

Last week, the City Attorney’s Office obtained a court order to close an illegal dispensary operating in Skyline. Defendants included the property owners, Esoo LLC and its chief executive officer Hani Yalda Toma.

Next week, the City will seek enforcement orders against illegal dispensaries operating in North Park and Grantville.

“We know there are other dispensaries operating illegally in San Diego beyond those that are referred to us for prosecution,” Goldsmith said. “As cases are brought to us by the San Diego Police Department or Code Enforcement Division, we will close them down and obtain monetary sanctions.”

Complaints regarding marijuana dispensaries may be referred to the Code Enforcement Division at (619) 236-5500.

###