Last Thursday (6/12/19) Kirkwood City Council held a public hearing on proposed zoning regulations for medical marijuana dispensaries. Those recommendations held that dispensaries would be limited to two zones: B-3 highway oriented commercial (primarily located on Manchester Rd) and I-1 light industrial (primarily properties located in the Eastern half of Kirkwood flanking railroad tracks). While I can understand why counselors might be apprehensive about dispensaries popping up in our quaint downtown, these exclusionary recommendations need to be reconsidered for the following reasons: 1) Dispensaries are by definition brick and mortar operations at a time when the future of brick and mortar is uncertain; 2) A large portion of medical marijuana dispensaries’ customers will be the elderly, a demographic that especially benefits from living in walkable, car-optional neighborhoods like our downtown. Kirkwood should cater its zoning rules to them and allow for the servicing of their needs; 3) while pushing marijuana facilities to the peripheries might sound good in theory, in practice this only cements their identity as seedy strip mall businesses; and 4) while apprehension is understandable, dispensaries will already have a number of other regulations placed on them to ensure they are located appropriately. They can’t be located within 250 feet of a daycare church or school (i.e. St. Peter’s) or within 1,000 feet of another dispensary. Even if we allowed dispensaries downtown, it’s unlikely that we would end up with more than one; Let’s reconsider what it is we’re actually trying to do and make a change.