

# MARIJUANA MANIFESTATIONS

## Compton groups want illegal pot dispensaries closed

By ANNE ARTLEY  
Contributing Writer

COMPTON — The Rev. Michael Fisher of Greater Zion Church and Family wants to see more businesses in the city — just not marijuana dispensaries.

He helped lead a protest in front of two illegal dispensaries on May 20, both on Rosecrans Boulevard and Matthisen Avenue. Even though recreational use of marijuana became legal in California with the

passage of Proposition 64 last November, it is still illegal to sell the drug and grow it for commercial purposes in Compton.

“I’m very concerned about the marijuana industry trying to capitalize on negative stereotypes of Compton by establishing it as a hub,” Fisher said. “If it’s medicinal, go to Torrance or Beverly Hills. We don’t need drug money fixing our streets.”

Of concern to many of the protestors was the proximity of the dispensaries to Dickerson

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A marijuana dispensary on Rosecrans Avenue in Compton was the target of a protest May 20 by residents who want it closed down.

Photo by Anne Artley



Compton residents protest outside two marijuana dispensaries May 20 near the intersection of Rosecrans Boulevard and Matthisen Avenue. The shops, which are illegal in Compton, are located near two schools.

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Elementary School and Davis Middle School.

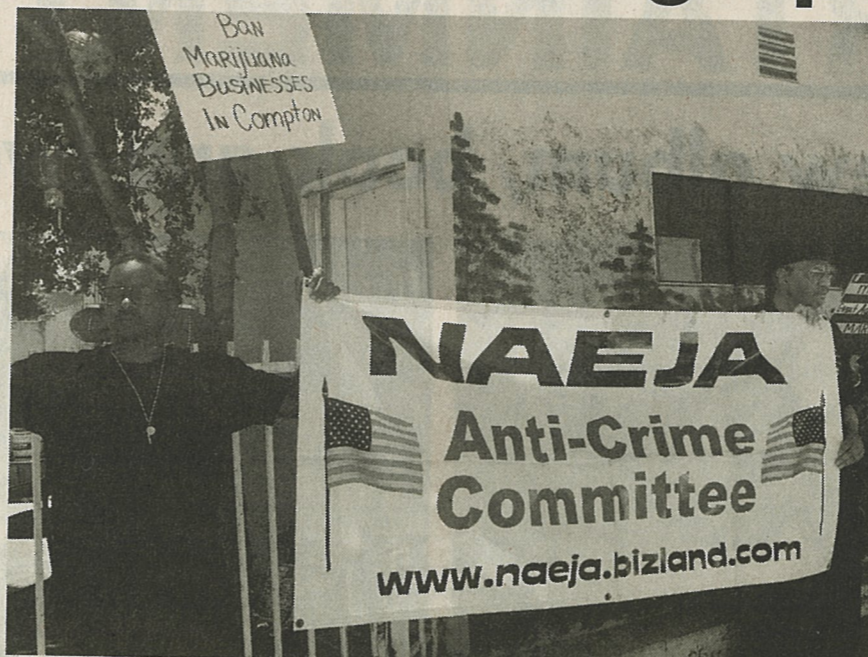
“We’ve got children walking by here on their way to school,” Fisher said. “We’ve shut down liquor stores on every corner. We don’t want marijuana dispensaries replacing them.”

Protestors gathered in front of the two dispensaries, a converted church and an apartment building, for about an hour.

They chanted, “No marijuana in Compton; take it somewhere else,” while customers entered a dispensary called “Budway,” located next to Greater Love Christian Outreach Ministries.

“What I’m loving about this scene is that it’s black and brown standing together,” Fisher said.

Among the protestors were City Councilwomen Emma Sharif and Janna Zurita.



saries. Sharif said it takes a coordinated effort among those branches to shut them down.

“Unfortunately, we have to go through a process, even with the laws in place,” she said. “Some of the dispensaries open with a business license, which they can’t obtain as a dispensary. Then, the license inspector can shut them down if they can prove that they aren’t what they say they are.”

Sharif said that otherwise only City Attorney Craig Cornwell has the legal authority to close them, and he has to go through the district attorney’s office.

Despite any protocol, Fisher said he is “disturbed” that it’s taken the city attorney so long to close the dispensaries.

Mayor Aja Brown said that while she does not approve of the presence of the dispensaries in Compton, the city might need to back a “secondary mar-

up,” she said. “We may need to consider allowing shops that sell the supplies for marijuana use or a delivery service to other cities that sell it in order to close the gap.”

Resident Richard Earl said since the city approved the ban on marijuana dispensaries the number of dispensaries has grown from 29 to 40, with some closing down and re-opening two or three times.

Earl is circling a petition that calls on Attorney General Jeff Sessions to invoke the federal Controlled Substances Act of 1970, which classifies marijuana as an illegal substance, and close recreational dispensaries.

Author and community advocate Ron L. Dowell said treatment, an important aspect of the marijuana economy, is often overlooked in discussions. “We’ve got dispensaries coming in