

MARIJUANA AD-HOC COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes – August 03, 2017

Members in Attendance: Edward (Ted) Haley – Chairman, Eric Desrochers, Patricia Neary, Matthew Rushton, Patrick Hohman, Irving Smith, Linda Carp and Peter Robillard

Members Not Present: Karen Peabody, Betsy Chouinard

Officials in Attendance: Michael Dutton - Town Manager

Meeting Called to Order: 6:02PM

Approval of Minutes. Minutes of 7-19-2017 were approved by unanimous consent.

Marijuana Ad Hoc Committee on Town Website:

The Committee engages in a discussion of the new webpage set up on the Town Website. The new page, listed as Marijuana Ad Hoc Committee is located within the Boards, Committees & Commissions section of the Town Website, www.bridgewaterma.org. The Town Manager's Office has assisted in creating the page and uploading documents on behalf of the Committee. The Chair notes that a large amount of information is now available to view by the public on the matter of recreational marijuana, along with items on House Bill #3818 and statistical data from the State of Colorado.

The Chair and Committee ask if there has been any additional outreach to the public via social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter) and print (local newspapers). The Town Manager notes he will have notifications posted to the Town's social media, and may be able to provide a press item to the newspapers.

The Chair asks members to review the page and let the Town Manager know in the next meeting if they would like anything in particular changed, added, or removed.

Discussion of House Bill #3818:

The Chair and Committee engage in a discussion of House Bill #3818 (H.3818). H. 3818 was recently passed by the General Court and signed by Governor Baker on July 28th. The bill, further modifies and reworks the ballot measure passed by the Commonwealth in fall 2016; and creates stipulations for local control (ban/regulations), tax rates and enhanced regulatory/civil criminal processes for marijuana in Massachusetts.

Ms. Neary expresses concerns with the legal requirements of the law, especially if the town initiates a moratorium or ban prior to the deadlines in the new law. Mr. Desrochers notes the law does not affect any existing moratorium. In order for any further legislative actions (i.e. election) to take place, a moratorium should be in place with a set expiration date.

Discussion and Potential Vote – Moratorium on Recreational Marijuana

The Chair and Committee begin discussion on the topic of a potential moratorium on recreational marijuana in the Town of Bridgewater. Mr. Rushton moves that the Town enact a moratorium on recreational marijuana with an end date of March 15, 2018. The motion is seconded for discussion. Ms. Neary inquires on the early date and why it was chosen. Mr. Rushton notes the date was chosen as it was reflective of the state's intent to have communities develop rules and regulations prior to December 2018. Mr. Irving asks how a vote on a moratorium so early in the review process affects the Town. The Town Manager indicated the state Cannabis Commission is currently developing rules and regulations. The rules and regulations will need to be reviewed by legal counsels, which could take time. Mr. Rushton notes that if

the later deadline is chosen and rules are adopted by the state without a municipality having its own rules in place, this could lead to recreational marijuana licenses being issued without a community having full say in the matter.

An unidentified female resident then addresses the Chair and Committee stating that the Town Council can still vote to ban recreational marijuana because the town voted overall to ban it in the first place.

Mr. Rushton asks to offer an amendment to the motion on the table to utilize language from the Town of West Bridgewater's moratorium which includes specific deadline language. The Committee accepts the amendment to the original motion. The Chair asks the public in attendance if they wish to contribute comment to the discussion. Dr. Fred Kern, 77 South Street, stands to address the Chair and Committee.

Dr. Kern notes he is in support of the moratorium and cites various medical points about marijuana and its risk to youth. Dr. Kern states he is in support of healthy kids and families and preserving integrity of the community. The doctor indicated that a moratorium on recreational marijuana is a moral obligation.

The Chair asks if there are more comments from the public or the Committee. Mr. Robillard notes that the moratorium as proposed allows the Town to do more research and develop guidance to regulate recreational marijuana. **With all discussion heard, the Chair asks for a vote on the motion as it is amended.**

With a vote of 8 yea, 0 nay, the amended motion to suggest a moratorium on recreational marijuana with an end date of December 31, 2018 is approved.

The Chair asks if this matter can be added to the next Town Council agenda for their consideration. The Town Manager notes that submittals for the August 8th Town Council meeting has passed, and that the moratorium language will be added to the Town Council agenda for their next meeting on September 5th. The measure will go through the legislative process which may vary in length depending on how the language of the legislation is written. Potentially could be acted upon in October, depending on the process length.

The Chair notes he has heard from public safety officials on the moratorium issue and they are supportive of the community and provided additional context on the matter.

Ms. Neary asks what the timeline would look like if the town desired a full ban before the December 2018 deadline. The Town Manager notes he can provide a timeline when one is available to share.

Mr. Robillard asks if more experts will be invited to meet with the Committee to provide their information and knowledge of the recreational marijuana issue. The Chair states that experts will be invited as the committee continues to meet.

Mr. Smith asks a question regarding the current dispensaries in town: how do they dispose of the scrap marijuana after harvesting all usable materials from the plants? Mr. Desrochers notes that the remaining plant matter is physically useless after extracting all valuable materials, and is disposed in a secure manner per state rules.

Open Discussion

The Chair opens up the floor to the Committee for comments. Mr. Desrochers suggested that it may be of interest to the Committee to request a tour of one of the dispensaries in operation to get a better understanding of the medical marijuana and recreational marijuana business/industry. Mr. Desrochers then asks Dr. Kern for input on support of a ban or regulated allowance for sales. Dr. Kern replies that he is in support of a ban.

The Chair asks members to consider looking at the Committee's page on the Town Website and to be ready to provide feedback or comments at the next meeting. The goal is to keep the page informative for the public.

Mr. Smith asks the Chair if communities with a moratorium have had a higher rate of marijuana use. The Chair notes that is a question the Committee could ask going forward.

Public Comments

The Chair opens up the floor to comments from the public.

Mr. Ed Ivaldi of 10 Boxwood Lane notes to the Committee they should still encourage the Council to allow a referendum vote on recreational marijuana. The Town voted no on the ballot question, so to prevent the recreational marijuana proponents from taking towns to the state supreme court, Bridgewater should affirm its previous vote with the referendum. Mr. Ivaldi notes the town has a moral and social responsibility to act on knowledge the Committee has now on the matter, further stating there is no additional need for information on the subject matter. Mr. Ivaldi continues to note there is nothing to stop the Town from enacting a ban, why risk trouble?

An unidentified female resident also speaks to the Committee stating that the monies gained from sales of recreational marijuana come at the risk of safety to the public, further indicating that taking money from recreational sales and medical sales endangers the community. The female resident also states Bridgewater has a moral responsibility to families and the public to enact a ban.

With all discussion concluded a motion is made to adjourn.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:07PM