

Selectboard Special Meeting Minutes

May 5, 2022

Present: Tom Fitzgerald, John Gannon, Sarah Fisher, Tony Tribuno **Absent:** Vince Rice

Others Present: Scott Tucker, Jessica DeFrancesco, Bob Fisher, Matt Murano, Therese Lounsbury, Meg Streeter, Phil Hoffman, Jessica Lee Smith, Amelia Nick, Gary King, Jennifer Betit-Engel, Chris Engel, Ryan O'Neil, Bonnie Lorimer, Karen Molina, Jerry & Sheila Osler, Todd Gareiss, Chris Mays, Brian Holt, Monica Donovan, Mike Eldred, Linda Green, Keith Hebert, Kit Cincotta, Mike Grady, Sara Molina, Ronnie Horn, John Lebron, Kathy Costello, DJ Boyd, Gretchen Havreluk, Lisa Sullivan, Emily Payton, Ella-VT Normal, Karen Mangold, Kris Antonides, Georgia Contois, J. Maturo

Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm

John Gannon gave a brief description of the law as it currently stands and what the vote encompasses. The town can vote to opt-out at a later time, and those retailers with licenses would be grandfathered. Special zoning cannot be put into place prohibiting cannabis.

Fitzgerald mentioned that neither of the two petitions have come from the board, but from voters. After this vote, this article can't be petitioned again until town meeting 2023.

Article 1: Shall the Town authorize cannabis retailers in town pursuant to 7 V.S.A. § 863?

- Meg Streeter; what is the intention in terms of the number of licenses? Certain licenses may be moved to the top (at the state level) to control the concentration of licenses in one area. The town hasn't discussed anything as a Board.
- Bonnie Lorimer; if there is a business with a manufacturer's license or a cultivator's license, but no retailers, they would have to sell outside of town? That is correct. They also can only hold one type of license.
- How do we opt-out? It would require another town vote at an annual town meeting via petition.
- Will the licenses be handled similar to liquor licenses? It will be handled very similar. They have to come through the town before the state will take them up.
- Kathy Costello; after some inquiries to other towns outside VT, she found that some towns had seen less issues in this area after dispensaries opened. Vermont would have a 20% tax on cannabis-6% sales tax, 14% excise tax. Wilmington would also have the 1% Local Option Tax. No one under the age of 21 can enter a retail cannabis store, and you will be carded twice.
- Todd Gareiss; could the 1% be increased for cannabis sales? Hoping at the state level that the tax will be increased.
- John Lebron; what response do we have from the police? They have concerns of drug impaired drivers. It's a more complicated task to process a drug impaired driver than a drunk driver. Often requires a trip to the ER for blood draws, warrants, paperwork, states attorneys, and judges; many times, after-hours. A lot more education is needed in cannabis use. Gannon stated that they are hoping to establish tools to assist with roadside testing.
- Is there a way to tell with testing what drug a driver is impaired by? In many of the instances, yes, substances are known when results come back.
- Ella-VT Normal; working on a delivery service. Gannon stated the bill will not include delivery but will have online ordering.
- Jennifer Betit-Engel; was there an up-tick in impaired drivers since the legalization in 2018? Yes, there has been an increase since then, while alcohol impairment has plateaued or decreased.

- Jessica Lee Smith; was hoping this would be more of a revenue stream for towns and communities, but it seems it is more state regulated. This bill was designed to keep large corporations out; which is why you can only hold one license and the state will prioritize smaller retailers.
- Meg Streeter; medical cannabis has been available since 2013. Retail is different.
- Bonnie Lorimer; what services would be impacted in town (police, healthcare, parking)? This may make some of this worse. How will you address this? Cannabis purchases are usually pretty quick. Based on pre-applications throughout the state, Gannon doesn't foresee the issues that other states have seen. Parking is part of your DRB application. The parking for this is no different than any other type of business opening.
- John Lebron; the Board has not done a review of the pros/cons of this coming into town.
- DJ Boyd; How many liquor licenses are in town? Maybe 20? Prohibition didn't work in the 1920's. It can be done; it needs to be done right, but can be done safely.
- Why are we asking what the 1% from alcohol is, but not about the 1% for cannabis?
- Karen Mangold: s a local cultivator who isn't using pesticides, they will be selling to local retailers, and they can rest assured that the product is safe and clean.

Meeting adjourned at 7:06 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
 Jessica DeFrancesco, Administrative Assistant

Approved by the Wilmington Selectboard:

 Thomas Fitzgerald, Chair

 John Gannon, Vice Chair

 Vince Rice, Clerk

 Sarah Fisher

 Tony Tribuno