

MARIHUANA POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Report Summary

Committee

In accordance with Resolution #20-01, adopted on January 8, 2020, the Marihuana Policy Advisory Committee was formed to advise and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees regarding potential marihuana facilities and establishments in the Township. The committee is composed of representatives from the Board of Trustees, Township administrative and law enforcement staff, the Township's planning consultant, an attorney who represents several potential marihuana businesses, and the Township's attorney.

Background

In 2018, voters across Michigan passed recreational use of marihuana with 56% voting yes. Washtenaw County approved the measure with 68% voting yes and Pittsfield voters approved recreational marijuana by 63%. According to the State Marijuana Regulatory Agency, 46 municipalities have adopted ordinances relating to medical and adult use marihuana in different degrees, and several other municipalities are in the process of adopting medical and/or adult use marihuana ordinances.

Committee Review

In the committee's early meetings in January and February, the focus was on understanding generally what is happening in the marihuana industry in Michigan. The group reviewed news articles and resources available on the State's Marihuana Regulatory Agency website, and had discussions about the statutory framework the Township is working within. The committee examined the differences between medical marihuana facilities and adult use establishments, and the various types of licenses available within each of those categories.

The committee also reviewed past locations of marihuana-related businesses in the Township, along with other areas in the Township which might be appropriate locations for marihuana-related activity. The committee started to review potential processes for local approval of an application for a state license, including whether a marihuana business would best be allowed as a permitted or conditional use, the optimal number of licensed businesses to be located within the Township, and all available zoning options.

In early March, the committee began to review maps for the placement of potential marihuana locations, but was unable to reconvene until April 21st due to the interruptions caused by COVID-19. Since then, the committee met twice in a virtual space in April, continuing to consider potential sites, reviewing potential ordinances, and outlining what the process and impact on Township personnel of reviewing an application and maintaining appropriate oversight of marihuana businesses would look like.

Throughout the process, committee members have discussed possible issues that residents may have with the Township adopting a marijuana ordinance. Discussions centered on location, business types, public safety concerns, and odor emissions. Some committee members took a tour of a testing/ safety compliance facility, a provisioning center, and a retailer to gain a better understanding of the business models.

Committee Recommendations

Although the committee has worked diligently and productively to accomplish the work laid out in Resolution #20-01, the interruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, together with the committee's increased awareness of recent developments in the regulatory and business environments related to marihuana, have prevented the committee from completing its work by the original target date of May 13, 2020. The committee therefore recommends and requests that the Board of Trustees extend the time frame for the committee to complete its work to July 22, 2020.

Committee Members

Michelle L. Anzaldi, Clerk
Linda Edwards-Brown, Trustee
Matthew Harshberger, Director of Public Safety
Belinda Kingsley, Zoning and Code Enforcement Administrator
Daniel C. Cramer, Attorney for potential marihuana licensees
Benjamin R. Carlisle, Township Planning Consultant
Andrew F. Fink III, Township Attorney