

**NARRAGANSETT TOWN COUNCIL  
WORK SESSION MEETING  
JANUARY 3, 2017 MINUTES**

At a Work Session Meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Narragansett held on Tuesday, January 3, 2017 at 6:00 p.m., at the Narragansett Town Hall.

Present: Susan Cicilline-Buonanno, President  
Matthew M. Mannix, President Pro Tem  
Jill A. Lawler, Member  
Michael T. Moretti, Member  
Patrick W. Murray, Member  
James M. Manni, Town Manager  
Joe Lindbeck, Assistant Attorney General  
Nancy DeNuccio, Partnership Prevention

Susan Cicilline-Buonanno, President calls the work session meeting regarding Marijuana in Rhode Island with Nancy Arnold DeNuccio, Executive Director, Narragansett Prevention Partnership and Joe Lindbeck, Assistant Attorney General representing the Rhode Island Attorney General's office.

Joe Lindbeck explained that her unit was tasked to address municipalities in Rhode Island to educate the communities about the issues around medical marijuana that has been seen in Rhode Island now and what has been learned from the western states about commercial marijuana. She said that since there was a potential of commercialization of marijuana in Rhode Island they want to show the options that can be done and the town

would have a voice. She left copies of resolutions opposing commercial marijuana and zoning ordinances that have been enacted by other communities in Rhode Island regarding medical marijuana and potential retail marijuana for the council.

She said that in Rhode Island there is decrim and medical marijuana. The decrim is a \$150.00 fine that goes through the traffic tribunal for an ounce or less and a substance abuse assessment in family court. She explained that when the General Assembly did pass medical marijuana and it went through many legislative changes. She said that it was to be adequately regulated and they wanted public safety and for the public welfare. The authorized users are compassion centers, caregivers, patients, cooperative cultivations and new cultivator's license holders. She said an authorized purchaser can buy 2.5 ounces for their patients; a patient can grow up to 12 plants, a caregiver can grow up to 36 plants and it is depending upon the amount of patients and cultivators' don't have a plant limit they go by square footage. She said that there is a lot of marijuana in the Rhode Island communities. She also noted that Rhode Island has the highest marijuana plant possession number in the country with three other states. She explained that at least 8 states in the country do not allow plant cultivation by a normal cardholder which they believe is a potential hazard to the community.

Joe Lindbeck, assistant attorney general also explained that there is no restriction on where the cardholders can grow marijuana plants. They can grow the plants anywhere such as residential or commercial or industrial. She said as of this year however not more than 24 plants can be in a unit, not a building. She also noted that now they have to be inspected by the official and licensed which is new this year and receive a certificate from the building official. She also said they need a licensed electrician inspection and certification and are to register with the state police. The attorney general's office believes this is not happening. She said that in Rhode Island there are only 3 licensed compassion centers by statute in Warwick, Providence and Middletown.

Attorney Lindbeck spoke of the butane labs and how they are odorless, weightless and the dangers of fire from a static or a cigarette lighter.

It was noted that the compassion centers have stated that they pay over \$30,000 a month for the electrical usage to cultivate the marijuana plants.

She said they have seen public safety and public hazards since the inception of authorizing the marijuana growers. She explained that there have been at least 4 fires from cultivators and 4 butanes fires and one with a death in the town of South Kingstown.

She spoke of greenhouse emissions as well as public welfare on mold increases in homes and there is an upswing in break-ins and robbery with card holders being assaulted.

She said that if you are allowed to grow 12 plants which yield 12 pounds but you are only allowed to use 2.5 ounces the question is where it goes and the answer is it goes on the streets. She noted that the cultivators can sell excess to the compassion centers but where is the excess from the patients or the authorized growers.

It was noted that the Attorney General supports medical marijuana as it helps the people who needed however, the concern is the cultivators are not adequately regulated.

Attorney Lindbeck also explained that law enforcement isn't able to confirm the location of the growers. She noted the cooperatives are supposed to register with the state police. However police officers can only confirm the patient and caregivers name and id.

Attorney Lindbeck explained that the Department of Business Regulations and the Department of Health have dual license rolls for marijuana. She explained that the pyramid is as follows: Compassion Centers (3) cultivators (no limit of cultivators), cooperatives (people growing together), caregivers and patients. She noted the top of the pyramid was highly regulated but not the bottom of the pyramid.

Attorney Lindbeck spoke of the options in zoning that the town can take to have some authority for the control of the commercial or retail of the marijuana market.

She said there is no evidence that it would be better in the commercial market.

She said the questions for commercialization are:

Are we allowing for the medical relief for the constituents?

No because RI has medical marijuana.

Are we allowing for small amount of possession?

No because RI is de-criminal for possession.

Are we going to help people stay out of the ACI?

There are only five offenders serving in the ACI on marijuana charges and it was possession intent to deliver, delivery and high amounts. Only three are waiting for trial.

Nancy DeNuccio addressed the council on the difficulty of regulated marijuana and the impact on the youth in Narragansett.

She said that RI is 5<sup>th</sup> in country for 12 to 17 year olds using marijuana and marijuana is not legalized. She noted that for 18 to 25 year olds Rhode Island is 4<sup>th</sup>. She noted that 19.2% of Narragansett High School use marijuana and 21.0% of South Kingstown High School use marijuana. She noted that 1 in 16 will likely become addicted.

She also spoke of the difference today in the THC today than in the 1960's. She said today the students use it mostly through vapors and not by smoking a joint.

She spoke of brownies, gummy bears, chews and cookies laced with THC that are now available to students as well as a vapor that looked like a pen. She spoke of the increase in emergency room visits due to all of the above.

Nancy DeNuccio read a letter from the Attorney General of Colorado to the Governor of California regarding the increase in crimes and motor vehicle accidents, and deaths, emergency room visits and increased calls to poison control.

She asked the town council to contact the town's Senators and Representatives on their feelings of commercializing and legalizing marijuana.

The following individuals spoke: Ray Kagels and Emily Cotter

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourns at 7:00 p. m.

ATTEST:



Anne M. Irons, CMC  
Council Clerk

MINUTES ACCEPTED AS  
PRESENTED 02-27-17



Anne M. Irons, CMC  
Council Clerk

A digital format is made a part of the record for a complete account of the council meeting.