**TNP Marijuana Committee**

**Minutes of 6/2/22**

**Present:** Steve Kleppin (Planning & Zoning), Josh Goldstein (Ordinance Committee), Tory Sullivan (NPS), Diana Revolus (Common Council / business owner & parent), Jeff Santo (RIPPLE / peer support specialist), Daniella Arias (The Hub), Kelley Meier (Norwalk Health Dept), Diamond Sead\* (Human Services Council school-based health centers & parent), Ginger & Larry Katz (Courage to Speak Foundation), Nicole Hampton (Recovery Coach Professional & parent), Tom Roncinske (Norwalk Police Dept), Margaret Watt\* (Positive Directions & parent) \**TNP co-chairs*

1. Introductions were made.
2. Update on HB5329 which is now law, amending last year’s cannabis law:
	1. Removed the limit of 1 cannabis establishment per 25,000 population. (City may choose to keep that ratio.)
	2. Advertising changes:
		1. Billboards will now be 1500 feet from schools, houses of worship, rec centers, etc., instead of 500 feet
		2. Digital signs prohibited between 6am and 11pm
		3. No advertising of out of state establishments
3. Billboard on Westport Ave that we identified as being out of compliance with the existing state law has been removed. Good job with advocacy!
4. Update from Ordinance (Josh):
	1. Josh /Ordinance members drafted an ordinance discussed at most recent Ordinance Committee meeting: [minutes](https://norwalkct.org/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/18542) ; draft ordinance (starting [p 19 of agenda](https://www.norwalkct.org/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/18513) for last meeting)
	2. Ordinance will:
		1. lift moratorium to allow people to submit applications for retail sites once state approves the first 12 cannabis applications;
		2. address public consumption;
		3. address management of trust account from the 3% municipal sales tax.
	3. Issues such as location of cannabis establishments, signage, etc. will be in the purview of P&Z
	4. Taxing districts own property (Town Green in 1st district; Bayley Beach in 6th taxing district) that are not public spaces even though people think of them as parks. They will have to make their own rules. Unlikely to allow cannabis use, however.
	5. 3% municipal sales tax
		1. Draft ordinance would put the money into a special non-lapsing trust account
		2. Draft ordinance would require that Community Services Dept provide guidelines for use of the funds within the 6 allowed categories in the state law
		3. Discussion about needs for funds:
			1. Prevention is already underfunded. Funding for awareness campaigns, needs for support groups at schools. [2020 national report](https://learnaboutsam.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2020-Impact-Report1.pdf) on impact of legalization found that cannabis addiction in teens increases 25%. [Latest study](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/add.15895) just found that cannabis use by teens increases in legal states.
			2. Law enforcement is going to have expanded needs (compliance checks at retailers and public designated consumption space, DUIs, etc)
	6. Timeline: Next Ordinance Meeting will be on June 21 at 7pm. They will probably vote as to whether to go ahead with a public hearing which would then be in July.
		1. There would later be a 2nd public hearing before P&Z – and ultimately additional hearings on each specific cannabis establishment
5. Update from P&Z (Steve)
	1. P&Z and health dept mapped out areas of the city, schools, etc. to identify potential locations for cannabis establishments, based on last year’s law about the 500’ distance. They are now re-mapping based on the new guidelines and a new list of houses of worship from Lamond.
	2. P&Z is recommending that the local regulations should link to all the state documents and definitions since those can and are likely to change
	3. Cannabis establishments could be microcultivators, packagers, retailers, etc.
		1. Historically P&Z has dealt with production establishments (e.g., distillery /brewery) the same as manufacturing. It could be different with marijuana because of increased security needs.
		2. Retail aspect is more straightforward.
	4. Signage regulations are pretty tight
6. Will there be money for prevention/ awareness before year 3? (Year 3 is when the state starts allocating marijuana revenue into a Prevention & Recovery fund. Funds are to be used for prevention, treatment, recovery, and data collection.) Norwalk doesn’t have to wait to allocate money, but has to find the funds.
7. Discussion of designated public space for consumption:
	1. Nicole asks when will Council hold public forum on the public designated space? Will they be medically monitored safe spaces?
	2. Law just says “a place” – will likely need to be owned or controlled by the City – Ordinance has been discussing with lawyers.
	3. Tom comments that buying on the street will be a serious problem because of fentanyl. So better have a lot of Narcan!
	4. Police Update (Tom):
		1. When laws for speed limit were 55, everyone drove at 65; and when the limit increased so did the speed. Similarly, when marijuana was an infraction, that kept it in check. Now you can smell it everywhere. Everyone already thinks it’s legal everywhere.
		2. Cars drive by reeking of weed and police can’t do anything about it. Will lead to crashes. Just like now in high schools where kids are vaping all day long in the bathrooms.
	5. Diana pointed out that designated public consumption space will not just be for Norwalk. People can come from other towns.
		1. Jeff suggests some kind of beach or park pass type of sticker to use that space, with pay to play as an alternative. That way out of towners would pay to offset the costs of Narcan, law enforcement, etc. for that area.
		2. Plus would provide data tracking of who is coming here
	6. What kind of public consumption spaces / ordinances do we have in Norwalk for alcohol?
		1. Drinking at the beach is ok – no glass bottles
8. Next steps:
	1. June 21st 7pm next Ordinance Committee meeting (not a public hearing, can listen in)
	2. Email Josh with any comments: jgoldstein@norwalkct.org
	3. Next TNP MJ Committee meeting: July 7th 4pm same zoom link