

## **TNP Marijuana Committee 9/1/22**

**Present:** Nicole Hampton (parent / woman in recovery), Wendy Mendes (NCC), Aniella Fignon (Health Dept), Josh Goldstein (Ordinance), Diamond Sead (HSC / SBHC and parent), Rebecca Oliveira (TNP coordinator), Margaret Watt (Positive Directions and parent)

### **1. Announcements**

- a. Shared flyer for Ginger's upcoming training - Courageous Parenting 101 on Saturday 9/10 - pls spread the word
- b. Please help promote Positive Directions' free teen support groups, held jointly with YBI and funded through Norwalk ARPA grant - SMART Teens group is continuing; girls' support group is wrapping up and boys' support group will be starting
- c. Municipal reports:
  - i. Health dept will be at the public hearing
- d. Ginger is speaking on Nov 7th to the NCC nursing faculty
- e. NCC has opioid/substance misuse awareness grant to spend by Sept 30, and mental/behavioral health grant from governor by Dec 30
  - i. Planned spending on Fresh Check Day and other wellness day
  - ii. RG Discovery training
  - iii. MHFA, QPR TOT
  - iv. Ideas: bus ads or billboards, awareness campaign, art therapy exploration, wellness fairs to accompany freshman forum

### **2. Ordinance public hearing 9/20 - 7pm - hybrid (council chambers) or Zoom**

- a. Josh discussed how the City plans to raise awareness about the public hearing
  - i. City is required to put legal notices in newspaper and on website
  - ii. People are confused:
    1. people asking "are you legalizing"?
    2. Ordinance + amendment to zoning regs - this public hearing is only on ordinance - amendment is just being drafted but not yet ready for public viewing
    3. Currently the text of proposed ordinance is in several documents
  - iii. Public hearing will start with a presentation on the proposal (like first hearing- Deanna, Lamond, Steve Kleppin...), but that overall presentation will include aspects (like the map and the zoning piece) that aren't at stake in the Ordinance hearing
    1. Lamond is working on the guidelines for solicitation of the funding
  - iv. Due to the importance of this new endeavor, the City will be doing more than usual ahead of this particular hearing, but hasn't fully decided what. They will decide next week and Josh will let us know
    1. Aniella suggests broadcasting what the question is that is to be answered

2. Josh: Ordinance is proposed to become law, so the legal question is: ***Do we think this is ready to be voted on by the full Council?*** Based on public comment, committee decides whether to go to the full Council. The community question is: ***Do we think this is a worthy investment for Norwalk?***
  3. Margaret suggests a FAQ and that the presentation of the bigger ideas/context be shared ahead of the hearing, over a couple weeks, so that people have time to absorb. Should be bilingual
- b. Margaret asks what the outcome would be if most of the public feedback went against bringing the industry into Norwalk; would the City stop? Have a referendum? Other?
    - i. The comments at the public hearing would provide input to committee and thus could result in tweaks to the proposed ordinance. There has been no discussion of this issue going to a referendum
    - ii. Feel free to ask Josh questions!! [jgoldstein@norwalkct.org](mailto:jgoldstein@norwalkct.org)
  - c. What can we do to support the awareness?
    - i. Nicole is writing an op ed to publish in the next couple days
    - ii. TNP will include information in our social media and parent newsletter, will likely rerun some past social posts
  - d. Discussion
    - i. Nicole - concerns about the lack of regulation and prevention in the cannabis legislation (not ordinance): no cap on THC vape cartridges, funding for prevention... where's the state funding going?
    - ii. Josh - City can restrict the industry - example of the City preserving the 1 business per 25K pop
    - iii. Police have expressed concern about enforcement - Josh: section 1.6 of ordinance says someone can be ticketed and pay \$50 for consumption in nondesignated spot (\$250 for business)
    - iv. Nicole - will City provide funding for cannabis testing kits?
    - v. Margaret - Can the local ordinance go beyond the state law in terms of something like consequences for underage consumption of cannabis vs alcohol? (Prevention is working to address the state law which is very weak on this and inconsistent across other substance policy... but would be nice to have strong laws locally.)
      1. Josh will look into this question
      2. Aniella noted that if Norwalk implemented consequences for underage cannabis consumption, even if it was just to make the local situation consistent for marijuana and alcohol, then there would be an inequity between Norwalk and surrounding towns in terms of consequence. (There will already be inequity in terms of access.)

### 3. Next Steps

- a. Ordinance will share the proposed ordinance as a single document when it is ready

- b. Josh will update on the City's plans next week so we can share/ support opportunities for people to get informed
- c. Josh will look into whether Ordinance can do something locally to strengthen and make consistent the consequences for underage consumption
- d. TNP will be sharing info on social media and parent newsletter
- e. Margaret & Wendy to connect re funding