

July 20, 2021

Schultzville, NY

A public hearing on the topic of Cannabis was held on this day in the Town Hall. Present were Supervisor Oberly, Councilmen Dean Michael, Chris Juliano, Michael Whitton, and Councilwoman Nancy Cunningham and Town Clerk Carol-Jean Mackin. There were three people in the audience.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

At 6:00 PM, Supervisor Oberly called the public hearing to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Notice of Public Hearing was read aloud by Town Clerk Mackin.

Supervisor Oberly opened the floor for comments and explained the purpose of the public hearing is to hear public comments on the issue of cannabis. the Town will need to make decisions before September 1, 2021 so if local laws are needed, there is time to enact them.

1. Do we want to allow the sale of cannabis products in our Town after the regulations get developed by NYS. If we allow the sale, we will be able to receive a 3% sales tax revenue source. If we do not approve the sale in Town, we will not get any of the sales tax revenue.
2. Do we want to allow smoking parlors in Town?
3. Do we want to allow smoking out in public places? No cannabis smoking is allowed in private and public vehicles and eating places. Organizations can restrict smoking in their facilities and grounds.

All the above are subject to the Town's Zoning as to locations and restrictions which must be revised. There are some other issues possible once we get the new rules and regulations from NYS government later this year.

Russ Tompkins – Governor Cuomo has said marijuana is a gateway drug and now that he can make money on it, he is in favor of legalizing it; Russ is against any use of marijuana and wants the town board to opt out.

Frank Venezia - disagrees with Russ, allow all that is possible and collect the taxes. Feels that alcohol is more a gateway drug for young people. Don't have different rules for cannabis than those for alcohol and smoking; have the same laws for all three. Alcohol is probably more debilitating for our bodies than marijuana.

Eliot Werner – agree with Frank Venezia.

Mike Whitton – said that 3% tax is allowed on sales in town.

Ray – there is no consensus among towns on this issue after talking to the other Town Supervisors. He asked residents to email their comments to him by August

10th, the next meeting. Mike Whitton understands if the Town passes a law allowing for cannabis, the people can sign a petition to call for a permissive referendum. So, the Board is concerned about the timing of any laws; if a referendum is called for, we may have to have a special election.

Eliot Werner- asked for clarification on the process of allowing cannabis in Town. If the town takes no action, then all cannabis is allowed in town at the end of the year by default. Mike Whitton explained the process. He thinks that dispensaries won't be located in Town as they will go to where the people are and that is other Towns like Rhinebeck. In the new year we will have to develop zoning laws to manage dispensaries, regulating where they can be and how they can operate.

Russ Tompkins – if we do nothing, it opens the ability for a dispensary in town and smoking parlors and smoking in public. We have no bars in town. People don't want drunk drivers in town or people driving under the influence, people can smoke at home like they can drink at home now. Encourages the Board to vote no to all three questions. Ray Oberly said the only question that can be reversed is if we vote no to the sales now, we can reverse that decision later.

Frank Venezia. Are there zoning regulations against bars in Town? Ray said no. Can we have a smoke shop in town? Yes. Frank said we shouldn't be passing laws that are inconsistent.

Nancy Cunningham - said if we don't have shops in our Town, people are going to buy it and drive here. Mike Whitton agreed, and considered a smoking parlor for example, feels they will open in other places but people will still be driving home to Clinton.

Dean Michael- we have an older population in town so he does not see marijuana as a really popular item.

Ray – points out that federally, marijuana still illegal, that is a conundrum.

At 6:22PM, There being no further comments, MM Supervisor Oberly, 2nd Councilman Michael to close the public hearing. All aye. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:22 PM, MM Supervisor Oberly, 2nd Councilman Michael to adjourn the public hearing. Al aye. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Carol-Jean Mackin".

Carol-Jean Mackin,
Town Clerk