



Cannabis Open Public Forum – Summary of Public Comments

May 12, 2021

Council President Hagerty described the timeline to adopt a Cannabis Ordinance and the consequences of failing to do so before the August deadline. He also presented a map of the City identifying the locations of schools to aid in discussion of potential zoning ordinances distancing Cannabis business from schools. He then opened the meeting to the public for comment.

Aaron Weber voiced a question as to research into economic impact on downtown Woodbury of opening Cannabis business that has been completed to facilitate businesses that may want to move into the City.

Janet Argentina asked about the timeline and the necessity of going to the Planning/Zoning Board to pass an ordinance amending the Zoning Chapter of the City Code.

Ted Johnson asked about the Woodbury results of the Ballot Referendum on Legalization of Recreational Cannabis (Council President Hagerty confirmed that 76% voted in favor of legalizing recreational marijuana) and indicated that the residents of Woodbury thereby voiced support of opting in.

Charles Hughes raised a concern that if the Durand Academy and the Woodbury Child Development Center were included in an exclusion zone, as he believed they should, they would prohibit Cannabis sales over most of Route 45.

Jared Hunter commented he would like to see a racial equity impact assessment in helping the City to craft a Cannabis ordinance. He also asked how the discussion can be expanded beyond the City Council Meeting for those that cannot attend meetings either virtually or in person.

Gary Pierce commented he is opposed to any kind of Cannabis legalization in Woodbury and indicated that if such legalization is implemented, the City should carefully consider the impact of the odor of these businesses.

Kaylyn Roger reiterated concerns about racial equity and proximity of Cannabis businesses near schools. She also voiced concern about proximity to residential districts.

Jamilah Damiani asked whether any panelists had been to a dispensary. (No Council members or panelists had been to one before).

May 26, 2021

Council President Hagerty introduced an updated map prepared by City professionals indicating school locations. He also reviewed the process of introducing an ordinance, the need for Planning/Zoning review, and adoption. He also described the strategy employed by local municipalities to opt out at this time and leaving open the opportunity to opt in at a later date.

John Traenkner voiced his support of opting into Cannabis business and his optimism about the economic impact on the City.

Charles Hughes thanked Council for the updated map and voiced a question in regard to whether Cannabis was prohibited in school zones. He voiced concerns about whether all schools were included in the map and interpretations of the Drug Free School Zone laws. He also asked how the Planning and Zoning Board had been considering these issues.

Amanda Terpstra introduced herself as co-founder of Bestbuds, a CBD and potential Cannabis business interested in working in Woodbury. She offered herself and her business as a resource for the City in finding information about Cannabis business.

Jared Hunter voiced his support for opting into Cannabis Business in the City, but endorsed a racial equity impact assessment as part of permitting these enterprises in the City.

Jamilah Damiani voiced concern about the governing body making decisions about Cannabis Business in the City when none of them had been in a dispensary before. She stated that her father had worked in a dispensary and could vouch for the quality of regulation of these facilities in Florida. She encouraged the elected officials to visit New Jersey dispensaries and document their findings.

Kaylyn Roger again voiced concern about Cannabis businesses in residential areas and asked how the community would continue to be involved in the decision-making process. The solicitor described the necessary process and public hearings.

Anthony Alveario said that certain businesses, including methadone clinics, drug paraphernalia stores, second hand clothing stores, liquor stores, and others, contribute to the destruction of commercial districts and small towns. He is concerned that some of these businesses are already permitted in the commercial district in the City and implied that permitting Cannabis businesses in the downtown would lead to a negative result in Woodbury.

John Fulmer voiced concerns about the inchoate nature of regulation and unfamiliarity of Council and professionals with new Cannabis laws and suggested that the City should opt out until more clarity is available. He stated that he supported an opt in ordinance once there is more clarity, though he stated that cultivation and manufacture would fit poorly in Woodbury.

Ken McIlvaine asked what tax revenue would be generated by permitting Cannabis business in the City. He suggested that this would be a small revenue generator.

Pamela Lewis stated that the map prepared by the City Professionals was helpful, but again brought up concerns about conflicts of state and federal law in regard to Cannabis businesses in close proximity to schools. She was worried about how failure to opt out could lead to a 'free for all' and questioned which businesses the City was most interested in permitting or limiting.

June 9, 2021

Council President Hagerty shared a New Jersey Cannabis fact sheet and invited the public to speak.

Jamilah Damiani asked if Council had any discussions about opting in or out outside of the public meetings. The Council President stated that he was working to have a dialogue with interested parties and Councilwoman O'Connor stated that residents from her ward had reached out to her with feedback and these discussions began prior to the public hearings. The Solicitor explained elected officials could not have group discussions amongst themselves outside of a public meeting.

Hugh Giordano came as a representative of the United Food Commercial Workers Union, a national labor union representing Cannabis workers. Stated that Cannabis was poised to create very good jobs and careers for educated New Jersey residents. Recommended looking at the City of Bayonne ordinance as a model.

Amanda Terpstra introduced herself as co-founder of Bestbuds, a CBD and potential Cannabis business interested in working in Woodbury. She cited a recent article from Northjersey.com which implied that there was considerable revenue available from Cannabis sales. She again stated that she and her business were available to discuss opportunities for Cannabis business in the City.

Jared Hunter asked about the map used in the discussion and who would prepare any ordinance Council would consider. He also asked how public feedback was being recorded and documented. The Council President explained how various City Professionals have worked together to generate the map. Mr. Hunter again voiced his support for a racial equity component in any ordinance crafted. The Solicitor explained that his office would likely write any ordinance, but the writing itself would rely on the discussions and input from other professionals. The Solicitor stated that a summary or transcript documenting the public hearings would be compiled.

Kaylyn Roger stated that all child care facilities should be considered in zoning Cannabis businesses as permitted uses. She questioned the communication between the Solicitor and Council prior to introduction of an ordinance. The Solicitor described the process for getting input from Council for the drafting of an ordinance. Ms. Roger suggested that any communication with the Solicitor about any ordinance should be in a full public meeting.

Ken McIlvaine asked if we were aware of what towns in the County had already opted out. The Solicitor provided an update as to the ongoing discussions going on in some neighboring towns. Mr. McIlvaine pointed out that cities like Paterson, a much larger municipality, would certainly make much more revenue and would make a poor comparison as to how much money and how many union jobs Cannabis business might generate in Woodbury. He also voiced concern that the City Police had not publicly weighed in on this matter. Chief Ryan urged everyone to review available data. Chief Ryan stated that there are conflicting reports about the effect of legalized Cannabis on local crime.