AGENDA NO: I

MEETING DATE: June 14, 2017
Community Forum

THE FOLLOWING PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE WAS RECEIVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL FOLLOWING POSTING OF THE AGENDA

Dana Swanson

From: Ikani Taumoepeau
Sent: Monday, June 12, 2017 9:17 AM
To: Dana Swanson
Subject: FW: Marijuana in Morro Bay
Attachments: marijuana in morro bay.pdf; marijuana..pages

'morning Dana,

Just FYI

From: Susan Stewart[redacted]
Sent: Monday, June 12, 2017 9:09 AM
To: Ikani Taumoepeau <itaumoepeau@morrobayca.gov>; Jamie Irons <jirons@morrobayca.gov>; John Headding <jheadding@morrobayca.gov>; Matt Makowetski <mmakowetski@morrobayca.gov>; Marlys McPherson <mmcpherson@morrobayca.gov>; Robert Davis <rdavis@morrobayca.gov>
Cc: Scot Graham <sgraham@morrobayca.gov>
Subject: Marijuana in Morro Bay

I will be in Evanston, Illinois this week and will miss the community forum on marijuana. Attached are my thoughts on the subject in pdf and pages forms.

Should be an interesting event...

All the best,

Susan Stewart

June 9, 2017

Dear Mayor and Council

I will be out of town for the community forum on marijuana in Morro Bay, but would like to offer some comments. I recognize the many proven (and unproven) medical claims for this substance in it's variety of forms, and It is obvious that it is a recreational drug that will find it's way into people's hands in the same way that alcohol has and did during prohibition. I also know that while we have legislation in California that legalizes use and propagation, it is still criminal at the federal level.

I believe it is important to look at other states where marijuana has been legalized to prepare for the challenges and maximize the benefits should we choose to go forward with brick and mortar dispensaries in Morro Bay. I also firmly believe that we need to have policy and regulations that are pro-active rather than reactive. It makes sense to limit the number of facilities and specify optimal locations. We should have an ordinance in place to eliminate future conflicts. And we should be sure that taxes and fees on the business(es) compensate the city for any extra law enforcement needs. I personally feel in a town this size we need to limit the number of dispensaries to one. (Perhaps it could be a cooperative effort? A "shopping mall" style business under one roof?)

We can't ignore the potential of an economic boost that such sales could provide. But I would strongly recommend that we place any dispensary businesses in a high traffic commercial area, and not on the Embarcadero, downtown core or North Morro Bay/ Main Street commercial districts. Nor do I think they should be in "industrial" areas, especially those which are adjacent to neighborhoods or are isolated from mainstream activities. In my mind the optimal place would be a facility like the vacant Video Palace building across from the Dollar Store: a commercial district, not adjacent to homes or schools, with plenty of parking and high visibility. We should treat this as a mainstream business, (no sneaking in and out of curtained side street buildings) but also one that could potentially impact neighborhoods if it were allowed too close to residential districts.

As regards to cultivation on an agricultural scale, my main concern (aside from the obvious challenges of crop theft and policing) is the potential for excessive use of water as well as herbicides and pesticides. Could a grower be required to provide an independent source of water and to grow organically?

Former city attorney Rob Schultz did a lot of research for the city when we were discussing this before. Hopefully his work can be a spring-board for what we do next, and city staff can research and prepare what is needed to make this viable for Morro Bay without hiring consultants.

Susan Stewart, [redacted]
Morro Bay resident and business owner