

**Norwell Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2017**

TOWN OF NORWELL
TOWN CLERK
2017 JAN 26 PM 3:42

Present: Jason Brown, Ellen Allen, Gregg McBride, Alison Demong, Peter Smellie, Peter Morin

Open Session

*Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, to approve the agenda as written.
Unanimously voted*

Citizen Comments - None

Selectmen's report

Ticksmart training will take place on February 8th. Please see further information on the Board of Health website, where you can also RSVP for the training program.

Town Administrator's Report

None

Chief Ross – Swearing in Ceremony

Chief Ross was present to swear in newly promoted Sgt. Brian Resnick. Chief Ross summarized Sgt. Resnick's exceptional career for all.

Marijuana Discussion - Rep. DeCoste and Sen. O'Connor

Sen. Patrick O'Connor and Rep. David DeCoste were present to discuss the implications of the new law to legalize marijuana in the state.

Mr. Brown summarized the legalization process in the state, beginning with medical use and zoning for a medical marijuana facility. The ballot question failed to legalize recreational use in the Town but passed at the state level. Sen. O'Connor said that the legislature passed a six month delay for retail sales activities, but possession of the specified limit is legal. Retail facilities are still being discussed. He explained the history of the ballot question and how it was written. All reviewed and discussed the taxes that will be levied on recreational sales and compared the percentages to those of Colorado, whose sales and use law is comparable. All discussed the current legal limits, which will also be addressed during the legislative session. Massachusetts is the first small state to legalize marijuana, and all are anticipating out of state purchasers from neighboring NE states. All discussed the ballot question – the legislature can't change the intent, just the laws around it. Sen. O'Connor expanded the discussion on the intent of the law. The question is how to set up the retail portion of the law and still protect the communities who don't want sales in their towns. A full year will elapse before sales can actually occur (two 6 month delays).

Options for the Town: collect data for the opt-out question, and then put this question on the ballot to decide on a moratorium. Once a moratorium is in place the clock starts running immediately, so the prudent choice is to wait as long as possible to enact this. The Town has already approved the medical marijuana facility, which means that recreational sales would be allowable.

Colorado's statute is similar to that of Massachusetts. Mass Medi Spa has a provisional license to dispense medical marijuana, and could come back to the BOS for approval to sell recreational product. Discussion ensued about options to block sales through various state and local channels. The legislature has worked to get the MMA involved. All hope that this will be openly debated and discussed by the legislature.

The BOS would like to pursue both options. As the moratorium can't be renewed, they will wait as long as possible to commence.

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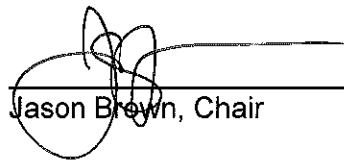
All voiced their concerns, including Chief Ross, who stated that there are no current laws to test or address drivers under the influence. A simple test measurement doesn't work. The Police Department is sending an officer to out of state training to recognize people driving under the influence. It is hard to get an OUI conviction currently. Questions were asked and answered about concerns and information about the law. The current laws allow 6 plants per person, 12 per household.

For an Opt Out bylaw which would apply to all commercial retail operations; the Town would need 10% of registered voters' signatures for a petition. Discussion ensued about opting out and potential revenue for surrounding communities choosing not to opt out. Per Mr. Morin, all surrounding towns are working in the same direction (opting out). The board discussed waiting to make a decision until the governor signs the new law which has a 6 month delay. The Town could hold a fall Special Town Meeting, then put the measure on a Town ballot.

Mr. Brown thanked Sen. O'Connor and Rep. DeCoste for attending the meeting.

Adjournment

Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, to adjourn at 8:27pm. Unanimously voted



Jason Brown, Chair