



MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF NEW PORT RICHEY

NEW PORT RICHEY CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

5919 MAIN STREET, NEW PORT RICHEY, FLORIDA

May 31, 2017

6:00 PM

ORDER OF
BUSINESS

1 Call to Order - Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Rob Marlowe at 6:00 pm. Those in attendance were, Deputy Mayor Jeff Starkey, Councilman Bill Phillips, Councilwoman Judy DeBella Thomas and Councilman Chopper Davis.

Also in attendance were City Manager Debbie Manns, City Clerk Judy Meyers, Chief of Police Kim Bogart, Development Director Lisa Fierce, Technology Solutions Director Bryan Weed and Senior Planner Chris Mettler.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2 Discussion on Medical Marijuana - Page 2

City Manager Manns introduced the item to Council. She stated that the purpose of the work session was to continue the discussion from the previous work session in April regarding medical marijuana. The purpose is how to accommodate the dispensaries within the city limits. The state legislature did not approve any regulations during the session and therefore the Department of Health has until July 1st to create the implementation rules. She then introduced Development Director Lisa Fierce who then made a presentation to Council.

Ms. Fierce began by stating the difference between the House and the Senate was the number of dispensaries. At the last work session she stated it was discussed what other jurisdictions are doing regarding medical marijuana. She then highlighted the changes in the counties and municipalities. The current LDC regulations include marijuana as a restricted personal use. There are development standards regarding those uses. There is also a 500 foot buffer from any other restricted personal use business. Concentrate tonight's discussion on issues relevant to dispensaries. Ms. Fierce then displayed a map of where the current restricted personal use businesses are located in the city. She then displayed a map which outlined where the dispensaries could be located within the current zoning. Ms. Fierce then showed various

photographs of what dispensaries look like across the country. Ms. Fierce then presented proposed design criteria including color, no bars on windows, no neon lighting, outdoor displays, interior lobby and requiring a security plan. Next steps are LDRB on June 22nd, ordinance first reading on July 18th and second reading on August 1st. Moratorium ends on August 21st.

Deputy Mayor Starkey stated that he hoped that the people would be more respectful than they were last time especially to the police chief. Mayor Marlowe then opened the floor for public comment.

Denise Houston came forward to speak and stated that we should be preparing the zoning and signage for medical marijuana and not recreational. She also suggested calling it cannabis.

Dr. Mark Hashim came forward to speak and stated that he has over 400 patients in the registry. This is helpful to patients. Worthwhile adventure and be spearhead and set standard for the state. He then spoke about revenues and the decrease in crime in Colorado. He uses it as an exit drug and allows him to get his patients off opioids. No one dies from cannabis. Cannot stop you from breathing like elements found in opioids. Benefit people.

Greg Smithwick came forward to speak and stated thanked Council members and staff for taking a heartfelt look at this issue. Wanted to make sure talking about medical cannabis dispensaries. Medical cannabis patients are patients who are sick. Not a pleasure seeking behavior. Opportunity to lead in the state and craft mood and direction.

Jamie Howe came forward to speak to thank Council. She has talked to various county commissions and felt like Council really listened to what she was saying. On the right path and keep moving forward.

Rachel Hagenbaugh came forward and stated that marijuana is a derogatory term and she would prefer cannabis as well. She owns 3 businesses in the city, a chair of one of the city's committees and now runs Tasty Tuesdays. This is what we are wanting and needing. As a patient cannot drive more than five or ten minutes. Put hearts into creating beautiful and family friendly. There are other types of businesses besides just dispensaries that can be brought here.

Anthony Livio came forward to speak and stated that he works at an ALF and the residents in his facility are not mobile. Give same opportunities as other businesses.

Gillian Leytham representing the Green Solution. First prong is location and where dispensaries should go. The number of dispensaries 1 per 67,222 optimum ratio. Two to three dispensaries based on total population in West Pasco. Should limit the number of dispensaries. Allocation to decide who gets to come in. Councilman Phillips asked how to judge merit. Trying to understand why go through that process because he believes what his merits are don't match up to others. Five or six approved vendors and they will decide where they want to be. Already taken criticism for what people thought they were thinking. Understand what perception. She replied to have comprehensive merit base process takes time. Not subjective criteria. Look at experience, background, product track record. State focused on cultivation whereas city focus on dispensaries. Deputy Mayor Starkey stated that the county has approved two in industrial zoning. Don't know if other municipalities will approve. We don't want to jump in and will do what is best for our community.

Doug Martin came forward to speak learn about what is going on in the city. Has anyone approached one of the five growers. Mayor Marlowe stated we are not at that point yet. Councilman Phillips stated if we have been proactive up until now why would implement something that looks like we are stalling. If our homework is done we are better to institute what the public has voted on. Perceived as a community that understands and not throw extra efforts on staff and the community. Not beneficial for the entire process. Mr. Martin stated dispensaries should be like Walgreens where respectable people can come in.

Faith Kropik came forward to speak. She stated her son has autism and has limited language. Want to have her son get medicine that can help him by his house. Get medicine at convenient location. Don't want to drive long distance to get something that can help him.

With no one else coming forward, Mayor Marlowe closed public comment and returned the floor back to Council. Deputy Mayor Starkey stated police has done good job cracking down on pill mills. The speaker at his Rotary meeting talked about the clinic by hospital. Fine to use term cannabis. Cannot compare medical cannabis to opioids. Whole community needs to be educated. Cannot compare the two. Commend colleagues as we have all done research. Should be treated like any other medical facility. Design and security is extremely important. Take out of the category for restricted use. Before approve is there a way require show preliminary computer graphics of what they are planning similar to Wright's Nutrition. Ms. Fierce stated that yes and if go that route then approve as a conditional use.

Councilman Davis stated medical cannabis should be its own category and taken out of restricted personal use. Whatever implementations should be in its own category. It is medical. Investigate in C-1 areas and in office districts.

Mayor Marlowe stated it strikes as a medical office use. Fit in with VA. Thanked Ms. Fierce as he did not think about conditional use. Give the oversight if conditional use. If it looks like a medical office he is happy.

Councilman Davis stated he like the idea of two dispensaries. There is a lot of bus use in the town.

Mayor Marlowe stated he thinks this does not belong in industrial area. If regulate then regulate alcohol establishments more than the medical cannabis.

Councilwoman DeBella Thomas stated that we don't think we have seen enough studies and science of other states. It seems across the board highway business district. Not comfortable not knowing repercussions. The industry as a retail market shopping moved to shipping to home. Companies will have to step into that. One of first drugs in behavioral treatment is marijuana and foolish to think that it can't become a problem. Want to see where Port Richey lands with their ordinance. Don't know what state is going to do. Whether it should be taxed and where dispensaries should be located. She appreciated the fact we're taking about it but not in rush to delineate. Highway business and not in city limits.

Councilman Phillips stated the marketplace will take care of itself if in right zones. New Port Richey is in the heart of West Pasco. Initially have three locations but market will not support it. Highway, bus route oriented, West Main Street and not in downtown due to parking issues and the marine district. Not regulate into industrial park. Conditional use for the first few to make sure we get the best. All side businesses work well with each other. Take out of the restricted use category. Good to look at everything and be ready when state comes around but need to be leaders and step up. Be compassionate with delivery of product. Shows we objectively understand the process. Not chasing the money. Staff and leadership to draft something accommodating. Pick out the best and move forward.

Deputy Mayor Starkey stated he did not agree with Councilwoman DeBella Thomas but respects her comments.

3 Adjournment

There being no further business to consider, upon proper motion, the meeting adjourned at 7:13 pm.

Approved: _____ (date)

_____(signed)

Initialed: _____

Judy Meyers, City Clerk