

CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY
September 14, 2020

Meeting Convened: 5:35 p.m. in the City Hall Auditorium

Meeting Adjourned: 7:12 p.m.

City Councilmembers present: Kraig Andrews, Chuck McDaniel, Phyllis Norris, Phil Pe'a, Anna Stout, Rick Taggart, and Mayor Duke Wortmann.

Staff present: City Manager Greg Caton, City Attorney John Shaver, Police Chief Doug Shoemaker, Finance Director Jodi Welch, Senior Assistant to the City Manager Greg LeBlanc, Management Analyst Johnny McFarland, Fire Chief Ken Watkins, Community Development Director Tamra Allen, Public Works Director Trent Prall, and City Clerk Wanda Winkelmann.

Mayor Wortmann called the meeting to order.

Agenda Topic 1. Discussion Topics

a. Discussion regarding Cannabis Regulation and Licensing within the City of Grand Junction

City Manager Caton introduced the topic. Police Chief Shoemaker reviewed the staff report, including the questions posed:

1. Should retail sales of medical and recreational marijuana be allowed? If so, where and/or with what conditions?
2. Should cultivation of marijuana be allowed. If so, where and/or with what conditions?
3. Should processing of marijuana be allowed? If so, where and/or with what conditions?
4. Should consumption of marijuana in "hospitality establishments" be allowed? If so, where and/or with what conditions?
5. Should a working group be formed to assist in proposed draft land use (and/or other) regulations?

Mayor Wortmann called for citizen comment.

Robin and Jeremy Cleveland spoke of their experience regarding an accident involving a driver who was under the influence of marijuana. They are not in favor of legalizing sales in GJ.

Dr. Kathleen Wilson discussed the effects of marijuana on young people, especially males and is opposed to allowing recreational sales.

Dan Ramsey spoke about the positive effects of cannabis and believes it needs to be regulated.

Lisa Pride stated that silence equals consent and commented on the negative impact of marijuana in the workplace.

Steve Wilson discussed the negative impacts of marijuana and the cause of diseases.

Ed Kowalski expressed concern about people speeding while high.

Liz Wise described her life as a child and her father's experience in Vietnam. She believes marijuana stores should be located in Grand Junction so purchasers don't have to drive to Palisade or DeBeque.

Darlene Distello provided handouts to Council regarding accident rates. She discussed an editorial in the *Denver Post* about Colorado accident rates.

Lisa Vin stated she has been a nurse for 52 years and has seen horrific impacts of marijuana use on families.

Charles Baines discussed the impact of marijuana on his four sons and how drugs can increase crime rates. He is opposed to recreational marijuana businesses.

Robbie Koos stated her support for a ballot measure, noted some marijuana products can be useful, and supports a tax that is earmarked for youth programming.

Sydney Norwood described how medical marijuana has helped her combat degenerative disc disease and she is no longer on oxygen.

Jessie Wise is an advocate for cannabis and discussed the effects of alcohol and meth on users.

Anton Abbott noted he was a marijuana user in his teens and is now opposed to its use.

Caleb Ferganchick encouraged research of how other local municipalities have addressed recreational marijuana businesses.

Diane Cox presented a picture of a brain scan of a typical brain vs. the brain of a marijuana user. She stated that no amount of revenue makes marijuana use okay.

Molly Strong stated that marijuana impacts thought processes and the motivation for youth to participate in social/after-school activities.

Parker Graham noted that marijuana legalization makes it safer for everyone.

Scott Beilfuss reported that Colorado is 50th in the United States for education and 17% of Mesa County residents live in poverty. He is curious how a marijuana question is placed on the ballot.

Mark Sills owns a dispensary in Parachute and noted the average age of his customers is between 40-50 years.

Rene Grossman discussed the revenues for marijuana sales. If a question is placed on the April ballot, she recommends including a question for taxing marijuana, limiting the number of available licenses, and those granted a license would be selected on merit (not via lottery).

Merle Miller does not support legalization of recreational marijuana businesses.

Cindy Savine stated her father's tumor shrunk as a result of cannabis use. She is a lobbyist and stated that marijuana is safer than alcohol. She recommends a merit system be used to choose those businesses granted a license.

Meghan Garcher is a CMU student working on a project team reviewing hemp production. She discussed the film, "Reefer Madness" and noted the drug war did not curb illegal use.

Mayor Wortmann closed citizen comments.

City Manager Caton reiterated staff's recommendation for a working group.

Attorney Shaver outlined the options for the April ballot:

1. Include a marijuana tax measure on the ballot (which would be a TABOR question).
2. City Council could place a referred measure on the ballot for marijuana businesses.
3. Citizens could petition to place an initiated measure on the ballot.

Citizen Diane Cox inquired about the past efforts by citizens to place a question on the ballot. The effort in 2016 was not successful and she wonders why this question is back on the table.

Councilmember Taggart expressed support for a working group and would like to see reliable data presented. Council was in agreement for the formation of a working group.

Agenda Topic 2. City Council Communication

Councilmember Taggart requested a future discussion about Catholic Outreach's request that was made earlier this year.

Councilmember Stout noted comments were made about individuals who are homeless and requested a workshop to review the support the City of Grand Junction has given service providers.

Councilmember Norris and Mayor Wortmann requested a memo summarizing this support. Councilmember Stout noted the importance of being able to ask questions of providers to ensure the City is taking a proactive approach. Councilmember McDaniel is on the Homeless Coalition and will send the meeting minutes to Council. Councilmember Taggart would like to know how COVID-19 has impacted services for individuals who are homeless.

Agenda Topic 3. Next Workshop Topics

City Manager Caton stated the next workshop on October 5 will be a presentation of the major operating budgets. The workshop will start at 4 p.m. and will last approximately four hours.

Agenda Topic 4. Other Business

There was none.

Adjournment

The Workshop adjourned at 7:12 p.m.