

## QUEENSTOWN COMMISSIONERS

### Public Hearing

August 30, 2017

**PRESENT:** President Thomas B. Willis, Jr., Commissioner Hogie Schuster, and Commissioner George L. Plumbo, Jr., Brynja Booth, Town Attorney, Amy Moore, Town Clerk, and Peter Johnston, Town Planner.

### **PUBLIC HEARING CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:10 P.M.**

Brynja Booth, Town Attorney, announced that this hearing was for the purpose of obtaining comments on proposed Ordinance 17-06 *AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF QUEENSTOWN TO AMEND THE QUEENSTOWN ZONING ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH LOCATIONS FOR MEDICAL CANNABIS LICENSE DISPENSARIES AND MEDICAL CANNABIS LICENSED PROCESSORS.*

This Ordinance would amend the Use Table to permit medical cannabis licensed dispensaries in the PRC, HC and RC districts with conditions and permit medical cannabis licensed processors in the I district.

Ms. Booth stated that all local jurisdictions are grappling with this issue. All uses are permissible by State law, but towns can designate and define where they go in each individual town.

Peter Johnston showed on the zoning map which districts were depicted in the Ordinance.

President Willis announced that the hearing was opened up for public comment:

- Joseph Kelkowsi - 117 Aker Road - doesn't want in town. Feels would bring wrong kind of people here. He went out around town with a petition against it and obtained 124 signatures. We don't need it in town. Mr. Kelkowski presented the petition to the Commissioners.
- Kim Keiler - Old Wharf Lane - asked if the dispensary would be open after normal business hours? She was informed that the Town has not received any formal proposal at this time.
- Dr. Peter Robertson - Del Rhodes Ave. - stated he has Industrial zoned property in Town where the processor would be permitted. He would be interested in this. As the processor is permitted, he would also like to see grower added to that zone. The history of herbal medicine dates back 2000 years. Having a medical marijuana dispensary in

town would be the same as having a pharmacy in town. He has family members who are physicians in the states they live in and it's been proven to work there. If not approved, we would be denying something proven to work. He believes the Commissioners should consider allowing a dispensary in the Town Center (TC). If permitted, it could stimulate foot traffic in the TC and could be great benefit towards economic development.

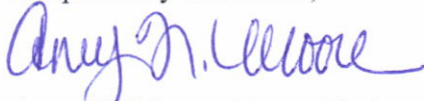
- Matt Anthony - Aker Road - He's against it. Recovering drug addict. He knows it's good for glaucoma and other illnesses, but those kinds of places attract people who use all kinds of drugs and alcohol and would bring guns and other weapons to this town. The Commissioners have no clue what can of worms it would be opening if they allow this. You don't put these things in small towns. Marijuana is a gateway drug to stronger drugs. Town needs to wake up. Don't need it and don't want it.
- Bill Booker - Metzdorf Lane - he inquired whether the Outlets had been approached about the dispensary being placed there, as it is one of the zoning districts that it is permitted. He thinks they should be made aware of the ordinance. If one resident is expressing concern, then most likely a majority of residents are concerned. Commissioners were elected to see to the best interests of the citizens. There are many reasons to deny. If there are no personal expectations of the Town Commissioners, they should deny. Is the medical cannabis dispensary really necessary? If majority wants it, they should vote for it. If not, then don't.
- George Buckler - Comegys Lane - He's against it. This is a small town, and the reason he came here. A lot of people know someone who is on drugs, and this won't be a good thing for the town.
- Warren Wright – The Drug Free Queen Anne's Coalition - only when medical cannabis is approved by the FDA will it be a good thing. It is still illegal in most places for a reason. Permitting recreational marijuana was introduced by the State last year, but did not pass. It will be coming back, and eventually sees it passing. There is only a 5% need for the medical cannabis and doesn't see it as a good thing for the community in Queenstown. It's an all cash business, which could lead to crime.
- Ashley Herr - Kingstown - one of the owners of Hippocratic Growth, the business interested in possibly opening a dispensary in Queenstown. She believes there is so much misinformation out there and hopes that those with concerns and questions would speak with her directly or read the application that was filed with the State that is available at the Town Office. The State regulations are very rigorous. What she wants to do will help the community and be a benefit. When asked why she wouldn't want to be on Kent Island, she stated that is where they initially looked. The only area that they would be permitted is an Industrial park, which has no vacancy. They are interested in a space in Centreville as well.
- At this point there were several people speaking and asking questions of Ms. Herr, with some getting loud and argumentative.

- Al Hardee, resident and Chairman of the Planning Commission, asked those present to please calm down. He stated he was against it at first, but after reading the application to the State, he changed his mind. There are enough regulations, stipulations and safeguards that he feels this business would work in Queenstown. He urged those with questions and concerns to read the 150+ page application for themselves.
- Stefanie Takacs - Maryland Ave. - In consideration of a final ordinance by the Commissioners, she asked that they consider setting more restrictive distances between same type businesses, set more restrictive hours of operation, consider and address potential traffic concerns, and look at anticipated tax revenue.
- Bill Booker - really believes Commissioners should talk with the Outlets and make them aware of this. And if people really don't want it, they should vote against it.

There being no further comments at this time, President Willis advised written comments would be accepted until our next meeting on September 13, 2017.

Commissioner Plumbo motioned to adjourn the public hearing at 8:10 p.m. Motion seconded by Commissioner Schuster, and motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Amy W. Moore, Town Clerk