

**MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING OF COUNCIL
HELD MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2018 AT 4:00 PM
IN THE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

PRESENT: Mayor Minions; Councillors Corbeil, Haggard, Paulson, Poon, Solda, Washington

A. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved and seconded:

That the agenda be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

B. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

It was moved and seconded:

That the minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting held at 4:00 pm on April 16, 2018, be adopted.

CARRIED

C. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Ministry of Attorney General

Letter dated October 4, 2018 advising of the role municipal governments can take in the issuing of a cannabis retail store licence.

2. Bill Young

Email dated November 5, 2018 from Bill Young expressing concern regarding recent construction in his neighbourhood and the possibility of a cannabis production and sales facility.

3. Janice Sheehan

Letter from Janice Sheehan expressing concern in regards to the Port Alberni Cannabis Club on Bute Street.

It was moved and seconded:

That correspondence items C.1, C. 2 and C. 3 be received.

CARRIED

D. STAFF REPORTS

1. Manager of Bylaw Services and Consulting City Planner – Retail Cannabis Businesses

The Manager of Bylaw Services and Consulting City Planner presented a report providing information and proposed changes to the City's existing bylaw regulations to transition from medical marijuana dispensaries to cannabis retail businesses within the City of Port Alberni.

It was moved and seconded:

That the report from the Manager of Bylaw Services and Consulting City Planner dated November 14, 2018, be received.

CARRIED

E. PUBLIC INPUT

Gary Spooner indicated he is a user of marijuana issued by the Government noting its effective and fast control of his stress issues as opposed to alcohol which can cause adverse reactions.

Char Patterson commented on the highly regulated lengthy process she undertook in order to get a liquor licence. She feels that the City should be starting with rules already in place for liquor licencing and applying them to cannabis.

Brent suggested synergy would be created by locating cannabis retail stores in one area – uptown. He felt community would be better served than dispersing them throughout the community.

Aaron Brevick suggested that stores would not be permitted to operate side by side – liquor stores are not permitted to do that. He commented that medical cannabis is medical cannabis – often irradiated, grown in million dollar facilities by companies who have spent millions of dollars for the right to do so. This will be the first council to issue proper legal licences to sell cannabis. He commented on the options presented by staff – felt that Temporary Use Permits would be a hard sell considering the investment required.

Mr. Brevick feels that there is much information that Council is unaware of in regards to production and processing and that public input on a larger scale should be considered before moving ahead with adopting recommendations as put forward by staff. Mr. Brevick also commented that government produced cannabis is not necessarily safe and distributed a list of 'approved' pesticides.

Rachel Rose, retail business owner. She commented that she didn't think cannabis retail should have a special licence and that any retail outlet should be able to sell cannabis like any other product. She also stated the number of stores shouldn't be restricted.

Rebecca Standley, owner of Full of Beans Cafe, commented cannabis is not just another product. She has worked hard to be part of changing the image of the uptown and felt it would be detrimental to businesses not to put some kind of restrictions on the sale of retail cannabis. She felt that setbacks were not just optics – that they do have an effect and impact where people take their children. She indicated that in looking for a place to locate her business she took into account the location of liquor stores.

Jim Baxter spoke regarding his studies of addiction in the Vancouver downtown east side.

Colin Baldwin talked about the differences between alcohol, tobacco and cannabis products.

Janice Sheehan commented on noise issues from a current medical marijuana dispensary on Bute Street.

Rebecca Terepocki commented on crime issues. She stated we should be promoting health. She felt cannabis should be in the same category of tobacco and alcohol. She commented on proximity to schools and that more thought should be given to young people and businesses. She suggested a cautious approach.

Anthony commented that education can and needs to happen throughout the community. He further commented on the strict federal and provincial guidelines that have been established – no odor situation as product in stores is pre-packaged and sealed. He felt that stores should be dispersed somewhat and commented that people looking to establish stores in a legal manner are entrepreneurs.

Christine Jarvis, general manager of the Port Alberni Cannabis Club commented on her own cannabis use. She talked about the reasons people use cannabis and reviewed statistics and studies undertaken by Statistics Canada

Bill Young commented on his concerns around production and home businesses not adhering to bylaws.

Amanda from Nanaimo commented on 'Nansterdam' and talked about the Nanaimo Council's 'wait and see' approach. She provided information about the task force that was established a year ago to discuss everything cannabis. The taskforce decided to recommend a site specific use through rezoning and provided a definition of retail cannabis stores. She recommended Council implement a similar task force that could include representatives from police, VIHA, licence producers, dispensary operators. She also referenced the

distance from schools as something to watch in light of an ongoing court case in Vancouver.

Dave Mills, Pacific Rim Shopping Centre referenced their application currently before the province for a retail store in the mall location. His company opened the first legal store in Kamloops and he discussed that experience which has generated a lot of traffic and been nothing but positive. His company is currently opening stores in Nanaimo, Campbell River and Duncan.

Shawn Standley, Full of Beans Café owner, suggested the market share being condensed doesn't make sense from an economic development standpoint. He felt that following the guidelines of alcohol makes sense and wants to see Council follow the lead of BC liquor.

In response to a question regarding current medical marijuana business licences, the Bylaw Services Manager advised it is the City's intention to honour those licences until December 31st at which time they will lapse and will not be renewed for 2019.

The Bylaw Services Manager also commented on the provincial application process noting only one has been received by the City to date from the province.

Kevin stated that medical marijuana cannot be compared to alcohol or tobacco. He said the people who use it need it and when placing restrictions in distances between stores you are restricting the ability of people with medical challenges to get it.

Ilona talked about her elderly Aunt who benefits from using medical marijuana.

Al Frank, owner of West Coast Hemp, provided background regarding his experience and plight in trying to achieve licensing through the City over the past 8 years. He likes the idea of starting over and advised they are pursuing provincial licensing in order that they can dispense legal cannabis to their customers in a safe and caring environment.

Pam Craig, Chair SD70 expressed concern for students and the potential of cannabis retail licenses being granted in close proximity to schools and/or school bus routes. She provided a letter dated November 19, 2018 which is attached hereto and urged Council to consider the impact of proximity on health-related choices with the needs of youth as a key consideration in ensuring that students are minimally impacted by cannabis retail operations.

Sam Brownlee commented that enforcement would be easier if retail stores were located in one central area.

Jenny Michalenko commented on the help provided from medical marijuana dispensaries to research and recommend appropriate products to assist her husband. She asked why retail cannabis stores shouldn't be regulated in the same way as liquor stores.

Major Rai indicated he has applied to the province for a cannabis retail store and has been approved pending City review. He felt limiting number of stores and locations is important. He also spoke regarding the rigorous and expensive provincial application and approval process stating financial/security checks will also be undertaken by the province after City approval and the province will have the final say.

Rebecca Terepocki spoke again expressing her concerns about 'pot' in our community and suggested more regulations and restrictions should be considered.

Aaron Brevick responded to comments regarding quality and Council's role in regulating retail stores noting the product itself is highly regulated. He also spoke regarding the length of time for the application/approval process for production facilities. As Council deliberates their position he stated the need for fairness and opening up all areas so preference is not given to existing medical marijuana stores who opened before legalization.

In response to a question from Council, the Bylaw Services Manager outlined the provincial application process and the opportunity for Council to either make comments and recommendations, not make comments or recommendations or simply approve or deny requests. In the same manner as the liquor licensing process, Council may also collect public input before providing comment in which case the feedback received would also be forwarded to the LCRB.

In response to a request from Council regarding issues with current medical marijuana dispensaries, Inspector Brian Hunter commented that they are illegal – there is no gray area. He indicated his support for the legalization of cannabis and cannabis storefronts as well as a regime in the community that is in line with the law which includes safe production and safe sales.

It was moved and seconded:

That the Committee of the Whole forward the report from the Manager of Bylaw Services to the next regular meeting of Council and recommend that Council for the City of Port Alberni consider the proposed amendments to the Zoning and Business Licensing Bylaws in relation to Retail Cannabis Businesses.

CARRIED

F. **ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved and seconded:

That the meeting adjourn at 6:18 pm.

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT

Mayor

Dawn Herten
City Clerk