

**SONORA CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF SONORA  
SPECIAL MEETING  
JANUARY 17, 2017**

A Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Sonora was opened this date in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 94 North Washington Street, at 5:00 p.m. with the following Members present: Mayor Connie Williams, Mayor Pro-Tem Jim Garaventa, Councilmembers Matt Hawkins, Mark Plummer and George Segarini; Administrator Tim Miller, City Clerk Marijane Cassinetto, City Attorney Douglas White, Administrative Services Director Jennifer Callaway, Fire Chief Aimee New, Community Development Director Rachelle Kellogg. Absent: Interim City Engineer Gerard Fuccillo and Police Lieutenant Turu Vanderweil. Also present: Deputy City Attorney/Advocate and Lobbyist Josiah Young, and Deputy City Attorney Chris LaGrassa.

**CITY CLERK'S POSTING OF THE AGENDA**

City Clerk Cassinetto advised the Council that at 2:00 p.m. on the 20th day of January, 2017, the Agenda for the City of Sonora Special Council Meeting was posted outside City Hall for public view.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

No changes.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

No appearances.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Marijuana Regulation Presentation - Public Comment, Discussion, and Possible Direction from City Council Regarding Marijuana Dispensaries and Cultivation.** Deputy City Attorney Josiah Young gave a power point Marijuana Regulation Workshop/Presentation. He reported that marijuana is an illegal Schedule 1 narcotic under Federal Law, and with that said, presented the history of marijuana regulation on the State level which included summaries of the following:

1. Compassionate Use Act - Proposition 215, November 6, 1996;
2. Medical Marijuana Program - SB420, effective January 1, 2004;
3. 2015 Medical Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act (MCRSA), established by AB266, AB243 and SB643; and
4. 2016 Ballot Initiative - Recreational Marijuana - Adult Use of Marijuana Act (AUMA).

Young reviewed City of Sonora marijuana regulations to date, Tuolumne County regulations and other relevant jurisdictional

laws, and reported on pending issues, on benefits and problems with potential cultivations and dispensaries, and on fire, police and planning department concerns, and reviewed sample regulations.

Deputy Attorney Chris LaGrassa explained that topic boards have been set up on which the public can participate and signify their votes by placing stickers in the columns of choice.

#### **RECESS AND RECONVENE**

The Council recessed at 5:48 p.m. to allow topic board participation, and reconvened at 6:05 p.m.

Attorney LaGrassa discussed the results of the topic boards noting that there were approximately 12 total voters reflected on the boards although not all 12 voters had cast votes on each board.

Mayor Williams asked for public comment. **Kira Tucker**, Executive Director of Tuolumne Cannabis Advocates, and member of the Cal Growers Association Board of Directors, appeared in favor of marijuana businesses with regulations. Cal Growers Association leads in this matter as lobbyist on the Assembly floor, and she said because of this she has quick access as to how regulations are developing, and she extended the offer to provide this information to the Council. Tucker would like to see a working group and asked if the City would be creating its own or participating with the County. She stated that both groups would like to see regulated dispensaries in Sonora to enable safe access; that the groups are here to educate, participate and integrate to help cultivate a healthier community together. She felt that the topic board votes of those present reflected back to the voting majority that passed Proposition 64, and also stated that tax revenues would help the community. **Zac Calbert**, owner of Foothill Business Cards, appeared in favor of dispensaries, and said that he would like to see more new businesses downtown which would be good for the local economy. **Elena Linehan**, Prevention Program Director for ATCAA, noted that she is heading up *Project Action* which is an anti-marijuana educational program for youth. She reported that ATCAA has a program funded by Behavioral Health to address the issues of youth using marijuana, and they work with the Friday Night Live group from Sonora High School. She asked that if the City forms a working group, it consider their participation. **Tom Taylor** appeared in favor of marijuana related businesses, and stated that they will help the economy move forward in a positive way. **A member of the public** urged the Council to collaborate with the County working group; she said that there are a small number of the public present tonight, and the time of the Meeting may not have been convenient for some who cannot drive at night. She said there needs to be more public input, and encouraged the

City to have its own working group as well. **Mayor Williams** noted that she has indicated to the County that the City would like to participate in its group. **Kira Tucker** added that a recent survey put out by the California Department of Food and Agricultural, which she sent out to 650 persons, and even though the survey represents a narrow pie slice, Tuolumne County results indicated that 155 were interested in any type of the many licenses, and she knows of 8 that are wanting to operate dispensaries.

City Clerk Cassinetta read e-mail correspondence from Joshua Ryun voicing his support for cannabis related businesses in both Sonora and Tuolumne County.

Mayor Williams asked for Council discussion. Councilmember Hawkins said that he does not support recreational use, and feels that medical marijuana should not be taxed. He thinks the Council should do something with medical marijuana, is looking forward to sitting down with the groups, and feels it is worth taking a look at. Councilmember Plummer said that the legal aspect of regulation is a "pretty deep mine field", but it is worth looking into, and that because of the way the law is written, the Council may have to do a place holder ban. City Attorney White said that there is no indication that this is high priority, and to be cautious as to anything that would legalize recreational use, but he is less concerned as it relates to medical, and feels comfortable with the medical. He noted that the matter is an evolving issue which his attorneys are monitoring and they will come back to the Council with updates. Mayor Pro-Tem Garaventa said that the City will have to see what evolves. He does not see working with the County as a negotiating partner, and would not want the City to participate in an ad hoc committee without equal representation. Councilmember Segarini commented on the small representation of the public tonight and wants to see broader public input. He said his biggest concern is the youth; he fully supports medical use; that a County group's decision will only affect the County and not the City, but he supports City participation in the County group. Mayor Williams said that when she attended the Silicon Valley Marijuana Awareness Conference, she learned a lot more, and has a better understanding of marijuana use for medical purposes. She said it is important to keep the community safe and important to protect medical users; regulation is important for public safety, and it is necessary to get input from the Fire and Police departments, and asked Attorney White if a place holder ban should be done now.

Attorney White responded that that it does not need to be done now unless the Council feels strongly about it; it can wait until Summer and see how things are moving along; the next steps would be for the Council to decide if it wants to form a City

group, or if the Council wants more information from Staff. White said that he does not feel properly equipped at this time to draft anything regulating manufacturing, and reiterated his feeling that he is comfortable with the medical and recommended allowing time for feedback from the Federal level.

Mayor Williams confirmed that it is not necessary to do a place holder ban at least for a couple of months, the Council would like to have more public input and have input from the Fire and Police Departments, and that Staff will stay up-to-date with other jurisdictional agencies so Council can be ready by Summer to put an ordinance in place. Williams asked the best way to proceed. Administrator Miller suggested that another Special Session Workshop with additional advertisement be held for public input, at which time Staff can provide options with pros and cons to consider, and Council can utilize the additional input and options as a way to refine a working draft. He noted that because all five Councilmembers want to participate, a working group would not work due to Brown Act requirements. Attorney White stated that time is the Council's friend, and to take time and do it right.

**ADJOURN SPECIAL MEETING**

The Special Meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

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Marijane Cassinetto, City Clerk      Date