**TNP Marijuana/Vaping Committee**

**2/3/22**

Present: Diana Revolus (Common Council / business owner / parent), Nina Chanana (TNP evaluator), Ginger Katz (Courage to Speak Foundation), Anamilena Moreno (Norwalk ACTS), Rebecca Oliveira (TNP coordinator), Aniella Fignon (Norwalk Health Dept), Dan Cicero (Norwalk Hospital Community Support Program), Margaret Watt (Positive Directions / parent)

1. Introduced Rebecca – new TNP project coordinator – [roliveira@positivedirections.org](mailto:roliveira@positivedirections.org)
2. Reviewed information about upcoming public hearing before the Ordinance Committee
   1. Tuesday Jan. 15th at 7pm online (participate on Zoom or watch on YouTube) – get links at <https://www.norwalkct.org/1913/Meeting-Notices>
   2. Get agenda at <https://www.norwalkct.org/1913/Meeting-Notices> (NOTE: The agenda currently posted as of 2/3 is last month’s.)
   3. To testify: 3 minutes max. (Practice and time yourself!)
   4. Can submit comments in writing ahead of time (at least 3 hours prior) to [bcandela@norwalkct.org](mailto:bcandela@norwalkct.org) for them to be read into the minutes
3. Reported on discussion with Ordinance Committee Chair, Lisa Shanahan
   1. Hearing is “to determine a temporary (9 month) ban allowing us to do more research and public outreach as to whether Norwalk wants cannabis establishments in our City, and if so, where, how many, hours, etc.  Without the ban we would lose the ability to limit the where's and how's across the City.”
   2. City hasn’t yet decided whether to handle this in Ordinance or P&Z
   3. Will be doing stakeholder groups to find out what Norwalk residents think
   4. looking to us to bring education and people
   5. Financial incentive for Norwalk: 3% tax revenues go to City
4. Diana reported on Common Council discussions – mostly in Ordinance but also in Caucus
   * 1. Council has been talking about equity – what will get distributed to whom in Norwalk
     2. Big convo about who will be able to come into the industry
     3. Talking about the use of the 3% - may be able to get some of this for prevention / health efforts, education, Common Council
   1. Will come to full Council eventually after Ordinance votes
   2. Doesn’t feel like Councilors are in a rush to approve sales right away
5. Suggest discussion points for public hearing:
   1. Gift of time:
      1. Need extra time to figure out what measures will be put in place to deter crime, locations, etc.
      2. We don’t have a lot of data on density of retail locations. Can use time to look at local alcohol and tobacco outlets for comparison and see what impact they have on crime, what kinds of security measures are put in place, to see what patterns might emerge in Norwalk.
   2. The cannabis law was enacted without going before the Public Health Committee and creates challenges for public health, youth protection, and law enforcement. It may be amended during the upcoming legislative session so if we wait we can see how the law may change.
   3. As of 12/31/21, 61 towns in CT (out of 169) have reported zoning decisions to DCP related to cannabis: 10/61 (16%) have approved retail sales; 14/61 (23%) have prohibited sales; the 37 remaining (61%) have put a moratorium in place. Most towns are doing 6, 9 or 12 months. Glastonbury has 18 month moratorium.
      1. 2 neighboring towns -- Westport and Weston – have prohibited cannabis sales and a 3rd, Wilton, has a moratorium on sales. This could mean that Norwalk could expect an influx of consumers from surrounding towns, which will have an impact on traffic, parking, and possibly DUIs.
      2. Comments about impact on crime: It may increase around retail locations. Aniella noted that some research shows that crime can decrease around dispensaries depending on what type of safety measures (video cameras, etc.) are put into place. Ordinance Committee can require measures such as these.
   4. We can suggest to the Committee that the 9 month moratorium should start *after* the state sales go into effect so we can observe what happens in other towns—not 10 days after the Norwalk vote.
   5. Use the moratorium to keep an eye on what happens in Bridgeport and Stamford after sales start.
      1. We’re on the I-95 drug trafficking corridor so we’re in a vulnerable position, along with them. Use the moratorium to consider safety measures for our residents and neighbors.
      2. Cannabis can be gateway to a first mental health break for youth. How prepared are we for the mental health services. Norwalk Hospital is actually losing its psych beds (moving to Danbury).
      3. People may come into area and increase crime but not actually be residents.
6. Sharing info or resources re cannabis:
   1. [*Smokescreen* film](https://youtu.be/1WvwDiwLejY) – recommended by Ginger – watched trailer on youtube
   2. [Model ordinance](https://gettingitrightfromthestart.org/our-model-ordinances/)s developed in California – identified by Aniella
   3. California is now investing $100 Million of taxpayer money to advertise legal cannabis since the sales are taking place on the black market. State is not getting revenue as they had hoped. Black market means lack of quality assurance around potency / safety.
7. Margaret commented that now is the time for everyone interested to follow up with legislators from the cannabis forum to encourage them to raise a bill to amend the law