

West Orange Cannabis Task Force and Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 9, 2021

7 p.m. Via Zoom

Meeting called to order at 7:05pm

Roll Call – Members present: Chief James Abbott, Abdur R. Yasin (Secretary), Jonathan Redwine, John Wayman Henry (Vice-Chair), Council President Cindy Matute-Brown (Chair), Mark Moon (Counsel). Councilwoman Michelle Casalino and Abdul Moore were absent. Quorum met.

12 attendees from the public were present.

Meeting opened with Chair calling for vote on acceptance of meeting minutes from previous meeting. Moved by Henry; seconded by Abbott. Motion carried.

Discussion on weighted scale for the provision of letter of local support for potential cannabis licensees ensued. Items discussed: point system; regulatory plan & township ordinance; background of applicants; front-end scoring (initial application, pre administrative review) versus back-end scoring (detailed scoring prior to submission to township council for award of letter of support); possible township council resolutions to handle any issues.

Formal application was discussed. Moon stated the language within the application is consistent with procurement process legal language. Abbott provided information on the criminal background process and application language. Application process discussed – rolling versus deadline was proposed.

Discussion on review of changes to be made to the cannabis ordinance. Proposed changes are as follows: Removal of \$500 application fee; insert cannabis licensed retailers 100ft from WO Board of Education owned and operated buildings.

Discussion on suitable locations/zoning and the appropriate local boards. Signage to planning and zoning boards as well as state regulations.

Discussion on the timeline for the release of application and available platforms for interested parties for filing applications.

Discussion on education outreach campaign and code enforcement. Yasin reported progress and expressed seeking collaboration with Abbott and Casalino for further study.

Attendee questions and comments were as follows:

- Differentiation of applicants – front-end scoring impact on final selection for letter of support.
- Process steps for potential applicants.
- Explanation of the last phase of the process and the state asking the township's preference once the state approves a license.
- Zoning restrictions relative to minimum distances away from schools, daycares, and specific businesses.
- Fee levels: how higher fees attract serious potential business owners.
- Fee submission process and the timing of the submission of fees.
- Conditional licensing and the associated risks.

Next meeting date is TBD. Doodle poll will be sent out. Taskforce is sending draft resolution to Township Council for removal of \$500 application from Cannabis ordinance.

Motion to adjourn by Yasin, seconded by Abbott. Motion carried. Meeting concluded at 9:24pm.