

Isfeld, Lori

From: Correspondence Group, City Clerk's Office
Sent: Tuesday, June 09, 2015 2:25 PM
To: Public Hearing
Subject: FW: Medicinal marijuana public hearing

From: Sally Nelson s.22(1) Personal and Confidential
Sent: Tuesday, June 09, 2015 1:54 PM
To: Correspondence Group, City Clerk's Office
Subject: Medicinal marijuana public hearing

City of Vancouver Mayor and City Councillors

I am strongly in favour of implementing City of Vancouver of guidelines regarding the licencing of medicinal marijuana retail locations. I support the guideline as they are currently written.

s.22(1) Personal and Confidential and have first hand, negative experience about the negative impact of a so-called medicinal marijuana shop being on the street level of my building. In addition to being within 300 feet of 2 preschools, community centre, senior centre and other marijuana shops, my building has significant local and tourist foot and bike traffic given it's on the seawall and adjacent to the Granville Island ferry landing. The marijuana shops's sandwich board and logo make it very obvious to passersby the shop sells marijuana can facilitate a prescription on the spot. This is an embarrassing eye sore that greatly detracts from the health oriented lifestyle Vancouver supposedly represents.

In addition to the negative neighbourhood impact, my building is now also saddled with increased insurance costs and is in contravention of the city/provincial leased land where it is built. This causes significant hardship and uncertainty to all residents of my building. With the adoption of the proposed guidelines, this marijuana dispensary clearly could not continue to operate. Also, it would limit the future proliferation of dispensaries to a limited number of controlled locations.

Thank you for your consideration of my perspective.

Sally Nelson
s.22(1) Personal and Confidential



Isfeld, Lori

From: Correspondence Group, City Clerk's Office
Sent: Wednesday, June 10, 2015 9:40 AM
To: Public Hearing
Subject: FW: Vancouver's Public Hearing on Marijuana Dispensary Regulation

From: Andi Wiseman 5.22(1) Personal and Confidential
Sent: Wednesday, June 10, 2015 9:30 AM
To: Public Hearing; Correspondence Group, City Clerk's Office
Subject: re: Vancouver's Public Hearing on Marijuana Dispensary Regulation

Dear Mayor & Council,

I'm writing to you as a concerned resident of Vancouver who is impacted significantly by Vancouver's booming marijuana dispensary industry.

My primary concerns regard the endless reactionary rhetoric that reduces incredibly complex social issues to singular bumper-sticker phrases like "think of the children" and "drugs are bad"...

How this reactionary rhetoric conflates the stigma of addiction with vilification of addicts while ignoring the complex social issues that underpin addiction (ie: homelessness, untreated mental illness, violence, etc. - which, for the record, exist everywhere regardless of whether a marijuana dispensary is in operation or not). Equally ignored are the the obvious and irrefutable hypocrisies of prohibiting a specific drug that has enough medicinal value to warrant regular prescription of it by doctors to terminal patients. If only marijuana was legal –doctors wouldn't fear prescribing it & patients could access its medical value before being terminal...

How this reactionary rhetoric ignores completely the well-documented history of this drug's prohibition, rooted in decades of politically-motivated propagandists connected to Big Tobacco, Big Pharma, Big Agriculture & other core institutions like Police, Corrections, Legal Stakeholders and other federal entities that benefit financially from prohibition and the "War on Drugs" (which by now is long-proven to be a categorical failure through and through)... but I suppose that's another conversation.

I work in the field of addictions and I can tell you that I feel *infinitely* better about the idea of a regulated marijuana dispensary in my neighborhood than I do about the methadone clinic that is below my office (located in the Mount Pleasant area of Vancouver), that makes regular practice of literally shuttling clients to cash in on the multi-billion dollar methadone racket. Clinic employees drive the patients in, give them their methadone, and drive them back to the downtown east side.

Methadone and other opioid replacements have arguable value within the context of primary care, certainly (as could marijuana); however, within the current status quo there is no primary care. A doctor wrote a script, and beyond that there is no concern whatsoever for the health or well-being of any of the hundreds of visibly sick, marginalized clients (many of whom can barely walk) who trundle through this one clinic in my neighborhood daily. Interestingly, there are no protests or "concerns" about this clinic or its practice of dispensing truckloads of methadone and scads of other legally-sanctioned drugs – and in close proximity to both a school and a neighborhood park frequented by children. Reactionaries conveniently forget or simply haven't yet learned that prescription drugs literally cause more harm and death these days than their illegal counterparts; and the clinics

dispensing these harmful drugs are certainly not required to pay an annual \$30K for their business licenses, either.

Moralistic, dogma-heavy judgements aside, there is clearly a significant demand for marijuana in Vancouver, evidenced by the sheer growth of the industry (from three to nearly ninety dispensaries in the Vancouver region alone) within the past ten years. The ever-increasing evidence from all around the world that harm-reduction and decriminalization yield far more positive outcomes than prohibition (socially, medically & culturally) notwithstanding, Canada's federal and provincial governments are likely to remain mired in their finger-pointing, deflective, circular debates regarding decriminalization and/or regulation of marijuana (despite the Supreme Court's ruling in 2014 that medical marijuana legislation was unconstitutional).

Vancouver has an incredible opportunity to demonstrate sound leadership by pioneering effective regulation of marijuana dispensaries. Were your Council to take this opportunity to work with the communities of people who both sell and use marijuana (rather than arbitrarily enforcing regulations that serve primarily to appease reactionaries and/or which come off like an unreasonable, bureaucracy-heavy money-grab), you could lead Canada in embracing progressive, evidence-based policies that support and respect the diverse needs of communities without resorting to reactionary stigma or exclusionary vilification.

I would suggest that you further engage with the people who actually use and/or sell marijuana, and by that I mean commit to more than just one single marathon public hearing. It is they who know best what they need and why they need it, and who can best represent themselves, not the abolitionists who stigmatize them. It would be lovely to see your team respect these constituents enough to give them meaningful, truly democratic inclusion in the regulation processes that will so severely impact their lives and/or livelihoods.

I don't personally use marijuana, either medically or recreationally - but should I someday require it I'd like to think I could access it without being criminalized; and I certainly despair today that my government continues to deny my fellow adult citizens their basic human right of autonomous choice about marijuana in their own lives. As someone who works daily with addicts living with incredibly complex mental-health and medical needs, I do sorely wish marijuana was a medicine more widely prescribed to increase health and wellness, rather than the staggeringly harmful menu of synthetic, psychotropic drugs provided by Big Pharma, routinely prescribed by physicians, and dispensed without question by countless clinics *everywhere*. I look forward to the day a regulated marijuana dispensary can operate in my neighborhood without stigma, vilification and scorn.

Thank you for the opportunity to include my thoughts in your proceedings.

Respectfully,

Andi Wiseman