

VILLAGE OF TIVOLI
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SPECIAL MEETING DRAFT MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 22, 2021
6:00 PM

Present: Mayor Griffith, Trustee Ezrati, Trustee Baldino, Trustee Mangieri

Absent: Deputy Mayor Majer

Public present: Russ Baker, Harry Colgan, Angela Cole, Nancy McGrinder, Leslie Baker, Mike Chrystie, Brian Seiler, Michael Kelly Boone, Derek McDonald, Leigh and Phyllis Palmer, Jamie and Sarah O'Donnell, Jason McGrinder, Ben Abrahams, and Bethany Nohlgren

Mayor Griffith opened the meeting at 6:07 PM.

RESOLUTION Authorizing the Village of Tivoli to Execute the Amendment to the existing Urban County Cooperation Agreement dated July 6, 2000 with the County of Dutchess for the Purpose of Undertaking Community Development Block Grant and Home Investment Programs Pursuant to Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, and Title II of the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990, as Amended; motion made by Trustee Ezrati, seconded by Trustee Baldino; roll call vote, all in favor.

Mayor Griffith asked who in the public had received and read his email regarding this forum. A small number of individuals responded. Mayor Griffith read the document regarding the cannabis dispensaries and adult consumption. He reiterated the consumption point in the law. Municipalities need to make decisions by December 31, 2021 to either opt in or opt out. If a municipality does not opt out by December 31, they are not able to ever opt out.

Mayor Griffith outlined and reviewed the document thoroughly and at length.

Sarah O'Donnell asked to confirm that if the Village did not respond, they can never opt out.

Brian Seiler asked where the Board did stand presently, and went on to state he feels as though opting in could bring revenue to the Village, and that money could be put towards the park and roads. He believes Pine Plains has opted in, and he feels that money/revenue from opting in could help Tivoli.

Leslie Baker asked about a café/dispensary, and the difference between them. She requested additional information as to whether a café would include existing restaurants, and if so, would that lead to café's popping up all over the place. It appears there is no limit, however, existing restaurants cannot become a café.

Harry Colgan spoke and feels the Board needs to make an appropriate decision now, and in his opinion, the appropriate decision would be to opt out. He feels opting in would have an immense impact on the quality of life in Tivoli. He went on to say parking would be an issue, and that if the Village allowed these cafes or a dispensary, it would put the Village at high risk, and he is definitely opposed to it.

Russ Baker discussed the traffic flow, and how opting in would require additional policing from the DC Sheriff's. He sees them now parked by the firehouse, and believes a dispensary or café will bring many people to Tivoli.

He feels homeless people could end up in the park, and there would be an increase in crime associated with cannabis.

He was in the chemical dependency field for years, and believes that if young people witness others smoking cannabis it could become a bridge to other drug use. He went on to bring up health issues, and he is not a fan.

Angela Cole offered she has been a resident for many years, and that even recreational use would bring on an even bigger problem with trash. Tivoli is a tiny tiny village, and it struggles with large amounts of trash on the weekends. Either a dispensary or consumption café will lead to more trash. This law of opting in should be taken over by larger cities as they are bigger and can handle it better. Tivoli cannot handle a dispensary, and rentals contain many people currently that are under 21 years of age. She fears quality of life, the health, and the well being of the village will be impacted. If we opt in, we cannot opt out; she would like to opt out, and wait to see what happens elsewhere, and leave options open.

Michael Kelly Boone said the village cannot support the traffic which could be associated with a dispensary or café. Even on a weekend when Kaatsbaan had an event, Broadway became a parking lot. He has spent hours in line in MA, and feels young people will smoke anyway. The reality is that Tivoli cannot accommodate lines of people and the parking. He said to opt in would be a mistake.

Phyllis Palmer said she was surprised about the comment regarding opting in bringing in money. She feels the problems could outweigh the money which could potentially be brought in. The Village is already crowded, and hearing of lines in MA, and people waiting for 2 ½ hours would not be a good fit for Tivoli. If people choose to purchase at a dispensary, they could go to Kingston or wherever there are places that opt in, but feels it would be a lousy idea for Tivoli.

Jamie O'Donnell feels the law and document takes away the right to opt out later, and is disappointed. He believes cannabis would be a gateway drug, that this can lead to having to address further legalization. He looks at society presently, and feels it best to opt out. He mentioned he does not envy Mayor Griffith being in the position to have to figure out how to proceed from here. He asked if the board would take everyone's feedback and use it to make their decision.

Mayor Griffith said, yes, the information will be discussed. The board will deliberate to make a decision that is best for Tivoli. Mayor Griffith furthered that Tivoli is small, and if they decide to opt in, there would be an announcement. Passing the local law requires a public hearing, and there is one tentatively set for October 13, 2021 for 7:00 PM. There could be legal requirements or permissive referendum based upon the board's decision.

Brian Seiler believes that a café and dispensary would lead to more support of the local restaurants and bars. He brought Amsterdam up as an example. Others chimed in, and there was a broad discussion. Brian Seiler reiterated that the Village could use a bigger playground, and with revenue from opting in, it could be done. He added that his wife has anxiety, and smoking at night eases her anxiety. He brought up health benefits of cannabis. He has some issues, but his dr says he is too young to have cannabis prescribed to him. In his opinion there are more benefits to cannabis.

Conversation about Pine Plains opting in, and the belief that Rhinebeck opted out, and Woodstock opting in was carried on by a few individuals.

Mayor Griffith added it has been a drag for the Board that there have not been many citizens at meetings for quite some time, and he was happy to see so many in person at this forum.

Harry Colgan mentioned his past work with Red hook, and believes there would be an impact on the town, and they should opt out. Others and Harry mentioned the potential zoom informational meeting that may have been held by the Town of Red Hook.

Sarah O'Donnell thanked the board for their leadership during the pandemic. The mixed views of benefits of cannabis came up, and she feels it would bring a different environment to Tivoli, and the Village would be different. She feels it better that folks go to Kingston or Red Hook or where places opt in. She has younger adult children, and does not feel it to be good to opt in right now. She feels it prudent to opt out, observe what happens elsewhere, and there could still be the option to opt in later.

Leslie Baker asked whether Red Hook, Rhinebeck and Tivoli could work together. It appears to her that these municipalities want the dispensary to go to other places, and thinks it's too bad that they couldn't or didn't work together from the start.

Mayor Griffith agreed, and feels this is challenging, as there are a number of other things that the Board could be working on. And, even with the dispensary in Great Barrington being brought up, he does not believe there is a way that the potential revenue could be measured right now.

Angela Cole reiterated that the revenue amount is so low, and that all tax revenue does not fully come to the Village. The “pie” is cut so much, and revenue may not be as high as many may imagine.

Trustee Ezrati added that a dispensary would be an entry business, and is not sure it would be helpful to other businesses; it does not appear that a dispensary has had that effect in MA.

Russ Baker added that the Village cannot grow much more. He feels Albany is corrupt, the return would be nill, and it is sheer politics. The cannabis grown now is 25 times stronger than years ago; 90,000 fatalities due to fentanyl, corporations are making money, cannabis is grown in warehouses, and it is not the same hemp which used to be grown. It is a toxic product, and it is now legal in New York State.

Mayor Griffith mentioned this appears similar to a while ago when cell towers were discussed for the Village, and there is no defined revenue.

Sarah O’Donnell wondered how much revenue other places will make, and feels it best to opt out and wait.

Mayor Griffith feels it impossible to weigh the benefits at this time.

Leslie Baker spoke of Russ Baker’s conversation of hybrid grown, and then Russ Baker provided his opinions on the consumption aspect.

Trustee Baldino brought up the topic of growing, and Trustee Ezrati mentioned that the board cannot prevent someone growing cannabis in their home. The legal amounts were discussed.

Mayor Griffith added about consumption, farming, etc.

Harry Colgan believes the law is too liberal in regards to amounts.

Trustee Ezrati and Mayor Griffith added about plants.

Sarah O’Donnell asked if there would be an exclusive area for consumption. Angela Cole chimed in that she believes there is already use at The Pub in the outdoor dining area. Not an existing or regular restaurant can become an area for consumption.

Brian Seiler mentioned use on a sidewalk could be the same as drinking, although the open container law does exist. It was also offered that there are no tests presently to test individuals for their consumption. During a group conversation, however, it was brought up that if someone is pulled over by law enforcement, and the smell of cannabis is very prevalent, an individual will be given a DUI.

Trustee Mangieri asked whether the village and board deals with Tivoli postal addresses or just the Village proper. Mayor Griffith added that the law will apply to the “Village of Tivoli; the board does not have jurisdiction outside the village lines.

Mayor Griffith thanked everyone for coming to the forum, and invited everyone to write in with opinions, and asked everyone to encourage their friends and neighbors to offer feedback. Trustee Mangieri has put information on the social media site, Tivoli Neighbors, and they asked everyone to encourage others to chime in.

Mayor Griffith did offer, again, that a scheduled public hearing is set for October 13, 2021 at 7:00 PM, and information will be provided if there is a change

Trustee Ezrati made a motion to close the special meeting; Trustee Baldino seconded the motion, all in favor, and the meeting was closed at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin L. Bruno
Village Clerk