



Town of Tusten Town Board Meeting

Public Hearing Minutes/ Transcript
Zoom ID: 890 1678 4280
November 9, 2021

PRESENT

Supervisor Bernard Johnson
Deputy Supervisor Jane Luchsinger
Councilman Alfred Smith
Councilman Bruce Gettel
Councilwoman Jill Padua

OTHERS PRESENT

Crystal Weston, Town Clerk; Ken Klein, Attorney to the
Town, approximately 25 members of the general Public

1 PUBLIC HEARING

1.1 6:00 PM Introductory Local Law No. 2 of 2021

**"A local law adopted pursuant to Cannabis Law Section 131 opting out of
licensing and establishing on-site cannabis consumption establishments
within the Town of Tusten"**

Please see the Public Hearing transcript:

2021-11-09 Town Board Public Hearing & Regular Meeting

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:00:02] Good evening and welcome to the Town of Tusten Public Hearing Number One will be for Local 2021 the local law adopted pursuant to Cannabis Law Section 131, opting out of licensing and establishing onsite cannabis consumption establishments within the Town of Tusten. Each person that wants to be heard, will have that opportunity. We ask that the comments are made to the board. There is a microphone on this side. You can use the table face towards the town clerk will take comments from the floor first and then we'll take comments from the Zoom audience to whoever would like to start. Ned?

Ned Lang [00:00:50] So in our little community, a community, it's been wrought with all kinds of problems, drug problems for years and years and years. We've seen community members die. We know that cannabis when allowed to be or not allowed to be placed in the hands of those younger folks in our homes. It's a problem, it is a gateway drug. There's no two ways about it. We don't need that kind of problem in then town, the town has enough problems drugs. I own the apartment houses. Drugs are a constant problem in the Town. Why would we ever want to have more drugs and a dispensary in our town for all walks of life into our little community, maybe having drug dealers across the bridge and as young folks can come in and buy drugs and on Pennsylvania side because, you know, you're going to get all those people in here. Why would why would we allow that? And not only that, we have cities. We have Newburgh, we have Liberty, we have Middletown, let that, let that type of activity going on there, not in our community. My mother started Green Recovery Center along with the ruins back in 1986. The recovery center in Monticello

saves thousands of lives. I also would go there and I talk to folks there, and she also started a recovery in Miami, and if you talk to a lot of those folks, how did you start with drugs? Well, back in those days wasn't opioids. It was... ahh I used to mess around with the marijuana down on a street corner, and now another drug comes along and so it a better high, a nicer high, a longer high. We don't need that type of proliferation of drugs in our community. Not today, not tomorrow, not ever we are a small town, wonderful community, and we have enough business coming into this community that we don't need that type of proliferation of drugs and those type of folks that will take advantage of folks that and sell it to younger, the younger folks throughout our community and other communities adjacent to us. So please vote no and we will... if there's a if there's a referendum coming up, we will work hard to shut that referendum down and keep our community whole, our family's whole and our children safe.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:03:05] Thank you, Brandi?

Brandi Merolla [00:03:16] So I'm just going to pop off the cuff today, and...

Crystal Weston [00:03:21] Brandi could you please speak a little louder so everyone can hear you.

Brandi Merolla [00:03:25] Okay my apologies, so I don't see it that way. New York State made this legal, it's adult use not like it's children's use and I just wanted to tell you the story entails yesterday for my Father 2017 and he had Parkinson's had it for 10 years, and I had written, read an article that sentence him in an e-mail about how it could help him with his physician couldn't feed himself for 10 years, so therefore he could not get it out of his mouth and so I sent him this article, and it showed incredible abilities that are restored with people who could not feed themselves or walk properly because he had Parkinson's and he was the most anti-marijuana guy you'd ever meet in your life and he said, You know what? I'm going to look into it. He looked into it, his doctor said, I highly recommend it for you, you're a good candidate for this. He gave him the tincture and he called me like a week later when he did it the first time, he said, I just fed myself for the first time in five years. OK, so his date would also improve. It wasn't sticking on the ground when Parkinson's patients walk it's very hard to lift yourself, he starting walking like a normal person. It restored dignity, and it helped him, being on a drug like this, their recreational uses. You guys all drink, have bars cetera, etc. and I don't see the difference (inaudible) made it the same. It's the same now, not I'm not looking for people to take opioids for their pain. I'd rather take people who use cannabis as a plant and feel really strongly about it because I watched my father learn how to walk again until he died, he used cannabis and it helped him and you don't have to listen to what I have to say right now. I don't know if you guys would look at the Saugerties police chief video? I sent you guys on the... are you laughing? I don't think that's funny, but I don't understand the resistance to learning about this, but that's okay because there will be a public referendum. I have the petition after this meeting. If you guys were to opt out, which is what I expect to happened, so thanks for trying two women on the board did attend the Cannabis Consortium learned all about it and did their own homework and I love that, so thank you for your time.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:06:01] Thank you Brandi.

Brandi Merolla [00:06:02] Yup

Laura Gettel [00:06:06] Laura Gettel, from Lava. I came here today bring you statistical facts about Cannabis as an educator on law and law enforcement, however, I changed my

mind about that. I will, however, share this one known fact in law enforcement. The opinion of one who holds a title is not always the popular opinion amongst all. Neither Ulster nor Orange County Police Chiefs Association has come out in favor of the legalization of cannabis. Nor have they said they were not in favor they have no political here or standing on it. One police chief who I know to be held in little to no regard to the officer in Orange County Police Association does not make for expert testimony that it can speak to as fact since I am well-traveled in the law enforcement community. Well, I am here to say today is, I have and my husband has attended Narcotics Anonymous meetings, but we have a daughter for 17 years our daughter has battled addiction and it will be a battle she will fight for the rest of her life. My husband and I are with one million other grandparents are raising our grandchildren today, largely due to drug addiction. That is a statistical fact. The stories these addicts tell are heart wrenching and their stories all start out the same way. It starts with the most abused drug in the United States today that would Cannabis, you know the old adage is just weed until it's not just weed. I don't care if you want to grow it and smoke it, just don't destroy our community and our lives and the lives of our children being raised here with it. Our country is in a drug epidemic and our county has the highest drug overdoses in the state yes, even more than New York City. So put your dispensaries in a county that is facing insurmountable addiction over the response, and let's set one smack dab in the town of Tusten. To me, that is just unconscionable, disgusting and wrought with grief for the love of God where is our humanity?

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:08:38] Thank you. All right.

Iris Helfeld [00:08:41] I'm sorry that I'm late, I did not realize that we started. So, what I want to say is... This is in response to what he said. That people do not want people who use cannabis in the community. So, I wanted to say that two and a half years ago, I was supposed to go in for major surgery, total reverse shoulder replacement. I was in pain on a scale of one to 10 higher than a nine and at that particular time, the surgeon contacted me into the office and he said, there is this thing going around Coleman and because of the fact that you have high susceptibility, because of some of the issues, I think we should postpone if you can possibly hold off. I knew that I was going to be facing at least two years of rehab and there was no guarantee with this type of surgery that it would create or solve the problems that had this happen and the pain I had. In any case, I spoke to my neurologist and then the relatives to know that I would not take any kind of opiates, said, could you would you take cannabis? And I said I would certainly try and I went from a nine plus pain factor to below a three which is tolerable, and I live with that. I have not had to go for the surgery because the pain level has decreased. I am one of those people who live in this community who take a tincture twice a day under my tongue so that I can function so that I can be an important member of this community. I have done a lot in this community. I will try to do even more, but I like so many others of the people that you say, you don't want here. Thank you.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:10:56] Star?

Star Hesse [00:11:13] (inaudible)...back in October. It's very disturbing to me greatly to hear the same false allegations being repeated over and over again that marijuana is a gateway drug. I don't think Iris diverted to heroin for her pain to go down. There are children that have seizures that work in child protective services. We had a mother in foster care, her three-year-old daughter from a drug addicted parent from severe seizures. She would cry mommy, mommy, mommy, I'm hurt, I'm hurt. The mother was in crackhead, they gave her marijuana the seizures went down to maybe from multiple a day to maybe once a week and for the rest progressed on. I also experiencing in child protective services

called for family violence and abuse. Not one of the cases I went out on was somebody beating on another staff or their children because they were high on marijuana, dope yes, but marijuana no, I don't understand the resistance to this. Constant statements from her medical professionals say that this is not an addictive gateway. you had the police, in (inaudible) one person, but that person was also the killer of the New York State Police Association and he also said we're not jumping up with joy, but we also see that there are many other addictive substances that are perfectly legal that are causing more problems in the community than marijuana. There's no reason that they shouldn't be available. Nobody's urging anybody to go out and drive under the influence of any drug, but marijuana is something that very much helps people. It does not cause addiction, or graduation into higher addiction and I think that being so close minded about anybody in this room that thinks that there is already an abundance of other drugs and marijuana available in the community is deluding themselves. So, I never think it's made it legal, people can come in, it can be regulated, you can keep an eye on what kind of quality is being put out or how much people are using and I think that this is something that would be a very beneficial thing for our community and our time.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:14:10] Thank you, Star.

Star Hesse [00:14:11] You're welcome.

Rick Lander [00:14:17] I think we're talking about a few different uses, in other words, medical marijuana, I personally have no problem but let it go through a doctor, let it go to a pharmacy and let it be for that use. What we're talking about here is recreational, not somebody that needs it for pain and so forth like that. If they need it for pain and that, let them go to the doctor. They can get their prescription, let it go through a pharmacy and so forth like that. Let's say, can we all or some of us went to college, I can't think of one of my friends that ended up in drug addiction, and it didn't start with marijuana and you say it's not a leading thing? They all started with marijuana, then they go into Coke and then went into other things. It is you know, no matter what you want to say, it really shouldn't be in this town and I'll tell you, I remember back in the days when drinking was 21 in Pennsylvania and 18 in New York, the lines going across that bridge for drunk people and so forth. This is going to happen with legalized marijuana in New York, and they're going to be lined up at the bridge to come across by, go back, give it to their whoever they want. It will have no say over ad do we really want that? Do we want to be known as a town that sells pot? And you know, I understand these people with medical marijuana and I and I feel sorry for them, and I think it is a good use. I mean, I have some good friends that are on it now I mean, it does work for the pain, but it shouldn't be you that's deciding what pain medication you should take.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:16:00] Thank you Rick.

Jennifer Patetto [00:16:08] Okay, as of right now, 70 percent of the state's 36 of them in D.C. have legalized cannabis in some form. Recent polls suggest that 69 percent of Americans believe cannabis should be legalized and 91 percent believe it should be legalized for medical purposes. As a nation, we may be divided on a lot, but we seem to be coming to a common middle ground on Cannabis. As a community, we need to come together and let go of this past rhetoric that has been ingrained in us all from generation to generation creating such a statement, it has to be put behind us and collectively we must move forward into a new era of safe, legal cannabis, just like we did alcohol years ago. Instead of talking more on cannabis, I would like to focus specifically on our Town and I was what I would like you all to consider before making a decision tonight. How can we opt

out of a possible 3% tax revenue from a potentially multi-million-dollar industry? We are facing a 7.5-million-dollar water system this year, and that was a quote from 10 years ago if I recall, is the board really comfortable going out of its way tonight to ban an industry that may potentially be able to come to come and inject revenue simply over feelings and opinions. I don't recall anyone suggesting a dispensary on Main Street, but I would say to that Main Street is not suitable for a dispensary, given the parking situation that we have with the other major issue that we're going to have to physically address at some point. That's why I would suggest we revisit the planning board to determine cannabis and viability in this town instead of opting out tonight. I know traffic from PA is a concern, but that will likely happen no matter what, because we are the gateway, we are the bridge, the regional bridge between Pennsylvania and New York, and it's my understanding Bethel does not plan on opting out. So, we're going to see that traffic, no matter what. We're going to have the ramifications of that traffic, no matter what. We're going to watch that 3% revenue drive right by and deposit into another Town bank accounts. I got to also ask you to examine how we say no to cannabis while we are watching an 82-person rooftop bar deck with limited parking on a very highly trafficked street. Pending it's opening in this town. How is everybody comfortable with that? Alcohol is a formerly prohibited drug that wreaks havoc still on our society today and in more recent studies, it's actually considered the gateway drug, since young people tend to try alcohol and nicotine first. It's not marijuana and it is different from the rest of the drug. It is not an opioid. It is not as addicted as what is being portrayed by people that had no people that had addictions. I have known family members that have died of addiction and it wasn't cannabis. It's never cannabis. Never. And if they have did it with the others, that's one thing, but never alone is cannabis the reason for death. Let's not forget all the other alcohol related businesses in this Town, the Inn, the old pub, the two liquor stores, one of which is on Main Street and three restaurants that have bars as well. That's a lot of potential danger, danger, and no one seems to have any issue with any of that, which is funny because compared to cannabis, I believe alcohol is way more dangerous for drug, way more dangerous and concerned about on-site consumption, I ask all of you to consider the potential misconceptions you may have. Just remember, no alcohol will be permitted in these facilities. The nature of a cannabis high alone without alcohol does not typically mean a rowdy, potentially escalating crowd, at best there may be a meeting of the minds, some laughter and maybe some enjoyment of music in the audience. My last concern, and this is a touchy one for me, but I'm going to present it because it does concern me. The alcohol industry is definitely challenged by the cannabis industry, hence why you see alcohol companies entering the market trying to recapture their lost sales. Then your family's business is directly connected to a bar owner, and that concerns me that relationship your business is fiscally dependent upon men and there are successes that are dependent on this town, and they see cannabis as a potential threat? Is that a question is an assumption, potentially so that maybe in order for tonight? Not that I'm implying anything from anyone. It's just you are directly in relationship with the bar. I do think there is conflict for bars. I see in the cannabis industry coming to town and thank you for your commitment both to this town. So please don't stand in the way of any of this progress, please. And most importantly, please do not stand in the way of potential revenue for this county, especially when it needs it the most. Thank you all for your time and your consideration, and for your commitment to doing what you do. Thank you.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:21:35] We have two public hearings so can I close one and start the other they seem to bleed into each other

[00:21:40] I think, I think the thing to do would be to inquire. I think it is a lot of overlap in this and I think the opinions that expected to be the same for either one you know...(inaudible)

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:21:47] I'm going to get ready to close the public hearing on the establishment on site cannabis consumption establishment. If there's anybody here or on zoom who wishes to comment regarding that, they can do it now or obviously they can do it when I open the next public hearing. if not, I'm going to oppose public hearing on Introduction to Local Law number 2 of 2021, and I'm going to open the public hearing for the introduction for a local law Number three, a local law adopted for the cannabis law, Section 131, opting out of licensing and establishing retail cannabis dispensaries within the town of Tusten. Picking up where we left off for now. Yes Iris?

1.2 6:15 PM Introductory Local Law No. 3

“A local law adopted pursuant to Cannabis Law Section 131 opting out of licensing and establishing retail cannabis dispensaries within the Town of Tusten”

Please see the Public Hearing transcript

Iris Helfeld [00:22:36] So I did not, I did not know that the meeting was starting six. I was told at the start of the six fifteen. I did not realize it was a separate situation, so all I wanted to say is what I said before applies to dispensary here, and I'm assuming that that's what was going to be discussing next correct?

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:23:01] Correct.

Iris Helfeld [00:23:01] And I don't have to go through it again?

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:23:13] No, no. Everybody that has spoken to this point is speaking on both.

Iris Helfeld [00:23:13] Thank you

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:23:13] Any other public comment from the floor? Yes, Star?

Star Hesse [00:23:17] I just wanted to say that...

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:23:20] You'll have to come up.

Star Hesse [00:23:20] Okay, okay I'm coming

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:23:23] only for the zoom audience and Jane.

Star Hesse [00:23:33] Okay, this is split up into two things. You're absolutely right. I think that many of the arguments about the licensing of on-site consumption establishments really is the underlying fear of some people. (inaudible) or not but any kind a bit or a fraction of being able to access cannabis is going to be detrimental thing for people and I don't think it is. Certainly not if they have a license to sell and then people go their merry way and go home and use it. That's even less in my opinion a problem then possibly, potentially, having an onsite consumption establishment. I don't necessarily think those are bad. I think that both of these laws are something that should be approved. Definitely something that would be a benefit for people. I agree with Danielle it's not going to be something that can just run across the border all day long, Sullivan County let's go nuts and then can go back to Pennsylvania and be our own Monticello.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:24:54] Donovan?

Donovan [00:24:56] different point of clarification, you got me...

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:24:58] You got to come up front.

Donovan [00:24:59] This might already have been discussed when they talk about on-site consumption. Is that like cookies? Is that smoking? Is that what is on-site consumption?

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:25:13] That would probably be both of those.

Donovan [00:25:14] Anything you wanted.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:25:15] But that would definitely include smoking.

Donovan [00:25:16] I see, and this lady made a point that she thought the people of Pennsylvania wouldn't come over here and use this. Is there? Is there a legal prohibition? That you have to be a Sullivan County resident to or a New York state resident to consume pot in our local pot mill?

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:25:37] No.

Donovan [00:25:38] So you can come from anywhere?

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:25:40] Yes.

Donovan [00:25:41] So I'm not so certain about her last point. Thank you very much.

Kathleen Johnson [00:26:00] Well, I would just looking here express that my family's been in this town, we've had business here for going on 70 years, and I don't like the idea of people trying to bring in a business, not my husband to the border, not my husband. He has nothing to do with it. He's, my husband. It's my family's business and we've had one of the biggest revenues car sales, the tax on car sales.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:26:28] It's more

Kathleen Johnson [00:26:29] I'm sorry, but...

Crystal Weston [00:26:31] Actually to me

Kathleen Johnson [00:26:32] Yes, the tax on car sales for over 70 years, that brings more income than anything else, but to have my family's name...

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:26:46] Too the board (everyone laugh).

Kathleen Johnson [00:26:46] Drug through dirt like we did something wrong actually gets me very, very upset being that I've been a member of this community, my family, my grandfather, Hankins, backed by the churches and I just don't think that people should be dragging, the Lang's, the Landers, they've been here for years. They've been the ones bringing the revenue in this town and I just think the people should think twice before they try to bring through the month or anything to do with my family or anybody in this town that's been in here for going on 100 years, that's all I'm saying, thank you.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:27:41] Bernie?

Bernie Lohmann [00:27:41] Well, I think what he pretty much had to say at the last meeting, however, listening to the conversations tonight, is basically medical marijuana,

the doctor's prescription go for it, no problem, Doctor's prescription. Marijuana sales or marijuana bar doesn't fit in Narrowsburg, doesn't fit at all. It's a rural community. It's not New York City, If you like New York City go smoke pot. Go back. Nobody's stopping you. It doesn't fit here. (inaudible)

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:28:21] I do have some question from Zoom. Do I have anybody else on the floor before I go into Zoom?

Ned Lang [00:28:30] Not far from Kathleen was talking, you can drag my name through the mud I don't really care. But one way that implied it. Our supervisor or anybody in this town has ulterior motives to push back against such a horrendous idea as putting a marijuana mill in our town and implying that this gentleman or anybody in this town has ulterior motives to stop it because they're going to make money on alcohol sales. That's fu**ing BS, I close my bar down because it's such a tough environment. It's such a nasty environment is in this state with all these crazy laws with the social distance stuff like umm the social distance, please. The bottom line is that we have a right in this town to stand up as Ben does, and everyone on board does and believe what you believe in and you should they should not be throwing money at you and saying oh, you have ulterior motives or conflict of interest. You have an attorney here, and I'm sure he will tell you the same thing. You stand by your motives, you stand by your decisions, you stand by this town, you stand by the culture of this town and push this thing back and keep it off our streets and keep our family and our children safe.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:29:42] Bob?

Bob Olman [00:29:43] I don't get the brand I'll make it quick. I'm kind of new to the town, I own over 400 acres here. I have a big investment in this town. I want pot here. I come from the city a lot of pot there. I smoke a lot of pot. I don't want to hear it doesn't fit in the community, it's a community decision, not just a natural thing, thank you.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:30:03] Brandi?

Brandi Merolla [00:30:07] Just feeling, really this dynamic is probably looking to shut down bars and on the other line, people who drink, and I'm sure a lot of you go home at night and have a drink to relax, and that's not medical marijuana, that's what marijuana can do for people and it's legal now it's not about if we want it or not. It's here in the state and lots of people, you guys know, either deal it or do it in the town already if you want to admit it in public or not, like I know that and who cares? Like, now it's going to be legal. It is legal, and if it's a relaxant and it helps people deal with this crazy world, then I think we should not say Narrowsburg is exempt from that world, I mean we are not. It's not about people going back to the city. I'm here thirty-two years, I'm not going anywhere and I just think, you know, if you have an open mind to all of it, I'm certainly not maligning anybody who had a bar ever in history or a liquor shop on the mall or five or legal. I just want to try to end that divide, which is bizarre for me. I'm sitting back there and listening to this so thank you so much,

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:31:25] Lisa...

Crystal Weston [00:31:27] Lisa DeAndrea.

Lisa DeAndrea [00:31:46] OK, I just want to say that I think it's a little foolhardy to say that there's a potential three percent tax revenue that we could gain as a result of a potential

marijuana dispensary or lounge or something like that without actually considering the consequences. With respect to what would happen if we had one of those facilities in our neighborhood, in our community, we do not have a police force. There's a state police in town however, everybody has to realize that there is no individual police force in town. The marijuana dispensaries they're legal tend to be cash businesses. They're not legal. Marijuana is still federally illegal. You cannot possess marijuana under the federal laws. It is still illegal. Banks will not bank marijuana businesses. It is a crime on the federal level in order to possess marijuana, and I understand it's legal on the state level. However, I think that our town is not into consideration or may not be taking this into consideration all of the ramifications of this, yes, there may be a potential for three percent tax revenue that could benefit the town, but there's also a downside. We don't have a police force. There are the people that if it's an on-site consumption, people are getting in their cars and driving. As somebody mentioned, we are a rural community. Everybody drives. It's not New York City. We don't have public transportation. It's not California. It's not LA, we don't have public transportation. So, people are going to get in the car after having been at one of these lounges and wind up, God forbid getting into an accident, or worse yet, people will take it with them, smoke it up in their car and drive off. So, I just want to (inaudible), you know, I am firmly against any marijuana dispensary, any lounge, and I hope that the board will take all of that into consideration when considering this, that's it thanks you.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:33:52] Any more on zoom? Any more on the floor? Let me start with the ladies up front and I'll work my way to the back. Iris goes ahead

Iris Helfeld [00:34:05] I am sorry to hear...

Crystal Weston [00:34:07] Iris, I'm sorry, I need you to come here, we can't see you.

Iris Helfeld [00:34:10] I am sorry to hear that there is this feeling that Kathleen mentioned. This is not to butcher anybody. I think that this is only a situation as a boy that perhaps it might be a conflict of interest. It wouldn't matter. It is not anything to do with the family. The family is a fabulous family, and I don't think that that's how it is presented. That is just the way I heard it. If it was Al or if it was James who had some kind of connection with a similar type of business, that's how it's getting in, but not about to butcher your name or your family.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:34:56] It was not taken that way, I will clarify one thing. Mm-Hmm. Kathleen is the owner of the business, I am not and I think that gets lost in things that when they look at me sitting here as a public official, I work for my wife but it's not like we don't know, I think that kind of knowledge about the oldest business in the Town of Tusten run by a female.

Kathleen Johnson [00:35:20] Yeah.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:35:21] They think that they kind of, you know, take offense to the fact that it's not my business. I'm an employee, but it's not my business. No offense taken on this from you or from you. Donovan?

Donovan [00:35:37] This is again, a question we may have already addressed it since it's not legal federally to possess pot, does that open the Town of Tusten taxpayer to liability? that, we don't see on the table right now that are not remotely in the in the debate. Are we exposing ourselves to financial liability that six months a year down the road are going to come at it? I don't know the answer to that.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:36:12] thank you. Yes?

Jennifer Patetto [00:36:22] Thank Iris for saying what you said, and I just want to reiterate that, and Kathleen and like totally not. I respect your business and I have since the days of selling you advertising through the River Reporter. So, it really is not that and I really said it in more of Danielle's business is my business just like your business is that and I understand you and as a family heritage to it, so I I apologize for any disrespect that may have been involved, but I am just concerned about, you know, these financial relationships that we have that you put our and I'm not trying to do anything either. It's just, you know, your family's business is potentially affected by what happens to the new owner of that building and that was all I was trying to say is to address this gentleman's question about the town liability. 70 percent of the states have this. I don't know if the federal government's going to pick the Town of Tusten to start the federal issue with. There are things happening in the Senate right now. Everything is moving in that direction. It is strange that we have this situation, but there is a reason why the states can independently set their own constitution right? so they, we are dealing with American society and it is where it is right now, folks. It just is where it is and the pot is here and everyone that smoking is smoking it and it's not going to feel much different afterwards except, we'll feel different why? Because we can legally consume what we've been consuming for decades and I don't have to be a criminal anymore. I don't have to be a criminal anymore. Buying on the street, that culture that's created part of this problem, and I am not talking about legalizing opiates, heroin, crack, cocaine and all the addictions that you know and have watched your family suffer from. That is not this. This is something like alcohol that needs to be addressed and legally provided a platform to exist. That's how you control situations, you don't keep pushing them into the streets and that's what's happening is they're pushing them into the streets and you're making regular citizens, be criminals. To live to have a pleasant life, to have a drink when you come home at night. I mean, think about that if you had to be doing something illegal to have a beer at night. I mean, it's insane. Thank you all. And I'm sorry. I hate conflict. I really do and I want us to be a community, and I love all my neighbors that I'm disagreeing with right now. Love you all. Thank you. I can't help it.

Kathleen Johnson [00:39:10] I just want to clarify one thing. The financial relationship with Frederick is not the bar. He's going to get into electric vehicles, I read from him.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:39:21] This has nothing to do with...

Kathleen Johnson [00:39:22] I know what I'm saying is he wants me there because one day I'm going to help him sell these electric vehicles for the (inaudible)

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:39:34] If there is no other public comment, I'm going to close the public hearing.

unknown [00:39:39] Amen...

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:39:41] Before I get in trouble, is there any other public comment?

Pat Hawker [00:39:50] I can't resist. To address whichever person made the comment about there won't be much traffic from Pennsylvania. I don't believe for a minute because when New York had an 18-drinking age in Pennsylvania had a 21, their right, the roads

were being burned up from east to west like crazy. I would have my husband without it because that's where we all came if we have an establishment that sells pot in town, Pennsylvania will find its way here and don't be misled by the notion that they will only come from Beach Lake or maybe Honesdale because when the drinking age was 18, they came from as far away as Scranton every single weekend. So, I think, you know, will you will that the sales person be making more money? Yeah. But I think you'll be opening up to a lot more legal ramifications because, you know, people like to sue these days and they will go after any suspect, then they're in the process.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:41:19] Rick?

Rick Lander [00:41:23] Yes, just on the retail aspect of it. You know, we're not saying that you can't smoke, you can smoke all you want, but go buy it in Bethel. Don't we? I feel it's not a Narrowsburg situation for our kids and our lifestyle, and we have a lot of vested interest up in here, sixty-five years and I wish there'd be more people coming from the city that be more interested in joining the ambulance, the fire department that we really need and instead, we worry about building pot and getting accessibility. We just got the wrong issues here.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:42:00] Bernie?

Bernie Lohmann [00:42:04] That's pretty much said what I said last month, that I have to do it again. There was a wreck every week and everybody knows somebody that wiped out a car somewhere between here and Honesdale. (inaudible)

Lisa DeAndrea [00:42:19] Just want to say the law is clear when it comes to marijuana. The law is clear when it comes to legalization of marijuana that we as an individual has the right to build six marijuana plants at home and use really as I want. I can tell you that there are people in this town who are growing six marijuana plants, their harvesting them, and they're probably clientele. So, your dispensary, isn't going to change much around here because you're still going to have that dealer who wants to put the money in his pocket and not the town's pocket, not in the government's pocket, in their pocket, tax free money in their pocket. So, if you put in a dispensary, you don't change anything that could be done understand you're not changing anything. I'm legally allowed to grow six plants, so if I grow six plants and I hook up with somebody who grows six plants and he hooks up with somebody, we build a clientele base so we don't need a dispensary. I don't need the town to get my money and then have to pay tax on that. Now it's free money for me. So, you're always going to have a dealer.

Donovan [00:43:49] Just one more question, is it possible to get an answer to the question about possible future liabilities given the before the town takes a vote on this issue?

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:44:00] Right now, our council feels that there is not.

Kevin McDonough [00:44:04] Yeah, I don't think there's a high risk of it honestly

Donovan [00:44:06] What are you basing this off on?

Attorney Ken Klein [00:44:07] it's based on experience of all these years with alcohol (inaudible) sued over the fact that every time there's an application for a 30-day waiver,

Donovan [00:44:17] If you go back to prohibition yes...

Attorney Ken Klein [00:44:19] No, no, no...

Donovan [00:44:19] Yes, this is a new thing, this is new and we have a situation where the state says one thing and the federal government says another

Attorney Ken Klein [00:44:26] I'm not going to argue with you. I'm just like, you asked the opinion, you got my opinion...

Donovan [00:44:31] And I'm asking you what you're basing it on.

Attorney Ken Klein [00:44:32] And I told you.

Donovan [00:44:33] Which was...

Attorney Ken Klein [00:44:34] Which is experience. You haven't seen a lot of people; you haven't seen a lot of alcohol establishments.

Donovan [00:44:39] And I'm saying in response, there's no experience in this situation.

Attorney Ken Klein [00:44:43] So that may be true, but

Donovan [00:44:45] your opinion isn't worth very much, is it?

Attorney Ken Klein [00:44:46] Okay, that's your opinion.

Donovan- Yes, it is.

Attorney Ken Klein- There you go. You're entitled.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:44:51] Thank you, Brandi.

Brandi Merolla [00:44:52] Sorry. Just one last point. Yes, people are allowed to grow three immature plants and three mature plants. Absolutely not for sale. That is illegal. You're not supposed to deal, it's private use adult use only over 21, let's clarify that.

Kevin McDonough [00:45:10] I wasn't going to say anything because I spoke at the last one, but the dispensary experience in Massachusetts that I've seen. I'm sorry, Massachusetts is not that far away. The experience there is that if in some ways people are right in saying it's not a Narrowsburg thing because Narrowsburg is a small town, it has fifteen hundred whatever it is. Twenty-five miles from a major highway, no one in their right mind is going to put a dispensary in Narrowsburg. It's just not going to happen. It's like saying, let's vote against the whole food. We're getting all upset about something that's really not going to happen. I think it sends the wrong message if we opt out because we're saying we're saying a lot of what was said by others about it needs to be taken out of the criminal realm and I think that the state did the right thing, but we're not arguing about this. If you have a beef with the state's legalization of marijuana, go to Albany. That's not what we are arguing, it's not what we're talking about here and I know they comparing it to the drinking situation in the 80s it's absurd because encouraging 18,19- and 20-year-old become illegal and drink and drive is very different from the dispensary situations that I've seen in Massachusetts. It's an adult use, people who go to a dispensary, we literally want

to obey the law, it's a nerdy crowd. It is not a druggie crowd these are people who go out of their way to do the right thing to obey the law. So, demonizing I can't understand everyone's had bad experiences in their family. They know of addiction, I respect them. I'm not immune to that, but let's talk about what was the real decision is, not relitigating something that all of them decide in a year.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:47:05] Any other public comment? If there is not, I'm going to close the public comment on Local Law Number 2. This time I'll call the meeting to order for regular meetings for the Town of Tusten for November 9th. Please rise for the pledge...

Public Hearing was closed at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Crystal Weston,
Town Clerk