



Town of Tusten

Town Board Meeting

Public Hearing on Cannabis
October 12, 2021
6:20 PM

A Public Hearing & Regular Meeting shall be held at the Tusten Town Community Hall and on Zoom.

PRESENT

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

OTHERS PRESENT

Crystal Weston, Town Clerk; approx. 14 members from the general public

PUBLIC HEARING

Supervisor Bernard Johnson opened the Public Hearing at 6:15 for public review and to receive comments regarding the Introductory Local Law No. 1 of 2021 entitles "A local law adopted pursuant to Cannabis Law Section 131 opting out of licensing and establishing retail dispensaries and on-site cannabis consumption establishments within the Town of Tusten, Sullivan County, New York. Introductory Local Law No. 1 was introduced before the Town Board of the Town of Tusten, County of Sullivan, State of New York on September 14, 2021.

2021-10-12 Town Board Public Hearing Transcript

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:00:15] ... rules and regulations. We're going to ask that each person only speak once unless we don't have an overage of people, which we don't seem to be doing to bad. I don't think we need to put a time limit on it unless anybody's talked up tomorrow and filibuster. The meeting is open, who would like to start? Iris? And what I would do is I would just ask you to come up to the table that way. It will be, this is a microphone that will allow the Zoom participants to hear you.

Iris Helfeld [00:00:55] A minute & forty-two seconds.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:00:57] it could be less or more; I think you'll be fine

Iris Helfeld [00:01:03] Hemp and cannabis are not our enemy. They have helped millions of people in many ways for many hundreds of years all around the world. As an educator for thirty-one years with the New York City Department of Education, it is incumbent upon me to point out the following. Education brings us into the light with clarity, transparency and positive growth. However, fear and misinformation keep us in darkness with stagnation and the inability to move forward in a positive direction to help ourselves, our neighbors and our community. We are on the cusp of being able to do something wonderful for our farmers, for our economy for jobs, for Tusten and Sullivan County. We need to do the right thing and the right thing is to opt in right now while we can. Opting out is denying Tusten the 3% tax revenue and giving that money to another town

when Tusten could certainly use that sizable amount of money. It will help our own community and pay for some of the upcoming town budgets. Thank you.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:02:38] Thank you Iris. Yes, Brandi.

Brandi Merolla [00:02:56] This is when I learned that the Catskill Cannabis Consortium on Sunday at the union with six experts in the field.

Crystal Weston [00:03:03] Is this better?

Brandi Merolla [00:03:04] Speak louder?

Crystal Weston [00:03:04] Please, yes

Brandi Merolla [00:03:08] Cannabis is a plant, a weed, two varieties of the plant, marijuana and hemp. There's twenty-five thousand uses for industrial hemp such as paper, rope, clothes, mulch, etc. The US Constitution was written upon hemp. However, marijuana has been demonized since 1936, when a propaganda film names Reaper Madness released, but marijuana does have medical qualities, and it's been used for thousands of years. Today, more than 200 illnesses like Parkinson's, cancer, meningitis, diabetes, pain management and more are treated with medical marijuana. Cannabis is now legal for recreational adult use 21 years or older in New York state. I like you all to vote with facts and not fear as well, and choose to remain opted into the New York state marijuana law, which allows all towns in the state to have adult use cannabis retail dispensaries and or on-site consumption venues. The New York state law will require all products to be tested in labs and emphasizes consumer safety and product transparency. Dangerous pesticides are often found thousands of illegal marijuana because there's been no oversight up to now. The new law requires testing from product, I'm sorry, but testing the product from lab to label protecting the health of the consumer. Three hundred twenty-one thousand jobs have been created so far, and they legalized cannabis industry in 38 states, building local economies. Distressed farmers who want to grow are eligible for matching resources from the state or the option of connecting with financial partners looking to back farming ventures. New York State is poised to make \$3 billion a year from the cannabis industry. The profits from adult use marijuana sales in New York state will be nine percent to go to the state, which goes to the police and community programs. Three percent go to the municipalities in which the dispensaries and who are on site consumption venues are located. That would be three percent all to Tusten if located here. One percent goes to the county, which the dispensaries and consumption are located as well. Tonight, the Tusten Town Board can facilitate this financial opportunity for Tusten. Saugerties Chief (inaudible name) was interviewed for the consortium and he has accepted a new law, has been working with his community to ensure safety. He has played an important role in guiding local dispensaries. The Journal of the American Medical Association has studied marijuana use in teens and newly legalized states and has found no increase in teen usage. In 2015, the Drug Enforcement Administration renounced the gateway theory, saying that there was no statistical proof of marijuana being a gateway drug. Legal cannabis in the Catskills will grow the state's economy. Why not consider the ends of this prohibition as a way to grow Tusten's economy and secure, professional, regulated dispensaries? If any of you were living when the alcohol prohibition was lifted, would you have voted to ban liquor stores and bars? Thanks for your consideration.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:06:31] Thank you for Brandi. Star?

Star Hesse [00:06:36] I also encourage people to view the presentation that was put on at the Narrowsburg union on Saturday because it was absolutely phenomenal and it dispelled so many myths about this marijuana madness, quote unquote. It's not marijuana madness, it's marijuana resurrection. This is going to be able to bring back Sullivan County agriculture to be a forerunner in the nation for this production, instead of being known as the headquarters for the gourmands delight foie gras. The police chief of the Saugerties, he not only was speaking as himself for his

community, he was speaking as the representative of New York State Police Chiefs Association, and they all have endorsed this idea that they're not leaping for joy about marijuana use, but it's much more controllable, it's not an addiction causing entry way drug. They've got studies to prove that, and as Brandi said, marijuana can be used as medicinal purpose, but also, there are so many other products that can be made from hemp. This could be an absolute salvation for the agrarian community of Sullivan County. Jobs will come back, you'll have products, we will have a product that is demanded. In California, the profits from their cannabis industry is eight billion dollars, eight billion. They are now, we're told, looking for other places to grow their farms of cannabis because they have these hideous fires out there that are just wiping them out, you know, in three days, their whole crop and everything else, the business is gone. So, we have a real chance here to capitalize on this, help Sullivan County residents help Sullivan County economy and really move forward with progress once the change of jobs, jobs, jobs is realizable. Thank you.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:09:11] Thank you Star. Glenny?

Glenn Swendsen [00:09:11] I'm going into this kind of blindfolded cause I didn't know (inaudible) something more, and um, since everyone knows I'm not running for office this year I can make an ass of myself. But ugh, I'm against selling it in the town. I know you're here. The biggest thing that bugs me is like everybody. So, I think of all the tax. Well, it seems like as long as we can tax, it will legalize it because we can make money off the tax, I don't agree with that. As far as people that smoke marijuana now, I mean it's still legal, I guess now it's legal and they've got their own suppliers anyway, and they go into a store and be able to buy it. Now you've got something that's under government control. So, they're probably going to take THC out of it. So, there isn't much THC in it or whatever. So, the illegal market will still be there. But I think it's a big mistake for the Town to allow selling it in the town. and I think you're also going to be pulling a lot of people from Pennsylvania over this way because they can't buy it over there. So, they'll be coming over here to buy it. And it's a mind-altering drug. I don't care how you look at it. I used to smoke a lot, and it's a mind altering that's why a lot of people smoke it and I just think it it's a mistake for the town.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:10:36] Thank you, Glenn.

Jennifer Patetto [00:10:47] I don't usually do these types of things but I'll do it tonight. OK, so hello, all, I'm Jennifer Patetto. My wife and I have been residents of Narrowsburg flats since 2008. For those of you who don't know us, Danielle and I have had multiple livings over the years. We started our Food Business National Conference in 2001, created a farm food and lifestyle and marketing agency, each reflected in 2016 that we have since morphed into super fine social and online social and digital marketing coaching programs for local small businesses. We live, work and breathe right here in Narrowsburg every single day. I decided to stand up today for multiple reasons, but mainly I felt compelled after attending the cannabis consortium held this past Saturday at the Narrowsburg union. Big thank you to Kathy and Brendon for hosting such an event, and an even bigger thank you to David Holland and the amazing panelists for an outstanding discussion on the overall picture of cannabis legalization in New York. The history lesson alone on the prohibition of cannabis in our country and around the world was worth every second spent that night. When tonight's public hearing and vote came up in discussion during the Q&A, they said something that resonated with me, that it's been stuck in my head ever since. It was something along the lines of... If there's anyone thinking of bringing a cannabis business to this town, bring it to the board because as we all know, whenever something is a reality, it's a picture too. So I am here to let the cat out of the bag, but Daniel and I are in the midst of creating a cannabis research and development business plan. This is all sobering news. I am not really comfortable discussing too many details, but we're basically doing research, having conversations with key players and having... We've been keeping a close watch on the industry for many years, specifically with our neighboring state of Massachusetts, to learn and understand what the industry has come to look like. I don't want to mislead anyone or make promises because we truly don't know where this will go but as of right now, we are entertaining the various business license sites,

which does include a business cannabis dispensary, but also includes a new wellness website, as I've recently enrolled in becoming a cannabis health coach. So why am I telling you all this? Well... Should the planets align and a physical, brick and mortar business takes hold, of course we will look at our home here in Narrowsburg first and then working outside from there. I'm telling everybody here right now, that when this begins to roll out in the New York Cannabis Control Board is aiming to launch the program in the spring-summer of 2022, so we are within months. It will happen extremely fast and properties typically in other states have to be secured in order to submit your application. So, what happens if Tusten opts out? So, anyone looking to secure a property will likely simply just go elsewhere. I know for us, petitioning the board or whatever the processes to go through the rigamarole to have this decision reversed will not be an option. There's just not going to be any time and honestly not any interest in trying to reverse people's decision and change the grounds of what the town folks to do. The next town over will become our focus, any municipality that's opting in, is going to have... It's going to be prime for these types of businesses and they will be the focus of most people. Direction. What actually makes me sad is that while... what actually makes me sad that there's potential loss in the Town of Tusten because of that receiving the three percent tax revenue. Some stats to just throw out, a dispensary can generate an average of nine hundred and seventy-four dollars per annually per square foot of dispensary space, and that's according to information gathered from the Marijuana Business Daily's 2016 Factbook so that's some years ago. Side note, supermarkets and department stores typically get about one hundred and eighty dollars per square foot. So, I mean, there's definitely the numbers have been stated here. This is a multibillion-dollar industry and we are behind in New York, we are behind we've actually missed a lot of opportunity but this is our opportunity to just catch right up and take the lead. So, yeah, they've coined this the green rush for multiple reasons. And three percent, they also stated in the factbook, you know, at minimum, dispensary even is the smallest dispensary is opening up first year with a million dollars in revenue so I could do the math, we could all do the math three percent or even just a million dollars is thirty thousand a year. I mean, plenty to do, the town can do to deal with our different projects that we have going on or shortage of parking. I don't need to bring up all the issues, right? But this is additional revenue that we could potentially find and put to good use. So please, I ask you to dear board members to let go of our preconceived notions about this industry. Believe me, we've been to a lot of dispensaries in Massachusetts, Massachusetts for research purposes only, important, but never have I ever felt unsafe or in an unhealthy situation. If anything, we felt a part of a thriving community that has happily accepted the new traffic and revenue. The laws around dispensaries require such a purity that you can't help but feel safe by every driver's license check that happens and every single door that gets swiped and held by somebody who's guarding it. They are very, very friendly and happy environment. And like the police chief of Saugerties said, which I don't recall the name, but it's been said multiple times tonight who was prerecorded that evening, the night of the contortion here this past Saturday had done his own research and went to college and traveled to Colorado. And he stated what he saw and he spoke to people, and it showed him that there were all walks of life that were participating and even married couples that I thought was cute. And it's true. There's not a specific stereotype at all. It's anyone and actually, at times it feels like everyone. So, I ask that you each make your vote tonight, not based on what your perceptions Cannabis may have been from years past but from a perspective of progress in moving forward toward a safer place for all of us. And believe me, I've been in this for a long time and it hasn't been safe and this is the opportunity to create a safe space for people just like people that drink have a safe place to go. So where was I? And I got to wrap this up now. I think I'm over the minutes, right? But please, I want you guys to fiscally think about this, and I understand but at this point, how do we think about it, but I think we to have to think about seeking out these businesses because at this point, this could bring something amazing for little Delaware hamlet and bring revenue of exponential potential. So, I thank you all for your time and consideration, and I actually welcome any questions if anybody wants to know and if anybody's looking to get into the industry, I really would love to have a conversation. So, thank you all. Good luck to you.

Mike Farrell [00:18:27] I'm not a lawyer, but if I understand the way the law is structured, basically what you're considering here are lounges and dispensaries, and that is the only thing that's really

on the table in the opt out and if that is in fact accurate the reality is the other aspects of cultivation, growth, distribution are going to happen all around us. And right now, it's already happening, it's happening in the dark right now, and there's the possibility it will come out into the sunlight and we'll know who's doing what. But the reality here is it's going to be happening all around us, all the opt. out does is ensure that we don't get meaning we don't get any revenue from it. There'll be a lot of producers, a lot of people distributing. We're going to be making a boatload of money. The opt out just ensures that we don't get any. But trust me, it's coming it's going to be here, it's going to be all around us. It's the new agricultural wave. We can't stop it. It's in the law. All that we're considering here are the lounges and dispensaries. And that's just really a tiny part of the whole picture.

Councilman McDonough [00:19:57] I attended the briefing on Saturday, and it was it was very interesting, and one of the best things about it was how young the crowd were, a lot of young farmer types, people I've never seen. And it was interesting i mean, because, you know, we're all debating, we see the same people all the time. This was this was really just an exciting group. But I started looking into this issue when it was starting to discuss and if you look at Massachusetts, it's in cities like Lee, it's in cities basically bigger than Honesdale. I think in many ways we we love Narrowsburg, we think it's the center of the universe, but a town of eighteen hundred people is probably not going to be able to sustain the kind of this is a big business. Nothing at this meeting convinced me because of the licensing fees, because of how many people you need to staff this place because of security. A friend of mine, who is on a public works board in San Luis Obispo, California, has mandated that the dumpsters alone for dispensaries cost twenty thousand dollars because they don't want people dumpster diving, whatever might get thrown away. It's a big business and I, the way I don't think a cold distributorship would arrive in that was because we're just we're miles from any major highway. I'm not saying negative things about your dreams. I'm all for it but, I think in some ways the opt out, you're protecting us from a problem that's not going to happen. You're and you're also protecting us from a problem that I think is not a problem in the sense of the legal. It is the state legalized marijuana. We're not going to unlegalized it here. We can pretend but... it's also going to divide the town opting out is its divisive path, you're going to engender you're probably going to inspire a referendum and that's going to be a divisive thing. And I think not just voting no on opting out. You're going to you're not...nothing's going to change and I think you're going to avoid a divisive fight, which is essentially over probably nothing and that's not to say I don't agree with everyone else what we've been talking about but you might also have perversely but, another element that they discussed shortly with their distribute there is and it's a big thing in California. It's like, let your fingers do the walking you call up. So, someone in liberty is going to be making a fortune, driving marijuana into Tusten, then it's going to happen anyway not so opting out I think is a mistake because of the divisive nature and this, I don't mean to be a jerk or personal whatever you're with the Bar Veloce you sold your business to the Baluchi, whatever that is you know, it's going to open soon, right or whatever. So, have you considered a recusing yourself because you're literally in business with someone who is going to actually be selling alcohol? So. You're going to vote for prohibition. When you with someone who is in that business to me, is it a conflict of interest? Probably legally no, but it's a weird (inaudible) that's just putting it out there. Anyway, thanks.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:23:15] Yes sir?

Sheldon [00:23:24] Hi, my name, Sheldon. I moved up to Weiden drive in 2019 before that, I was a software engineer in New York City for 13 years. I work with young stage startups and we had a couple of significant accidents and I decided I want to small town to move too so I came up here from the city. I'm probably one of the youngest people at the meeting and I'm happy to be a young resident of this town. I think the fresh blood is what will we communities that are away from major cities have no energy. And I'm here tonight, obviously because of this referendum everyone else is talking about everything everyone else said I agree with so far. I would just say one thing. The problem with opting out is that it tells entrepreneurs they're not welcome. Whoever is going to get this type of thing done, it's going to take millions of dollars and man hours and just an

unimaginable amount of logistics from the top to the bottom. And you're telling that person to leave town, which is essentially just the problem. Thank you.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:24:12] Yes, Sir.

Jacob Kelly [00:24:22] Well. Hi, my name is Jacob Kelly. I've been a resident of Narrowsburg since 2016. I concur with all the points that have been made before, and I don't wanna repeat them. The thing I want to say is that they're all pro sale and distribution of cannabis in our town or the people who are against it. There is such a huge movement against it and you are actually considering voting against, who are actually representing? where are they? Are they here? I mean, it seems to me like you're trying to have an abortion before you had sex and I think that's a little bit backwards. Just consider that okay

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:25:24] Yes, Bernie.

Bernie Lohmann [00:25:26] Well, I don't have a written script. I don't have to read the law; I'm will tell you this from my heart. Ben, you remember, Al you remember, Narrowsburg was vibrant when the drinking age was 18. How far do the kids come to Narrowsburg and drink? I know Ed in the back knows, everyone else is new comer they weren't here. Kids drove all the way from Scranton down to size. Rosemary. There was a car wreck a week going to Honesdale. Well, you think parking on Main Street from size cars backed all the way up on Main Street. There was no place to park when drinking age was 18. Possibility the Narrowsburg I know of since 1964, it's nothing new. What are you going to do with it when kids come from Scranton? or Wilkesbarre cause we're the closest point. How are you going to deal with? The other problem I have with it to start with pot, it adds the other stuff. I lost a son to drugs. It's bullshit. Oh my God, it's great stuff. Stick it up your nose. No, what the hell? I don't give a rat's ass what happens to California. I live in the Town of Tusten. I'm done. This is bullshit. No approval.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:26:57] And thank you very much.

Bernie Lohmann [00:27:05] Lived in Narrowsburg, born and raised never knew enough to leave. I'm going to second, go ahead. We're going to have to say I second what he said.

[00:27:16] (inaudible)

Crystal Weston [00:27:24] Do we have anybody online? I have no one online. I don't see anyone with their hand raised

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:27:29] Is there anybody else still within the audience that wants to take a comment? You're not allowed twice, but go ahead.

Councilman McDonough [00:27:40] After the idea that you got to answer the idea that that's going to attract kids... is that marijuana dispensaries are, by their nature, a law-abiding crowd. If you go to one in Massachusetts, it's filled with extremely middle-aged, middle-class people. It's not like a kid seeing it. The sheriff said that when somebody said that I can second that, it's amazing how just it's all walks of life but it almost struck me as like the NPR convention. It was so upscale and kind of respectable. I was shocked. I was looking for like Bill and Ted's great event. It's not. It's not stoners. And, you know, I respect anyone who has problems with marijuana. It's not a drug to be tried with or would be minimal. Nor is alcohol. But it's not a stoners world, it's not Woodstock, it's like if you go to a dispensary, you want to obey the law because you can get it. I'm sorry if you go to a dispensary, you, but you want to obey the law.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:28:55] Yeah, this is your microphone. I'm sorry.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:28:57] I'm sorry go ahead.

Councilman McDonough [00:28:58] I'm done.

Crystal Weston [00:29:03] We have one of mine, Lisa D'Andrea.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:29:07] Lisa, you are on.

Lisa D'Andrea [00:29:11] Hi. So, I understand that there's a lot of people that are for it and they keep saying, I keep hearing it's the law, it's the law, it's the law. Correct. It is the law in New York state. However, I think everybody is losing sight of the fact that marijuana is still a Schedule one controlled substance. So, while it is the law in New York state, it is still technically illegal on the federal level to sell, distribute or dispense marijuana. The money generated from the marijuana sales are illegal proceeds. Anybody dealing with the money generated from the proceeds of the marijuana sales in the state of New York could technically be violating the money laundering laws. There is a provision within the Federal Controlled Substances Act that prohibits an individual from renting property for the purposes of illegal drug activity. A marijuana dispensary technically would be an illegal drug activity. So, I think everybody is looking at this as well, it's the law in New York state and it is, but it's not the law federally. You're still committing a federal offense. With this, you still have the potential for money laundering. You still have the potential for other CSA violations. And I think that as a town, we should really think long and hard about whether or not we want to have this happen and have this type of activity engaging happening within our town. Not to mention the fact that most of these dispensaries are cash businesses. Nationally, chartered banks aren't going to bank an individual that owns a dispensary. So, I would be I again, I think the town needs to think long and hard. Yes, there is a potential for a three percent tax revenue, but we might be thinking we might be shortsighted in our thinking and, you know, dangling that three percent in front of you. Yes, you can get that revenue, but what problems are you also inviting as a result of those problems? So, I just urge the board to, you know, really consider all of the factors, not just the tax revenue in addition to marijuana is and has always been a gateway drug. So do we want that sort of element? Do we want that in our town? You know, just that's my I would just ask the board to really consider all factors. Thank you.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:31:57] Thank you.

Iris Helfeld [00:31:59] Two quick things,

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:32:02] they can't hear you. You gotta come up

Iris Helfeld [00:32:05] two quick things. One, it is not considered itself, but it is not it is not considered the gateway drug. What transpired in 1936 was William Randolph Hearst and the newspapers were very concerned about the great loss of money and because they were backing jute, which was being grown and hemp was grown, that would curtail their businesses and it would be a tremendous hit and so they came up with what could they do to stop it? J.P. Morgan financier put his more than two cents in lots of money and said, we're going to create something that will be a fear-mongering program position and that has lasted for the last 90 years. It is not what it is that was done specifically to put the kibosh on it so that they could profit with from jute, which is what they were using paper for newspapers and so that was something that was very specifically designed for that. The other thing is point two, I believe it is 38 states that have legally accepted cannabis and hemp and it is going into Congress to change the federal law so even what Lisa said is true at this moment, it is not something that looks like it's going to be valid for very long. Thank you.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:33:57] Is there any other public comment before I close the public comment? Is Lisa still back?

Crystal Weston [00:34:04] I'm not sure

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:34:04] Ok Lisa, go ahead.

Lisa D'Andrea [00:34:08] Sorry, I just wanted to address one thing you're right, there are bills before Congress in order to legalize marijuana and to remove it from the Controlled Substances Act. Hemp is federally legal, so there is no issue with hemp I wasn't speaking about hemp, I'm speaking mostly about marijuana, cannabis, whatever you want to, however, you want to refer to it. While it is true that those are pending before Congress, why not opt out of this and when it becomes legal federally, when it becomes something that is nationally permitted and that these dispensaries can be banked properly with national banks and not mainly cash businesses, why not wait as a town and see that? Or why not wait and see how and what effect it has on rural communities? Yes, there are dispensaries in California, there are dispensaries in Massachusetts. However, they're in urban areas, we are a rural community. If you have a lounge, somebody is smoking in that lounge and then getting into their vehicle driving home the same thing, if somebody is purchasing marijuana from a from a just a dispensary, not a lounge, they're getting the marijuana going into their car what's say they're not going to smoke and drive? So I think the town really needs to consider all of the factors and look and see, you know, maybe just wait a little bit. So, opt out now and we have the option later to opt in to the program. That's all that I would like to say. Thank you.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:35:37] I'm not. I'm not going to get into a discussion. It's a public comment. We're not going to go back and forth. That's why I said one time in the beginning, Brian is next. You don't have to agree with what people say. It's public comments so that they can give it to the board. It's up to the board to know the facts about certain things before we get going, so we're not going to get into. This is not going to get into a two hour back and forth, he said. She said.

Lisa D'Andrea [00:36:02] My apologies then.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:36:03] You're fine. I wasn't, but you were fine. I got one other person that wants to have their first attempt, Brian.

Brian Mendoza [00:36:13] Hey, I'm sorry, I missed the beginning of this, so I'm hopefully not having it too far off topic you know, I think that this has been a long time coming so as you know, I'm a Canadian citizen recently became an American citizen as well. You know, marijuana has been fully legalized in Canada now, and it's happening all over in my hometown, you know, big city, small cities all over and you know, there's been, you know, no, no real shift, right? Like for us to believe that like legal versus illegal is actually going to change the population that is using marijuana right now. You know, alcohol is out. There is option. We have lots of alcohol establishments in town and just seems like we are we are singling ourselves out as, you know, a community that is not going along with what the state is doing, what the what other communities, what other countries are doing and I have yet to be, you know, received any scientific analysis, articles or case that actually says, you know, there is a there is a reason to opt out like that makes a case against it. There's a lot of rumors, et cetera, and people's opinions, which I respect everyone's entitled their opinions, but we are not going... But when it becomes legal in New York, you're not going to see like millions of people all of a sudden start using weed that didn't before. They're all using it now, it's just happening illicitly under the market hidden you know, people are growing up here I'm sure and have been for years, right? The reality is here, we should just be part of the community and not single ourselves out as someone who's going to not go along with what our state and what the vast majority of the population is doing.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:37:53] Thank you. Any other public comment from the floor?

Jennifer Patetto [00:38:00] The government.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:38:03] Sure, why not throw everything to the wind?

Jennifer Patetto [00:38:09] Right? I just want to add a couple of... I just looked it up. I believe it's 19 states that have gone recreational and 36 medical and the issue with the federal government is definitely an issue but that's why we have state rights, right? So, I think there's a reason for that. So, let's not forget about the states' rights to create their own programs and their own laws that, we'll have to see and watch the federal government move on this, but there are a limited number of licenses. It's going to happen fast I've watched it in other states, goes like this "snaps fingers". So, we're either going to be in or we're going to be out and it's fine and whatever the decision is, is going to be what it is, but waiting and opting and later you're going to be behind the times, you'll have missed the opportunity and like the gentleman in the back said you're discouraging entrepreneurs that are trying to bring business to Sullivan County (inaudible) to hear. So yeah, thank you.

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:39:14] You're welcome. Anybody else? before we close the public hearing. Anybody online?

Crystal Weston [00:39:23] Nobody that I see online

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:39:30] This point, I make a motion to close the public hearing.

Deputy Supervisor Luchsinger [00:39:34] I Second

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:39:34] All in favor...

Board Members [00:39:36] (all say aye).

Supervisor Bernard Johnson [00:39:36] Opposed? (Public hearing closed).

Supervisor Bernard Johnson made a motion to close the Public Hearing at 6:56 PM, seconded by Deputy Supervisor Jane Luchsinger. All in Favor.

Respectively Submitted,

Crystal Weston, Town Clerk

Victoria Strumpfler, Deputy Town Clerk