

WHEATLAND TOWNSHIP SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
7:00 P.M. February 7, 2022
MINUTES

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER 7:00 P.M. with the Pledge of Allegiance being recited by all present.

ROLL CALL: Tom VanSyckle x Amy Snyder x Mary Karcher x Ethan McNeal x Lee Carte x

Others in attendance: Dee Powell, Duane Karcher, Dar & Linda Wernette, Kim & Kevin Thiel, Denise Reichert, Nikki Walcutt, Tom Stickler, Mike Wernette, John Wernette, Linda Howard, Pastor Chuck Richardson & wife, Jeff Snyder, Chad Paulsen, Ruth Chapman, Cindy Havens plus 2 others

Supervisor Tom VanSyckle made a few opening comments about the agenda being open for public comment regarding the marijuana ordinance in Wheatland Township.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ruth Chapman (resident) asked about a proposal that was discussed with Eric Williams, Township Attorney, at the Jan. 10, 2022. Tom stated that we would only go forward with that proposal if the Board voted to go forward with Opting in with our Marijuana Ordinance. Ruth went on to say that she is not in favor of any marijuana being in Wheatland Township and has maps for the township to look at for what areas of Wheatland Township are zoned Industrial & Agricultural. She stated that she knows of 1 68-acre parcel that is zoned Industrial. She also stated that Big Rapids has 23 stores that sell Marijuana and mentioned that Zoning has extremely high liability cost. A question from Ruth was "If we legalize it what are we saying to people who are already growing it?"

Linda Howard, tax payer, former resident, County Commissioner, stated that personally she is not in favor with a Marijuana grow or store front in Wheatland Township. She stated that the cost to the township for an Ordinance as well as legal fees would be very high. As a former business owner, she does not see this as a positive factor for economic growth for the community.

Pastor Chuck Richardson reflected from the last meeting and asked us why do we need to put our community on the map for this (marijuana grow and store fronts). He also spoke about medical vs recreational and encouraged if the board decided to go ahead with this to please consider on only medical marijuana to be sold but overall he would prefer it not to be in our community and stated that there are morals and values we need to consider.

Nikki Walcutt (non-resident) however has lived in this community all her life stated she is proud to call Remus her home town and it's very sad to think we would consider selling marijuana in Remus. She is a Truancy Officer and having drugs in closer proximity would allow it to be in more homes and easier to get because it would be here.

Cindy Havens (resident) asked what are the benefits for Wheatland Township?

John Wernette (resident and requesting to have a Marijuana Commercial Grow in the township). John stated that problems do not come from the stores or grows out there.

Duane Karcher (resident) Stated that he has been a resident in Wheatland Township all of his life. He is a 3rd generation on his mother's side and 4th generation on his father's side to reside in the township. He does not want to see it, and said our town stinks right now.

Chad Paulsen (former resident, requesting a store front in Remus). Stated that the board could put it in the ordinance about a smell factor. Chad said you would not smell it at his store until you got to the door. He also talked about how the State gets the license money and distributes it out to the townships that are involved. Chad stated that the State did not do anything to get marijuana on the ballot back in 2018. People wrote up the ordinance and that's how it got on the ballot.

Jeff Snider (non-resident) area plumber stated that he has put in 2-3 different units for people and the smell can be controlled with certain filters. He asked about where people could put in a distribution and feels it would boost the economy in our area.

Tom Stickler (resident) main questions were. Is there money to be made? Is it going to benefit our community? Is it going to benefit the business around here?

Mike Wernette (resident) shared that his wife had cancer for over 20 years and the medical doctors gave her OxyContin, which controlled the pain however was very weepy with the medicine. When they decided to try medical marijuana (which they purchased in Grand Rapids), she found much more comfort with her pain with no side effects.

Dee Powell (non-resident) asked Mike Wernette when he went to Grand Rapids to purchase the marijuana for his wife if they put any money into the economy in the Grand Rapids area while they were there. Mike said yes if he needed gas or a few groceries they would pick them up there.

Dar Wernette (resident, property owner) Questions from Dar was "Isn't it legal now? Everyone can grow 12 plants, who's policing that?"

NEW BUSINESS: Key points during our discussion

- As a board we need to know more about the cost to our township (money going out as well as coming back to us).
- The big issue that people have is the smell
- Carbon filters will help with smell. The smell happens when the plant is flowering
- Default ordinance with the State is 1000 feet from a school or Church's property line.
- Caregivers/Medical Licenses
- Question comes back to.... How do I become a client of a Medical Grower? Answer from John Wernette is go to Greenville and get a card.
- Next Special Meeting Tuesday, March 15, 2022 6:00 p.m. (Mary will check with BOR)

PUBLIC COMMENT:

(3 MIN NOT ON AGENDA 5 MIN ON AGENDA)

Kevin Thiel (resident) Stated this isn't a Medical vs Commercial issue since Medical is already legal. It's a Moral Dilemma.

ADJOURN: Amy Snyder made a motion to adjourn, Ethan McNeal supported, all in favor, meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Karcher
Wheatland Township Clerk