

# Woodstock Cannabis Commission

## Minutes of January 12, 2022

**Attendees:** Tory Littlefield, Seton McIlroy, Lisa Lawlor, Devon Kurtz, Philip Robertson, Frank Horneck & Robbie Blish

### **Agenda:**

1. Call to order
2. Additions or deletions to the agenda
3. Public Comments
4. Woodstock Trustees Meeting Update – Seton
5. Discussion of Public Safety Concerns with Woodstock Police Chief Robbie Blish
6. Continued discussion of cannabis policy and education research
7. Adjourn

### **Call to order @ 4:05 PM**

**Tory Littlefield:** Requests for any additions or deletions to agenda

**Lisa Lawlor:** Yes, Requests to up discussion of timeline of information

**Devon Kurtz:** Suggested Info be published in the Vermont standard

and or some sort of op ed or writeup for the public, who do not make it to information sessions.

**Lisa Lawlor:** Publish in the Woodstock List Serve

**Tory Littlefield:** Any other additions or deletions? None.

**Tory Littlefield:** Are there any public comments? There are no members of the public here. ( No one from the public attended the meeting. )

**Seton McIlroy:** Shared language with trustees. Trustees does not seem to have any concerns about it. Trustees decided next steps:

**Seton McIlroy:** To email language to Nikki Nourse. Nikki will put it on the ballot.

Before ballot is approved, the trustees will go through the language one more time. Which happens in the beginning of February.

Jefferys concern was about legislature making significant changes that the CCB came up with would he would want to know about that, but he thinks the language is basic enough. Other concern was getting a date scheduled for education for the public. Which we could probably do in February.

**Tory Littlefield:** Introduces Police Chief Robbie Blish. To discuss public safety concerns if a retail cannabis dispensary were to open in Woodstock.

**Robbie Blish:** The Legalized marijuana is here and is not going anywhere and the big thing here is what is the impact locally here in Woodstock

Looked at some documents unclassified report from New England high intensity drug area task force which is part of the office of the DEA. They had some stats that probably would be my concern. The increased accessibility for the youth that some of the statistics have shown especially in terms of the edibles and the obviously the other part is the impaired driving aspect that has in Massachusetts has been shown an increase. In Vermont since it has been legalized personally has not noticed an increase locally and has NOT seen any strong reporting that it has had a large increase statewide.

Part of that my personal opinion of course which doesn't matter but it is that a lot of times people have both marijuana and alcohol on board, when we are dealing with an impaired drivers. But if we have a high enough level of alcohol to just charge them with a DUI alcohol we go that route because it take a lot more effort to do the other way. If you do not have a DRE come out to evaluate that driver and you just draw blood for instance and send it into the lab the local PD is on the hook for the 400-500 dollar lab fee vs. if you get a Drug Recognition Expert there is only about 30 or so statewide to come out and do the evaluation and sign off on the lab paperwork then it is free. Obviously when you are talking about a DUI arrest and if you can go the alcohol route and you save a lot of time and potentially save some money. This is typically what we do. The data maybe a little bit skewed but then again I have not seen any real reports to say there has been an increase. The stats that came out of Massachusetts have said there has been an increase since they legalized marijuana recreationally, and they have dispensaries and we don't. So that might be something else to consider.

The perception of it being legalized sort of added to the increase in use. Some of the percentages that were presented in the report that out of all New England States Vermont has the highest rate of marijuana usage for persons 12 years and older.

For instance. I'll give you the breakdown if you are interested.

Connecticut was lowest at 19%

Maine was at 24.7%

Massachusetts was at 22.16%

New Hampshire 21.43%

Rhode Island 223.31%

Vermont 27.04%

for individuals 12 years and older.

**Lisa Lawlor:** Robbie, Was this self reported?

**Robbie Blish:** I did not look at the foots notes to see how they obtained the data. I can't say but a lot of this especially for the younger adults is probably based on the youth behavior risk survey that schools do. Send out school wide for 8th grade and 11th grade. That is how they collect the data often.

So that would be my concerns, especially for the establish users have more of an ease of access so it could drive higher usage. The youth in terms of the diversified usage, in other words so the more access adults have to buy it legally the more likely they will pass it to someone under 21 or 18 or even high school age. As we see with alcohol, that happens we were seeing it with vaping, that was happening a lot until they changed the law, the usages has gone down but is still pretty significant.

We have NOT seen this in Vermont but in Massachusetts they did mention the legal sales of marijuana hasn't really curtailed the black market. Keep in mind that I don't think we have the same laws that we have that we that allows people to grown their own and possess a certain amount of their own home grown stuff. In Massachusetts everything is purchased from a i think a dispensary so they would have more of a significant black market than say Vermont where your neighbor can grow it and give it to you and its perfectly legal so its not necessarily black market just because you did not buy it from a state sanctioned dispensary.

**Philip Robertson:** Asked Is the high tax reason for black market?

**Robbie Blish:** Yup, that could be a driver. So for instance, maybe its changed but the Cannabis Control Boards on the state level has tweaked it a few times sort of very fluid at this point I think, but at one time when Vermont which is the 11th state to legalize recreational sales although they don't open up until 2022 under the provisions they were going collect 14% excise tax on retail sales and 30% state tax revenue will be earmarked for drug education prevention programs. I don't know if that is still the case, but you're right but if you can either grow it yourself or get it from your neighbor for free, because its illegal to barter its illegal to sell your home grown stuff even though it is very hard to control. It's obviously happening, but people aren't advertising as much. If you could do that for a lot less you are not going to pay the 30% tax on marijuana. The flip side is somebody who is older more of an occasional user but someone who doesn't grown their own or know anyone that grows their own. They are maybe apt to go to a dispensary and get a known product. In your homegrown stuff or something from the black market, you may not know what the potency is, how its grown, what are the organics, what kind of pesticides or chemicals used to grow it, so the state sponsored marijuana grows are much more controlled and knowledge of what you are ingesting in terms of chemicals.

Is Woodstock, who are we looking to sell to? I guess it doesn't matter but are our customers going to be locals and or tourists.

**Devon Kurtz:** Question / Concern : Has anyone seen an increase transporting marijuana across state lines from other New England dispensaries.

**Robbie Blish:** I don't have an answer to those stats. You're right, The consumer is on the hook for that. If they go into New Hampshire and they get stopped. i think it's happening but I don't know at what level.

**Lisa Lawlor:** Asked to Robbie Blish - Where is the closest DRE person?

**Robbie Blish:** Probably a trooper. DRE in Hartford at one time, don't think he is one now. Ludlow PD has one, Sargent King. Beyond that, it would probably end up being a trooper out of the Royalton barracks. They have been rotating troopers, I don't have a good handle of who it is. The state police dispatch has a list of who is on duty that is a DRE where they are and typically will reach out to the closest one and if they are available they would respond to us.

**Devon Kurtz:** How expensive is the training?

**Lisa Lawlor:** If the law passes, is a DRE something the Woodstock police department is interested in doing?

**Robbie Blish:** The answer to your question is Yes. I would put it out to the officers if they were interested in doing that. The training Devon you were asking about. The training is pretty intense, you have to have number 1 the baseline DUI instruction certification, then there is a mid level DUI certification called ARIDE. Where they teach you some some more advanced or technical skills in terms of detecting impairment. They also give you training on field exercises to give to others to indicate their level or other type of impairment. Then DRE is the top level and part of that, I don't know if they still do, but you went on a two week trip to Phoenix and go to the jail in Phoenix and when they brought the prisoners in that are on meth, cocaine, fentanyl you name it and they got to interact with these people and assess them and get training on what someone on meth looks like, this is what someone on cocaine looks like. It is a grant funded thing. I believe that some of the tax money will be allocated for more DRE's in the state. Part of the DRE agreement is If Woodstock officer is DRE is certified and Springfield request of a DRE if officer is not tied up with a call would have to go and then Woodstock calls in an overtime officer while the other officer is at a DRE evaluation. There are some moving parts but I think its a worth while program and if we had somebody that wanted to go through all of the training, they pay for it but do not pay on the back end for filling in the shifts. For a la The cost is absorbed into police. We would probably participate, If Robbie Blish had an officer that wanted to volunteer for the program. If you force someone to do it you will not get great results. These spots are competitive so I wouldn't want to waste anyones time or money if they were not interested in doing it.

**Devon Kurtz:** When a DRE is involved in a case not in their jurisdiction is the offer that pulled over or the DRE going to court?

**Robbie Blish:** Both has to go to court, if during shift hours they would have to backfill time for another officer

**Tory Littlefield:** If a dispensary happens to come in, there might be strain on traffic control and these dispensaries have a large amount of cash. I was wondering about your thoughts about traffic congestion and Robbery

**Robbie Blish:** No issue with traffic impact we have a high amount of traffic and not concerned with high volume of traffic

In terms of security and break-ins is an extra concern for Police, because not your typical retail establishment it is an attractive place to break in because of cash and products.

**Lisa Lawlor:** Robbie, in any of your reports have you come across robberies or crime in the neighboring New England states

**Robbie Blish:** There was not anything noting in the report and I have not seen anything in the bulletins

we are part of New England police network and the will put out bulletins crime trends around New England.

For example the catalytic converter theft trend. We would see an alert on break ins and I have not heard of any medical marijuana dispensary be broken into

When you were able to grow hemp people stole some hemp thinking it was marijuana is the only issue Robbie can recall that has been a few years now.

Robbie Would like to add one more thing from his notes: Massachusetts has an increase in the pediatric emergencies because of cannabis edible products.

10 calls in 2015 increased to 65 calls 2019

1 - 6 will become addicted if starts using before 18

So it goes back with the same concern I started out with was ease of accessibility, increasing of youth accessibility. Windsor county has I think the highest in the state in terms of youth use of marijuana for school age children.

Vermont has the highest rate of use in the past year of marijuana 18-55 over 52%

Honestly in my personal opinion if the town or the village can make some tax revenue on it, I think its worth it. If they can't. Im not sure it is worth the head aches. but I don't know what kind of headaches it comes with. On the other hand you would also have a storefront occupied vs an unoccupied storefront. There are a lot of pros and cons that go with it.

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**Tory Littlefield:** The next item is the continued discussion of policy and education. Pulled up document that was prepared by Lisa and Phil.

**Lisa Lawlor:** - Going back and forth trying to figure out what the questions are for the people of in the village of Woodstock

**Philip Robertson:** people on this commission has more experience than we do. Wants to make sure info is correct and agreed upon

**Lisa Lawlor:** - Describes document requests some assistance with more knowledge and understanding

**Devon Kurtz:** Will take on defining what is unknown to Lisa and Phil

**Philip Robertson:** Asked how detailed do we want to get

**Devon Kurtz:** Suggested what will be helpful is what products will be sold. There will be quite a few products that can be sold is an entire industry.

**Tory Littlefield:** - The CCB will remove limits off of the cap of THC content because of confusion and limiting of products.

**Seton McIlroy:** Suggested this information will be great to have on the website. Pull out highlighted stuff for what people are interested in.

**Philip Robertson:** Suggests that people become educated on testing and regulations on products

**Seton McIlroy:** - Under retail nurseries can sell seeds and clones

**Devon Kurtz:** - Might want to say something about it still being federally illegal. Federal Crime to cross state lines.

**Tory Littlefield:** Would like to put info from Robbie Blish into document

**Philip Robertson:** Suggests mentioning about equity and keep it local within the document

**Devon Kurtz:** - Will look into if there is a limit of how many dispensaries you can own. Would it prevent chains?

**Seton McIlroy:** Believes they are trying to keep it to one owner, one store.

**Tory Littlefield:** Its almost time can we stay a little longer

**Lisa Lawlor:** Where can it actually be consumed

**Philip Robertson:** Only current ordinance in Woodstock is avoiding smoking in public parks. The State has rules and regulations to handle that.

**Frank Horneck:** If you are not permitted to smoking cigarettes you cannot consume cannabis as well

**Devon Kurtz:** Found licensing information. You can only have one license, and each license can only permit one location.

**Lisa Lawlor:** If ordinance is passed in Woodstock, more than one person can apply to for a permit in Woodstock

**Seton McIlroy:** - We (Woodstock) are NOT allowed to limit how many stores

**Lisa Lawlor:** Requests if someone can add about where it can be consumed

**Devon Kurtz:** Combine to two sections from Woodstock and the State. State laws are applicable.

**Devon Kurtz:** Seems like we are in a similar boat as the state taking over most of the regulations

**Seton McIlroy:** We (Woodstock) is not allowed to make any special zoning laws

**Philip Robertson:** Does the dispensary have to be 1000 feet away from a school?

**Seton McIlroy:** They changed no less than 500 no more than 1000 feet from a school. The measurement is walking distance not how the crow flies

**Tory Littlefield:** Put in some research of what we can do vs what we cannot do. Tax maybe be on the ballot but cannot collect local tax in Woodstock.

**Philip Robertson:** Suggested using Forbes because of its reputation. Mentioned article about tourism and how it could save the tourist industry from covid.

**Lisa Lawlor:** People who come for cannabis tourism usually stay longer.

**Seton McIlroy:** We should have a section about any employee has to be licensed to work at dispensary

**Tory Littlefield:** People are going to have to learn how to be safe about it. lock it up

Next meeting Tuesday at 4:00pm.

**Seton McIlroy:** Ballots come out and then do the education. Possibly 2nd week of February

**Meeting adjournment motion by Seton, seconded by Phil at 5:25 p.m.**