

Village of Canton, New York

VILLAGE BOARD MEETING Meeting Minutes: September 22, 2021

Board Present:

Michael Dalton, Mayor
Beth Larrabee, Trustee
Klaus Proemm, Trustee

Carol Pynchon, Trustee
Anna Sorensen, Trustee

Others Present:

Gerald Ducharme, Village Attorney

Sally Noble, Clerk/Treasurer

The Public hearing was held on Wednesday, September 22, 2021 at 6:00pm via Zoom. The public hearing was held to receive public comment regarding whether it should adopt a local law, subject to permissive referendum, whereby the Village of Canton will opt out of allowing retail cannabis dispensaries and/or on-site consumption establishments from locating and operating in the Village of Canton.

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

The Mayor announced we have 23 participants. The Mayor said he has received 12 emails, one letter and one text. Discussion was opened at this point.

Lenore VanderZee thanked the Board for holding this hearing. She spoke first on behalf of SUNY Canton. She stated that they have already incorporated aspects of cannabis into their curriculum and they plan on continuing to do so. They expect this to be a large and growing industry in NYS. On behalf of herself not on behalf of the college she feels that allowing cannabis dispensaries and on-site use in the Village of Canton is to the benefit of the economy of the Village and Town of Canton. She supports it wholeheartedly.

Marti Macarthur is very much in favor of letting cannabis be sold in the Village of Canton for a lot of the same reasons that Lenore gave. She said she has used it for medicinal purposes for years and has had to go to Plattsburgh. She has a lot of pain and it is very beneficial. The Mayor thanked her for her letter and has passed it along to the board.

Rod Tozzi is diametrically opposed to it. A couple of years ago the half way house was approved. He lives on Main Street and has found needles in front of the Verizon property. He has turned them over to the police. He has also found needles in the Village green. He does not think it behooves us to introduce another form of dope. He understands the concept of making money but absolutely does not agree that we have to sell our souls to do it now. This is not the cannabis from the 60's. This stuff is much more potent.

Pete Macarthur identified himself as a registered pharmacist. He said one of the concerns for a lot of people is they fear that marijuana is a gateway drug. He added that studies have been done

that show that alcohol is a larger gateway drug than marijuana. The fears of it being a gateway drug and getting all these people to go to stronger drugs in a fallacy.

Austin Bailey thanked the Board for having this hearing. He agreed with the previous two comments. He lives in Seattle Washington. He has an I502, a cannabis license in Seattle. He has been in the industry for a couple of years. The cannabis we see today is definitely not the cannabis from 20 or 30 years ago. It is now regulated. It is tested from seed to sale. It is safe if you buy it from a dispensary. Alcohol abuse goes down when there are other alternatives like cannabis, to take that place.

He is interested in Canton bring pro cannabis, not just in allowing it to happen, but the fact that people right now that he knows are looking at upstate NY as a place where they can potentially take some of their expertise in business. That could be creating a small boutique business. The market on the west coast is dominated by big business and has crashed in a way which is not friendly to the little guy. If Canton doesn't allow it will just go elsewhere. He would love to see Canton benefit from all the supporting industries and all the investment that could happen if it's a welcome space.

Reverend Mike did not want to get into the pros and cons of it. His concern is the scale. There hasn't been any other town in St. Lawrence County that is allowing right now to his knowledge. Where would we do that? He has been to the dispensary in North Hampton Massachusetts. They had to change the streets from one way to allow traffic patterns. They have off duty police officers directing traffic. He just can't imagine where you'd have that kind of flow and input, when we talk about boutique that is kind of a misnomer. We want the revenue but do we want everything else that is associated with that all coming here. He just doesn't see any physical place in the village that could handle that kind of traffic flow.

Christa Haifley lives in Potsdam. Thank for holding the hearing and the opportunity to speak. She wants to echo what Lenore said. She does teach classes in cannabis business. Seeing this industry which is already here it would be a shame if it would not be allowed in Canton. She does recognize what Reverend Mike was saying. If it's only Canton there's going to be smuggling into Canton and out of Canton. She knows this is just focused on cancer right now but there is a larger ripple effect. She does support it as an economic opportunity.

Ann McLaughlin from Pierrepoint but pays taxes in Canton. She is here because you are having the discussion. Does not see the argument of Canton having too much business. There is also the aspect of social consumption sites. That too here is one of the most positive aspects of having legalized cannabis. The greater threat to public health is loneliness. She would love to see some social spaces for people to come and gather.

The Mayor thanked everyone for participating. The Board will make any decisions at the next Board meeting.

Peter asked if the Board would be contacting other Villages in the area to see what their opinions are and what they are doing?

The Mayor answered that he has not at this point. We could ask around if that is a concern. By being silent, they appear to be headed in the direction that they are going to allow it and not opt out. We wanted to give our community an opportunity to speak to us.

Trustee Pynchon said she has spoken to some of the Potsdam people, Town and Village. She plans to have a deeper conversation because that is a good idea. It is important to know especially them being the other college community.

David Hartman said he has actually had meetings with both Gouverneur and Potsdam. He will share that information if you would like. He added that there are 11 different types of licenses that are being optioned by the state. One of the licenses that is not included in the decision is delivery. If Canton decides to no it doesn't necessarily mean that somebody from Rensselaer Falls couldn't deliver to Canton or Potsdam. The sales would still be there. Do you want a piece of the revenue is what it comes down to?

The Board thanked everyone for coming.

Trustee Proemm made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:28 pm. Trustee Pynchon seconded the motion All voted in favor. The motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Noble
Village Clerk