

## LWVN Topic Meeting October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018

### Local Ballot Questions on Marijuana:

Karen Sherman (Opt-Out): group of residents met and were worried about commercialization of marijuana; over 40 other cities and towns have voted no to shops; Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Belmont have opted-in; asking for yes on ban, but no on 2-4 limit; reasons:

- Not about medical marijuana—is only about hosting stores here in Newton
- 2 of the deadliest substances are tobacco or alcohol because they have been legalized, industry promotes and encourages use that normalized the substance; leads to use and abuse and deaths
- Expose our kids to marijuana much earlier, opens the door for abuse and addiction—1 out of 6 get addicted to marijuana
- Edibles are easy to bring anywhere, unpredictable when effect will kick in—attractive to youth
- Availability is a big risk factor
- Concerned about driving—no safe tool to test THC in blood
- In CO, accident fatalities have increased by 150%; in WA-double of drug driving fatalities
- NHTSA confirmed danger of driving under the influence of marijuana—they falsely believe they drive better when stoned
- Revenue numbers of more than \$2 million—is guess; 2/3 needs to go into community impact fund for public health and safety, would disappear after 5 years

Jane Frantz (Responsible First Step Newton); no on ban, yes on limit 2-4; Newton supported state referendum question in 2008, 2012, and 2016. Legalized use and sale of marijuana—that is what this question is about.

- Shops are legal—will be in communities around us: Brookline, Watertown, Somerville, Framingham, etc. Newton will be sending a significant amount of local revenue to Brookline--3 mi down the road. Regulate it—don't ban it.
- Already sold in city and in schools all the time—no possibility of ban—can only ban regulated shops.
- Needs to be highly regulated shop; in addition to legalization in CO, have an increase in population that could skew the numbers including traffic accidents and fatalities; in MA, Cannabis Control Commission with set of regulations—cover every possible area that can imagine; more highly regulated than 40 liquor stores in Newton.
- Locally: recommend not be in village centers or be within ½ mi of one another to prevent clustering; not where children congregate; we all want to make sure kids are safe in mind, brain, and body.
- So why 2-4? Special permitting process is difficult, time-consuming and thorough. It will not be easy. This is a compromise between complete ban and no limits at all—asking for compromise. It is not a sham—genuine attempt at compromise.
- Revenue: 10.25% of gross sales goes to state; 6% goes directly to Newton—divide into two sections 3% to gen fund, 3% to impact fee—public health, safety, administrative, infrastructure and any identified impact on city. Much needed revenue—why would we be sending a significant amount of revenue to Brookline when we need it for our services.

Frieda: a lot of permutations on how you can vote: Respect the Vote, vote no on both; vote is complicated, though issue might now be

Question about use in home and affect:

JF: concerned about use for minors—are illegal for minors; students already use it—will not go to Brookline, will get it in school; do not want minors using substances—want them to be educated; many more substances out there that are illegal—need to educate parents about them

KS: hosting stores, always have underage use, will increase it, will be more accessible and available in community; won't prevent use; Bill Evans, former Boston Police Commissioner, is against it.

What is purpose of compromise? If issue is limiting access to marijuana—still going to be regulated the same and teenagers still have access, reduce revenue. How would limiting benefit?

JF: hear from many who don't think this should be a limit at all. Believe that there is a compromise

KS: in CO, no net gain, addition is taken up by regulatory costs and health and safety; think that a lot of this is inflated, except that have a lot of negative consequences; lose local control

Potency of THC in recreational marijuana—heard it's 2 – 3 times more potent than that in the 70s:

KS: in 1970s 3-5% THC, today 30% THC

JF: CCC regulations includes a section about labelling—every item must have % of THC on label; have no idea on black market, but will know in shop; doing research now

Stats on driving while impaired—how does it help Newton to have people have to drive farther to get marijuana?

KS: have no idea, but saying 'no' sending a message to our community and kids that we don't believe in it and that we will not normalize a substance that it not harmless.

JF: remembers when driving while drinking was acceptable and then MADD, SADD became very involved in issue and educational programs have been extremely effective; same thing has to happen with every substance

Marijuana is part of our culture—has been for decades. Prohibition didn't work—are we facing something along those lines today? Making it unavailable just won't work.

KS: have an opportunity to get some science-based data to know what a safe level is

JF: prohibition doesn't work; not working now with drugs

Notetaker left at 9:35 am, though people stayed to ask questions.