

**St. George Planning Board Workshop on The Maine Marijuana Legalization Act
May 23, 2017**

CEO Brackett conducted a workshop on the Marijuana Legalization Act. He and Emerson attended a workshop put on by the Knox County Planning Commission. Brackett also attended another workshop on marijuana put on by the Fire Marshall's office. They discussed the processing of the product. Brackett reviewed Legal Marijuana in municipalities.

Last month, Maine voters narrowly approved a ballot measure legalizing the personal use, possession, and cultivation of marijuana by persons 21 years of age or older and operation of marijuana stores, cultivation, manufacturing and testing facilities and social clubs for on premise sale and consumption. It talked about the new law, all state licenses require local approval, although it is not yet clear who on the local level decides or what basis. Municipalities are also authorized by ordinance to regulate the number, location and operation of retail marijuana stores, cultivation, manufacturing and testing facilities and social clubs and to impose a separate local licensing requirement. In the alternative, municipalities may by order entirely prohibit any or all of these establishments. Brackett said he believed the State agency which handles this is going to be changing and will go to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. Brackett said as near as he could tell it would be like a liquor license whereas the town as to weigh in on that, in addition to the state.

Bates said his feeling was the commercial side of it, he did not see that St. George needs to be leading the charge on this. Hewlett thought there might be residents who would like to become a commercial grower. Bates said the revenues that come from this. There was an interesting piece in the paper. A number of towns are already ahead of us in thinking about this. York and Lebanon voted on this. Drummond & Woodsum said there are 3 approaches dealing with recreational marijuana. Towns could decide not to have local rules regulating it; officials can develop local zoning and regulations to fit the needs and desires of the community – designating in the town it should be and what is appropriate but the town's without comprehensive planning for zoning or no desire to be known for the business, it the easiest option may be to just go dry. York and Lebanon has done that.

Bates said the tax revenues for this, are not going to lower property taxes. The tax revenue goes to the state, so we can go through a lot of hoops to do all this and be in the vanguard in getting these all set up but no obvious benefit, at least in the near future, to the town. Brackett said if someone has a business, they are taxed on that, so you would get tax money from that? Bates said the York Board of Selectmen said the tax money is going straight to Augusta, we are not going to have any retail sales tax on these operations. Brackett said, right, retail sales tax but the property tax is what I am looking at.

Brackett said the issue they talked about today was the amount of butane that can be in some of these places. Bates said we are getting into the practicality of the type of business. Emerson: you would need a big building because it is grown inside, it is all secured, so it is not just a backyard place. Brackett said the scary issue, if individuals process this themselves, and the fire department gets a call, and they go in there and they will not know there is butane. Brackett watched a video of a very exclusive house in a well to do neighborhood and the amount of

canned butanes that were around when the house burned and all you could was popping. It is an issue. What you decide to do with it, it is up to you.

Hewlett asked what if we put it to a town vote? Bates said that was what York and Lebanon did. First, they put in a moratorium, then gave the town opportunity to vote on the different shall the ordinance prohibit retail stores? Ordinance prohibiting social clubs, testing facilities, ordinances for each, 5 in all. Brackett said no one has asked him yet for a facility. Bly asked about the butane. Brackett said that was one of the chemicals used in processing. Bly said into candy or something? Brackett said hash and honey oil, etc. Bly said that was not like selling marijuana; it was selling the products of it. Bates said it has been thrown back to the towns to see what they individually want to do. Who could put a moratorium on it until we vote on it? Bates said we have until November. Bates said it will be on the November ballot, maybe earlier.

Brackett said Polky was talking about having a hearing. Bates said public hearings would need to happen. Like so many of these, one public hearing is probably insufficient to get everyone informed on the subject. He thought there would be a number of public hearing. Hewlett asked if it would be a Planning or Select Board issue? Bates said whatever the town proposes, he felt it should have a statement from the Planning Board. Brackett said the Select Board gives us the directive to do the ordinance. Bates said we all need to get better informed on this. How much do we want to get involved on a regulatory thing? Emerson said you would need to look at social clubs which are like bars. Bates said ultimately the Planning Board will be involved in this.

Emerson said basically we have to come up with an ordinance. Brackett said there are quite a few out there, already. Bly said Bates read them off. Emerson said there is plenty of legal help out there. Hewlett said it is grown hydroponically. Brackett said it is also grown by the Co2 in the air. Minery said CO2 and butane. Brackett recommended the Board read the literature and get up to speed on the topic and will have more discussions about the subject. Bates said we can talk to people in town and get the sense of this. Hewlett said what if someone wanted a retail dispensary.

