

Charter Township of Portage Residents

In the 2018 midterm election, the ballot initiative to legalize recreational marijuana in Michigan passed statewide and in all three precincts in Portage Township. The township already has a Medical Marijuana Ordinance, and in response to township residents' vote, the Board has begun to develop a Recreational Marijuana Ordinance. The state authorized twelve (12) types of recreational marijuana businesses, and the township is considering permitting eight (8) of these types as current zoning allows.

Board members obviously possess a broad range of opinions on the topic, but we agree that Designated Consumption Establishments, public marijuana events, and Excess Marijuana Growers will not be allowed. We also agree that allowing only one (1) business of a type gives someone a monopoly, and we can't give any new business owner an outright monopoly. What follows is a brief sketch of our discussions thus far:

Marijuana Safety Compliance (labs that assure the product doesn't contain pesticides, etc.) would be a good fit since we have a university with a Chemistry Department nearby.

Marijuana Secure Transporter is also a good fit since our B-2 and Mixed Zoning areas allow trucking facilities.

Marijuana Retailer is essentially the same business model as our existing Medical Marijuana Provisioning site.

Class A, B, & C growers are delineated by the number of plants the state allows and would be limited to our FF (Farm Forest) zoned area where horticulture and greenhouses are permitted.

Marijuana Processor includes two different models: a business which makes edible products or a business which supplies both edible items and oils. If edibles only, Baked Goods Stores are permitted in areas zoned B-1 & B-2 (Business), LAR (Lakeshore Residential), and MU (Mixed). If oils are included, the business would only be permitted in areas zoned M-1 (Manufacturing) or MU.

Marijuana Microbusiness (where limited growing, processing, and selling will occur) would likely be permitted as a Special Use in B-2 and MU once the ZBA (Zoning Board of Appeals) rules whether or not that model is similar to other businesses permitted in those zoning districts.

Later this summer the Board will hold a public meeting on Recreational Marijuana – the intent of this letter is to keep township residents abreast of our progress on this topic.