

Charter Township of Portage
Special Board of Trustees Meeting
October 19, 2020,
Township Hall
47240 Green Acres Road
Houghton, MI 49931
(906) 482-4310

The Charter Township of Portage held a Special Board of Trustees Meeting on Monday, October 19, 2020 via Zoom meeting.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Bruce Petersen at 11:00 AM

In attendance were Supervisor Bruce Petersen, Clerk Amy Skewes, Treasurer Betsy Smith and Trustees Peggy Anderson, Bill Bingham, Bill Fink, and John Ollila as stated by roll call

Charter Township of Portage held a meeting to discuss our recreational marijuana ordinance. The board went over the ordinance as drafted by Bill Fink.

1. First the board discussed allowing unlimited facilities in the Township. Fink described negatives to putting a limit. Ollila stated that after speaking to many people he has changed his mind and is now in favor of unlimited facilities. Smith and Skewes agreed. Bingham had a question as to how much water would be used if a grow operation were to be put in Farm Forest, if a well could provide that much water and if it would negatively affect the surrounding land owners. Joni Moore commented that because of the climate in our area she does not foresee any business having an outdoor grow facility. The board agreed to allow unlimited facilities in the Township and have the Ordinance reflect this.
2. The board went over in detail the marihuana draft ordinance and made minor changes.

Public comments: Resident Jeff Koski expressed concerns with allowing recreational Marihuana facilities in our township. He would like the Township to consider the children and would rather the time and money be spent on recreation and parks.

Resident Mike Bach also expressed concerns with the ordinance. He stated that although recreational marihuana did pass in the Township, he isn't sure if the residents realized they were also voting to allow the sale in our Township. It is already available in the City of Houghton and surrounding areas. He is concerned about children gaining access to it and the risk which this creates in our youth in regards to development, mental illness and addiction.

Joni Moore with Ottawa Innovations stated that it will be highly regulated and there are safeguards in place to make sure children will not be able to gain access. She is available any time to speak with about this.

Board Comments:

Anderson commented that she spoke to residents and people don't have a concern with medical marihuana but they do have concerns with recreational.

Smith commented that the black market is alive and well and if the youth in our area want to find marihuana, they can get it on the black market, if it's available then at least it's regulated.

Skewes Commented that she also has heard from people who may want medical marihuana but don't want to see a Doctor, it's easier to seek recreational.

Ollila commented that he has spoken to many people regarding this topic, they are all in agreement that this needs to be allowed in the Township. He never smoked marihuana and never will but believes people should be able to access marihuana if they wish especially since the voters voted in favor.

Skewes agreed with Ollila and also stated that she grew up in the era of "this is your brain on drugs" and she was afraid of drugs, she has also never used marihuana. She has come a long way in 5 years on this subject and feels that Fink and Smith have kept the Township well versed on the rules and regulations as well as Ollila and Bingham narrowing down the zoning areas to allow the sale of it. She feels that since the voters voted in favor of it, she is basing her vote on that.

A motion was made by Smith to move forward with the ordinance with the minor changes and submit to Pat Greeley for review, seconded by Fink. Motion passed by a roll call vote. Aye: Fink, Ollila, Petersen, Skewes, Smith. Nay: Anderson, Bingham

Adjourn: Ollila motioned to adjourn at 12:10 P.M., seconded by Skewes. All in favor

X 

Bruce Petersen
Supervisor

X 

Amy Skewes
Clerk