

**NOVEMBER 6, 2017
SPECIAL MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Carol Shank, Chairwoman. Those present were Robert McDougal and Larry Rackley, Commissioners; Bryce Shields, District Attorney; Karen Wesner, Administrative Assistant; and Lacey Donaldson, Clerk.

PUBLIC INPUT: There was no public input at this time.

Commissioner McDougal thanked those in the audience for coming. Commissioner McDougal stated that his business has holdings in the Industrial Park and may see an economic gain if this Ordinance is passed. He stated that he would be recusing himself from the discussion and voting on such matters. Commissioner McDougal left the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

THE MEETING WILL FOCUS ON DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC RELATED TO BILL #332, WHICH AUTHORIZES MARIJUANA ESTABLISHMENTS, SPECIFICALLY CULTIVATION FACILITIES, IN PERSHING COUNTY. THE BILL DOES NOT ALLOW FOR OTHER TYPES OF MARIJUANA ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE COUNTY: Jordan McKinney stated that she is the Pershing County Senior Center Director and also has children who attend school in the district. Mrs. McKinney stated that regardless of her personal feelings, marijuana is legal in the State of Nevada and she sees no problem with the county benefiting from additional revenues. Mrs. McKinney stated that her department heavily relies on tax dollars to provide services to the seniors and any additional revenues would be beneficial. As a parent, the additional revenue would also benefit the School District.

Commissioner Shank stated that the Board received written letters of opposition from James Evans, Sean Burke, Gail Munk, and Geraldine Atkinson.

Geraldine Atkinson spoke in opposition as she is concerned about the possible need for increased law enforcement. She is also concerned about the edible products that appeal to children (gummies, suckers, etc.) and the possibility of more emergency room visits.

Benny Hodges stated that this initiative was passed by Clark County and it shouldn't be forced down our throats. He stated that he thought this would damage the ability to find a suitable work force. He also stated that it is still illegal by Federal Law.

Doris Bridges spoke in opposition. She stated that 60% of Pershing County voters voted against legalization. She asked how personal growing of marijuana would be enforced if a dispensary was approved. Mrs. Bridges stated that increased revenue isn't a good reason to encourage drug use.

Vijay Ratti spoke in opposition, citing his own children's struggle with drugs.

Jack Pardick from Grass Valley spoke in favor of cultivation, but is opposed to dispensaries. Mr. Pardick stated that Reno has a shortage of product, so why not export it and bring in revenue. As a Vietnam Vet he saw a lot of marijuana use and didn't see a detriment to those using it. He also stated that he doesn't see how a cultivation operation would increase crime.

Commissioner Shank wanted to clarify that the County is not looking at approving dispensaries and is only considering cultivation facilities.

Mitch Nielsen, County Landfill Operator, spoke about Pershing County's lack of infrastructure. Mr. Nielsen also stated that the County should wait until the State has worked out all kinks in the regulations.

Franklin Wilkerson, 11th Judicial District Court Administrator, spoke in opposition. Mr. Wilkerson stated that in his experience working with the Drug Court, marijuana is a gate-way drug. He hasn't seen anyone come into the program that has employment. He doesn't want to give the impression that it is ok to use drugs.

Mike Murphy asked if an Impact Statement had been prepared. He would not be opposed to a secured grow facility, with the product shipped out of the County, but feels that this is premature without an Impact Statement. Mr. Murphy would also like to see any increased revenue from such a facility given to the School District for computer science programs.

Jessica Wilkerson stated that she is a 2006 graduate of Pershing County High School and is currently a psychology student. Mrs. Wilkerson stated that there is hard evidence that marijuana is a gate-way drug. Mrs. Wilkerson referenced studies and statistics relevant to that evidence.

Tom Moura stated that this is not the right step for our community to take. Our community has always been morally responsible and this is a step in the wrong direction. Mr. Moura also expressed concern with the proximity of the Industrial Park and a possible cultivation facility to the 4-H building. He also believes it would put an additional strain on law enforcement.

Lisa Pontius stated that the statistics mentioned earlier are irrelevant as marijuana is legal in Nevada. All the revenue is going to Washoe County and the cultivation is not keeping up with demand. Ms. Pontius has years of experience with youth in Pershing County and marijuana is not the gate-way drug for kids in Pershing County, alcohol is. Ms. Pontius stated that people are going to use marijuana no matter what, so why not make safe sources available. Cannabis oil provides non-addictive pain relief that opioids don't. Decisions should be made based on reality, not scare tactics.

Carl Clinger mentioned the faces in the Crime in the Courts section in the paper. He reiterated others testimony regarding the ill-effects of marijuana. Mr. Clinger stated that the Ordinance already states what everyone is feeling; that the statutes authorizing marijuana establishments "fail to conform to the character of Pershing County and threatens the health, safety, and general welfare of the inhabitants of the unincorporated areas of Pershing County".

Alan List asked what neighboring rural counties are doing. Commissioner Shank stated that Churchill, Douglas, Elko, Humboldt and Lyon counties have prohibited marijuana establishments. He also asked what the projected revenue would be. Mrs. Shank stated approximately \$120,000 a year. Mr. List feels that it would cost the county more in enforcement than any increase in revenue. Mr. List also doesn't see the difference between a grow facility and a dispensary. He is totally against allowing it to be grown and then shipping the problems somewhere else.

JC Astle, a student at Pershing County High School, spoke about his mother abusing alcohol and him and his siblings being taken away from her. He struggles with learning disabilities. Mr. Astle feels that the County shouldn't be making decisions based on money.

Bruce Harkreader stated that he has been involved in law enforcement for over 40 years. Mr. Harkreader feels that \$120,000 is pocket change. He gave Chairwoman Shank some information about crime where drugs were a factor.

Darin Bloyed stated that the Board has heard from the court system and the Sheriff and didn't see why they would move forward. Mr. Bloyed stated that he sat on the Commission when the moratorium was put in place. The people voted 60% against initiative and the Board is here to serve those people.

Paul Schlehr from Grass Valley stated that it sounds like most in the room are against recreational use of marijuana. Mr. Schlehr stated that he has no problem with a grow facility producing for medical use only.

Kevin Machado spoke about morality and taxes. Mr. Machado thought time would be better spent trying to get a gas station in Grass Valley; which would bring in more gas tax.

Lamont Wanner stated that marijuana is a gate-way drug, but the gate swings both ways. He has known individuals who have stopped using hard drugs through the use of marijuana. Mr. Wanner feels that we are over-thinking the infrastructure for a facility, stating there is plenty of space for cultivation.

PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED ORDINANCE #332, PERTAINING TO LICENSING, FEES, FACILITIES, AND OTHER REGULATIONS RELATING TO MARIJUANA ESTABLISHMENTS IN PERSHING COUNTY: Commissioner Rackley stated that he is in no way in favor of marijuana usage, but he has been looking at the financial aspect of the issue. For many years they have heard that the County officials have been anti-growth and this may be an avenue to growth. Mr. Rackley thanked everyone for their comments.

Commissioner Shank stated that she believes this is not something that is wanted in any shape or form in Pershing County. In regards to a grow facility, she feels they would be contributing to the delinquency of minors. She also stated that if the product isn't wanted in our county, it would be wrong to send it to another county.

Commissioner Shank made a motion to not adopt Ordinance #332, pertaining to licensing, fees, facilities and other regulations relating to marijuana establishments in Pershing County. Motion seconded by Commissioner Rackley. Commissioner McDougal was absent. Motion carried.

PUBLIC INPUT: Jordan McKinney asked if there was a timeframe that would allow someone to come in and open a grow facility. It was noted that it will not be allowed in the County, but the City has not made a decision yet.

Jessica Wilkerson asked for clarification regarding medicinal marijuana as this Ordinance is specific to recreational marijuana. Mrs. Shank stated that the County has already prohibited medical marijuana.

Pam Munk stated that the City Council will be discussing the same topic tomorrow night at 7:00 p.m.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

Approved 12/20/17: _____ /s/
Carol Shank, Chairwoman

Attest: _____ /s/
Lacey Donaldson, Clerk