

Commissioners of St. Mary's County/St. Mary's County Board of Health (Wednesday, June 7, 2023)

COMMUNITY BRIEFING ON CANNABIS LEGISLATION

Generated by Sharon Ferris on Monday, June 12, 2023

Members present

Commissioner President James R Guy

Commissioner Michael L Hewitt

Commissioner Scott R Ostrow

David Weiskopf, County Administrator

Jenna Guzman, Communications Director, and Moderator for the Community Briefing

Panel members:

William Tilburg, Director Maryland Cannabis Administration

Sheriff Steven Hall

Dr. Meenakshi Brewster, St. Mary's County Health Officer

John Houser, Assistant County Attorney

1. WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Commissioner President Guy opened the Community Briefing on Cannabis Legislation at 6:30 in the in the Chesapeake Building Meeting Room, Governmental Center.

2. MOTION TO CONVENE AS BOARD OF HEALTH

A. Board of Health

I move to adjourn as Commissioners of St. Mary's County and reconvene as the St. Mary's County Board of Health.

Motion by Commissioner Michael L Hewitt, second by Commissioner Scott R Ostrow.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Commissioners Guy, Hewitt, Ostrow

3. PRESENTATIONS

William Tilburg explained HB556/SB516: Cannabis Reform Act that was passed by the Maryland General Assembly in April 2023 and what changes come with it beginning July 1, 2023.

Sheriff Steven Hall discussed the impact Cannabis Legislation will have on public safety and preparation measures the Sheriff's office is and will be taking as this new law takes effect.

Dr. Meenakshi Brewster discussed health risks associated with cannabis use and cannabis use disorders, potential cannabis poisoning and youth utilization.

John Houser discussed local county zoning regulations pertaining to Cannabis and Ordinance 2022-30 adopted by the Commissioners in August 2022 which adopted zoning for medical cannabis facilities.

4. MODERATED Q&A SESSION

Citizens were asked to submit questions by May 31 at 5pm. The following questions were received.

1. What measures are being put in place to regulate the cultivation, distribution, and sale of cannabis in our county?
2. Are there any zoning restrictions or limitations on where cannabis-related businesses can operate within the County?
3. What impact will the legalization of cannabis have on the county's economy, particularly in terms of tax revenue and job creation?
4. How will the legalization of adult-use cannabis affect public safety and law enforcement efforts?
5. Are there any provisions in place to ensure that cannabis legalization doesn't adversely affect vulnerable populations or communities?
6. What steps are being taken to educate the public about responsible cannabis use and the potential health risks associated with its consumption?
7. How will the county address the potential conflicts between federal and state laws regarding cannabis, especially considering its classification as a controlled substance at the federal level?
8. Will there be any additional resources allocated to public health services to address potential increased demand or related issues resulting from cannabis legalization?
9. Are there plans to track and monitor the social and economic impact of cannabis legalization in our county to ensure it aligns with the initial goals and objectives?
10. Currently, St. Mary's County Government tests for cannabis use as part of the hiring process. For those prescribed cannabis for medical use, this felt discriminatory, as medical treatments don't typically disqualify someone from working an office job. Will that policy now be changed or updated? Can county employees use cannabis starting July 1? Will there be differences in allowances between medical and recreational use for county employees?
11. My understanding is those facilities currently licensed to dispense medical cannabis will be able to obtain a license to also distribute recreational cannabis.

If they are dual-licensed, will an adult be able to obtain medical cannabis from the facility without having a medical cannabis authorization card in their possession?

12. Does a tobacco store owner need to first apply for a medical dispensary license and then apply for a recreational one? Is there a way to apply just for a recreational license?

13. There is currently a conflict between cannabis use and firearm possession. You can use medical cannabis, but you cannot possess firearms. Or you can possess firearms if you don't use cannabis at all. Does this legalization change anything regarding possession of firearms and the use of cannabis?

14. I live in an apartment and have complained to my landlord numerous times regarding cannabis smell and smoke coming through the vents from my neighbor as it causes me to be sick. I open the windows it still doesn't help. What can I do?

15. Will the facility located in Abell be able to additionally produce recreational cannabis?

16. How will the county handle issues related to impaired driving and ensure public safety on the roads?

Responses to questions can be viewed by either logging into BoardDocs click on the "meeting" then "Edit Video", at "4. Moderated Q&A Session" click on "View" or watch the meeting on St. Mary's County You Tube Channel.

5. ADJOURN

The Community Briefing on Cannabis Legislation adjourned at 7:59 pm.