

**NORTH RIDGEVILLE CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES
City Hall Council Chambers – 6:15 p.m.
May 6, 2024**

To Order:

Chairman Jason Jacobs called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Led by President Jason Jacobs

Roll Call:

Members present: Councilwoman Holly Swenk, Councilman Eric Shaffer, Councilman Bruce Abens, Councilwoman Georgia Awig, Councilman Martin DeVries, and Chairman Jason Jacobs.

Also present: Mayor Kevin Corcoran, Finance Director April Wilkerson, and Assistant Clerk of Council Fijabi Gallam.

Councilman Clifford Winkel was excused.

New Business:

2024-45 An Ordinance prohibiting adult use cannabis processing, cultivation, retail dispensaries, or other North Ridgeville business intending to process, provide, or sell cannabis as defined in Sections 3780.01 through 3780.99 of the Ohio Revised Code.
(Introduced by Mayor Corcoran)

Mayor Corcoran provided a brief overview of the history of medical marijuana in the City of North Ridgeville. He reminded everyone that the City had previously passed an ordinance prohibiting medical marijuana dispensaries and cultivators from operating within its limits. With the recent passage of recreational marijuana at the state level, a provision was included allowing municipalities to also prohibit these businesses from operating.

Mayor Corcoran stated that he would like to ban recreational marijuana in the City for the same reasons the City banned medical marijuana in the past. He pointed out that several neighboring cities, such as Avon, North Olmstead, Westlake, and Strongsville, have also chosen to prohibit marijuana businesses. The Mayor emphasized that North Ridgeville is a growing community and aims to project a positive image to all. The City's goal is to avoid attracting visitors that may not align with the desired image of the City. He expressed that the negative aspects outweigh the positive aspects of having a marijuana business in the City.

Councilman Shaffer inquired about whether the proposed ordinance to ban marijuana businesses would also prohibit personal cultivation for personal consumption.

Mayor Corcoran clarified that the legislation specifically addresses the commercial use of marijuana and does not extend to personal use.

Councilman Abens raised concerns about potential legal challenges that the City may face in court regarding the ban.

Mayor Corcoran pointed out that the State has a specific provision that enables municipalities to adopt restrictions.

President Jacobs asked the administration if they had any comments or questions. No further discussion took place.

President Jacobs opened the floor to the public for comments regarding ORD. NO. 2024-45.

Rudy Ringwall, a resident at 31966 Center Ridge Road, expressed his concerns about the City's decision to ban marijuana businesses. He disagreed with the administration's decision. Mr. Ringwall believed these businesses would not contribute to a rise in criminal activity in North Ridgeville. Additionally, Ringwall argued that allowing marijuana businesses would generate tax revenue for the city and benefit the community.

Councilwoman Swenk concurred with Mr. Ringwall's viewpoint, emphasizing that marijuana usage should be regulated similarly to alcohol usage. Mrs. Swenk inquired about the tax procedures for marijuana businesses that came into the city.

Finance Director Wilkerson clarified that the city would only get the income tax dollars. For example, if a dispensary has one employee, the city gets 1% of what one employee makes. If the employee works at a dispensary in North Ridgeville and lives in North Ridgeville, the city would only get 0.9% of what one employee makes. There is no huge revenue generator by bringing marijuana businesses into the city.

Mayor Corcoran explained that the legislation solely focuses on prohibiting the establishment of marijuana dispensaries in the city.

President Jacobs asked if there is anything in the law that states the municipality obtains a percentage of the sales.

Finance Director Wilkerson is not aware of any provisions regarding the percentage of sales.

Councilwoman Awig believed that it is a good idea to ban marijuana businesses initially and then have the option to amend the legislation at a later time.

Councilman Abens argued that allowing marijuana dispensaries in the city would not result in a positive outcome because the black market for marijuana is already present. He continued to express concerns about the potential increase in illegal sales and other negative consequences associated with marijuana businesses.

Councilman Shaffer expressed his concerns regarding the increase in crime on marijuana. He remarked that when issues related to banning something that people desire, it could rise to people wanting it badly.

Councilwoman Swenk expressed her concerns about marijuana businesses being in undesirable locations. She emphasized the importance of restricting where businesses go if the legislation is adopted. Mrs. Swenk concluded that marijuana has the same effect as alcohol – messes with your brain.

Councilman Shaffer inquired about the need to change the zoning code if marijuana businesses were allowed.

Mayor Corcoran acknowledged that the zoning code would need to be examined to accommodate the change. He also pointed out that alcohol is currently in the zoning code as well.

Adjournment:

Chairman Jacobs adjourned the meeting at 6:19 p.m.

Approved on May 20, 2024.



Jason R. Jacobs
PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL



Nicholas Ciofani
CLERK OF COUNCIL