

August 19, 2021

To: The City Council of Lathrup Village

From: John D Roberts – Lathrup resident for 43 years

i.e. - My thoughts on the Evolving Cannabis Considerations for Lathrup Village

I have been following the developments regarding the potential for Cannabis Dispensaries in Lathrup Village – and most recently watched the YouTube recording of your Aug 16th City Council Study Session.

You are to be commended for proceeding carefully and thoughtfully as you evaluated whether to consider Cannabis facilities in Lathrup – and especially to be commended for taking the lead in establishing ordinances and rules beforehand, so that the city, and not potential cannabis vendors, would control how any how many such establishments would be allowed to operate in Lathrup. You are now into the phase of establishing defensible evaluation criteria for the potential selection of any candidates prior to actually accepting any such applications. (meaning fair – and least likely to be the valid basis for any potential law suits against the city)

I have several suggestions regarding the evaluation criteria which I hope can be of help to the individual or individuals who are currently tasked with this job:

- 1) It was suggested in the meeting that other cities have placed value on how much money a potential candidate spends in getting the facility ready for operation. Quite honestly, I don't think this should have any weight in your matrix, as your concern should be the suitability of the finished facility to meet your criteria which, after all, is what matters to the city and its residents. (things like parking capacity, traffic flow patterns, adequate air handling systems, security plans, exterior appearance and product visibility from the street, etc.). You will have your engineering reviews and the like to determine suitability of each proposed plan to meet your criteria.
- 2) A financial consideration that could be of value to the city and its residents is the willingness of a potential candidate to get financially involved in short and long term city projects that would otherwise fall on city services or residents to provide.
- 3) Historically, many businesses and schools give special consideration to attracting local talent, which could give credit to companies and individuals involved with those companies with ties to the Southfield/Lathrup community. Commitments to hire local talent could certainly be one of those criteria.
- 4) It probably would not be difficult to quickly find out what the basis for cannabis-related lawsuits have been in those cities that have or are experiencing them. I suspect that it has largely because advanced planning, like you have done, was not carried out in the rush – and avoidable mistakes were made. You are to be commended for setting up ordinances and rules in advance to assure that when and if cannabis facilities arrive in Lathrup, the City Council is in control of the implementations and not whoever is able to get a ballot measure to modify our charter.
- 5) You would certainly want to know the business plan of the proposed candidates and the amount of revenue they anticipate generating, which I assume should be a factor in how much the state and local municipalities can expect in continuing revenues. If returns to the city are not based on

the profitability of the business, I would suggest that this should be considered, if it can be legally binding.

There have now been at least 2 signature drives, one initiated by entities outside the city and one by “concerned citizens”. One was undoubtedly intended to take control of the process -and the other intended to outright kill any consideration for Cannabis businesses in Lathrup. This second signature drive was full of the fears and stigma that were once prevalent in mainstream though on the illegality of pot. I understand that both of these efforts failed, the most recent for failure to meet the technical criteria for making such a ballot referendum request.

There was also an anonymous letter circulated throughout the city via the mail. I suspect that all or most of you have seen this letter, which was also posted on the Villager Facebook page by a resident who was not pleased at receiving an anonymous letter. This letter is basically a propaganda hit piece, delineating all of the fear items expressed by those who put together the second signature drive. I strongly suspect that the author or authors of this letter are the originators of the second signature drive, but that really is irrelevant. It should be noted that all of the “negative outcomes” expressed in the letter are precisely the areas that your evaluation teams evaluated as they “followed the data”, which pointed out that these fears are unwarranted by the data and the experience of the surrounding communities who have successfully moved forward with Cannabis Dispensary implementations.

I appreciate that the August 16th special meeting emphasized the need to get the latest data related to these concerns, but feel that when this is done it is certainly appropriate for you to proceed in voting on the proposed evaluation criteria and to begin to accept applications. If those who strongly object do a third signature drive and meet the technical requirement for getting a ballot initiative – any decisions could over-rule any approvals by the council. I strongly suspect that any such initiative would fail at the ballot box if and when residents are presented with a factual summary of the findings of all the various committees that have worked to determine feasibility.

I hope that these thoughts of a 43 year Lathrup resident can be of some value to you as you move towards a controlled and workable solution for Lathrup Village.

John Roberts – 27xxxLathrup Blvd