

02016-10

Blankenship, Johni

From: Kenai Peninsula Borough <webmaster@borough.kenai.ak.us>
Sent: Tuesday, April 12, 2016 11:19 AM
To: Assembly
Cc: Blankenship, Johni
Subject: New Public Comment to Assembly Members

Name: Leif Abel

Email: leifabel@yahoo.com

Subject: Marijuana Establishments

Message:

IT IS TIME TO SUPPORT MARIJUANA ESTABLISHMENTS IN OUR COMMUNITY
By Leif Abel

The Kenai Peninsula Borough currently has a review process in place for the licensing of Marijuana Establishments. It has named the assembly as the local regulatory authority. When a marijuana licensee provides a completed packet to the state it will be sent to the borough government for review, first by the planning department and then by the assembly. Licensee's will appear before the planning commission and the assembly as well as the state Marijuana Control Board. This is the process the KPB is currently using to permit Marijuana Establishments on the Kenai Peninsula outside of the cities. This took almost a year to formulate and was an inclusive process worked on by the Marijuana Task Force, the administration, staff (planning and legal), the assembly, and the public, through rigorous and lengthy comment. It was the responsible action to take. It would be irresponsible and divisive for the assembly to pass an ordinance placing a marijuana establishment opt out question on a KPB Ballot for the voters. While Ballot Measure Two grants local governments the right to place an opt out question on the ballot, it was written for small bush communities, much like the parallel alcohol regulation. As an example, most of us would be unsupportive of an ordinance putting a question on the ballot to make the entire KPB a dry community. Interestingly enough, residents of Soldotna, Kenai, Seward, or Homer will be unable to vote if the question is placed on the ballot. They have their own local governments that control the local option.

No law is perfect and this is certainly true of Ballot Measure Two. Consider the vastness of our borough. It is important for the residents of communities such as Fritz Creek, Hope, Anchor Point, Happy Valley, Moose Pass, Clam Gulch, Ninilchik, Nikiski, Seldovia, Tyonek, Nanwalek or Kasilof to make their own choices about land use. It would be an imposition on the freedoms of the people from these areas for population bases just outside the city limits of Kenai and Soldotna to make those decisions. The communities throughout this large borough are culturally diverse. Imposing their disparate opinions on one another would only cause discord and hard feelings. We must strive to meet the intent of the initiative, rather than ignore it in order to fit a specific program of discrimination.

Local Option Zoning, the review and permitting process, and the assembly as the Local Regulatory Authority are the three components of a comprehensive plan for the implementation of Ballot Measure Two on the Kenai Peninsula. This comprehensive plan, unanimously approved by the KPB Marijuana Task Force, and passed by the Assembly with support from the Mayor, offers plenty of reasonable protections for all citizens of the borough while supporting economic development and jobs. It is a good solution, one the borough worked hard to provide.

Over 20 businesses applied for Marijuana Establishment Licenses on the Kenai Peninsula. Many are outside the

cities. Seeing the state and borough rules finalized, these businesses have put many resources into licensing and preparation. In good faith they have followed all of these rules and indications from the local and state governments, including participation in the process through testimony. Why, after all that, should the assembly facilitate an attack on their existence? This is a complete reversal of the ordinance already passed that allows for the permitting and oversight of such businesses. These are premise-based licenses. That means, to receive a license, the facility needs to be constructed and ready to operate. In turn this means, that in order to apply, most businesses have already spent the lion's share of their startup capital to buy land and build. These are over 20 families within our borough that have put their life savings into businesses they are passionate about and dedicated to. Our community has the chance to be supportive of how neighbors feed their families through legal and regulated means. Hardworking farmers need cash crops. Agriculture can be an important part of a community, and cultivating cannabis is a part of agriculture.

Let us welcome entrepreneurship, economic diversity and development in our community. Let's welcome safe access to cannabis as medicine for those who need it. Let's welcome a thriving regulated market that reduces risk to minors in our community while providing safe, tested, high-quality product to consumers. Let's welcome more sales tax dollars to fund our schools. Let's welcome hundreds of new jobs for families. Let's make welcome our own neighbors who want to create more good businesses here. That is the way to show respect and support for your fellow citizen. That is the way to build a thriving economy for the Kenai Peninsula Borough. It would be wonderful if the next cannabis-related ordinance introduced was a proclamation of support for these dedicated entrepreneurs and their Marijuana Establishments. It is time borough leadership became more vocal in supporting this new industry. This is a state and borough approved process. Join me in giving these folks the positive support the borough gives other businesses. I am proud of these pioneers in a new market. I am honored to count myself as one. Let's be kind, compassionate, and work together. With continued careful planning we can strengthen our community.

Blankenship, Johni

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From: Kenai Peninsula Borough <webmaster@borough.kenai.ak.us>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2016 2:15 PM
To: Assembly
Cc: Blankenship, Johni
Subject: New Public Comment to Assembly Members

Name: Dollynda Phelps

Email: jeffndol@yahoo.com

Subject: ordinance 2016-10

Message:

Hello assembly members,

I am glad to hear that ordinance 2016-10 will be withdrawn at the April 19 meeting in Seward. I have passed the word on that it is not necessary to travel to the Seward meeting, but some members of the community do not trust that the withdrawal will occur and will be attending to provide public testimony.

I hope this decision does indeed occur, it is important that we have faith in our local government leaders and that faith is not misguided.

Thank you for your consideration and your diligence on this matter.
Dollynda Phelps