



Published in the Novato Advance
Volume 91, Issue 42
October 21, 2015

Cannabis Dispensaries

Supervisor Connolly and I were appointed in January to a Board of Supervisors Medical Cannabis sub-committee to look into the possibility of the County regulating medical cannabis dispensaries in unincorporated areas of Marin. The proposed ordinance is intended to expand options for accessing medical cannabis, consistent with the voter-approved Compassionate Use Act of 1996 and the state's Medical Cannabis Program.

At the June 9 public workshop, when a first draft ordinance was released, we received input from residents, stakeholders, patients and community members. Since June we have continued our work on this issue and released a revised draft ordinance to the public on October 1. The Board of Supervisors will conduct a first reading of a proposed ordinance on Tuesday, October 20 at 1:30pm. A second, merit hearing of the proposed ordinance will be held on Tuesday, December 8, also at 1:30pm. If you have interest and cannot attend the meeting it will be available to watch live at:

<http://www.marincounty.org/depts/bs/meeting-archive>

I would like to share some key provisions of the draft ordinance with you. We have decided to use a business license model in order to select an applicant that is patient focused with a best practices approach in operating a medical model dispensary. Rather than a land use permit which would allow a first-come, first-served approach, there will be a competitive application process in order to select the best operator. A selection committee will review the applications and make recommendations to the County Administrator who will approve the two year license. Staff will be working on a list of criteria that a selection committee will use to review the applications. Any dispensary granted a license would be subject to monitoring and reporting requirements.

We have created two zones in unincorporated Marin: Zone A makes up the urbanized Highway 101 Corridor and Zone B consists of Central/West Marin. Up to four dispensary licenses may be issued in the County with no more than two licenses issued in each zone. Dispensaries would be restricted to certain commercially-zoned properties that are 800 feet or more from a school or park and extensive requirements for on-site security to mitigate any impacts on surrounding neighborhoods will be required.

A dispensary will only dispense to qualified patients or caregivers with current physician's approval, and the dispensary will obtain and maintain verification from the recommended physician. No minors will be allowed on the premises unless they are a qualified patient or caregiver and are in the presence of their parent or guardian.

The ordinance is intended to serve as a program in conjunction with implementation of the California Medical Marijuana Regulation and Safety Act but will not regulate cultivation, testing, pesticide use, or manufacturing/labeling of medical cannabis.

If you would like more information or to comment on this issue, and/or would like to receive updates on future meeting dates and draft ordinances, please visit the County's medical cannabis webpage, which includes the draft ordinance and maps, at: <http://www.marincounty.org/main/medical-cannabis-dispensary-ordinance>

October is National Bullying Prevention Month when students, schools, and communities come together to raise awareness and show support for those who have been bullied. In order to raise attention to this very important issue, I was happy to bring forth a resolution on October 6 proclaiming October as Bullying Prevention Month in Marin. The Novato Blue Ribbon Coalition for Youth's theme for 2015 is "Take a Heroic Stand Against Bullying". The Coalition is working to educate the community about bullying through outreach activities including providing training on cyberbullying and internet safety to parents.

I wanted to let you know that I will be holding office hours on Tuesday, October 27, from 5:30-7:00pm at the Novato Library located at 1720 Novato Blvd. You are invited to stop by to discuss any County related ideas, suggestions or concerns with me. You do not need to make an appointment – it would be great to see you.

As always, my door is open to you. I welcome your suggestions and ideas. You can reach me at: (415) 473-7331 or jarnold@marincounty.org.