

REGULAR WORK SESSION
TUESDAY, MAY 4, 2021
6:00 P.M.

The Regular Work Session of the City Council of the City of Vineland was called to order by the President, Dr. Elizabeth A. Arthur.

The following members were present at roll call:

Councilman David Acosta
Councilman Ronald J. Franceschini, Jr.
Councilman Paul F. Spinelli
Councilman Albert Vargas
President Dr. Elizabeth A. Arthur

Also present were: Richard P. Tonetta, Esq., City Solicitor
Robert E. Dickenson, Jr., Business Administrator
Edwin Alicea, Director of Public Safety

President Arthur led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Deputy Municipal Clerk stated Public Notice of this meeting, pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, has been given on December 8, 2020 by the City Clerk in the following manner:

1. Posting written notice on the official bulletin board in the lobby of the City Hall on;
2. Providing written notice to the offices of The Daily Journal and The Press of Atlantic City;
3. Filing written notice in the office of the City Clerk of the City of Vineland.

The Deputy Municipal Clerk introduced Michael Regenelli from the Southwest Council who was asked by City Council to make a presentation concerning cannabis. The Southwest Council is a local alcohol and drug prevention agency preventing abuse especially among the youth. His presentation centered around the education of what Cannabis is and the chemical THC that gets people high. The methods of use and the particular concern with “edibles.” Mr. Regenelli spoke of the explosion of popularity in Colorado where recreation marijuana is legal. The process to receive the high takes longer because it is ingested in the digestive system. Edibles create ease and the effects of overdosing; short term coordination problems, panic attacks, paranoia; the long term effects which they are looking at are weakened immune system, certain types of cancer, greater risk of unprotected sex, relationship problems, behavior problems and problems in school. There is a current issue with “vaping” and those who use it to get around the public smoking law.

Vineland will need to make a decision soon as to whether or not allow the sale of recreational marijuana in the City (a decision must be made by August). Therefore, Mr. Regenelli educated the governing body on the subject, what surrounding municipalities have done and what were some of their available options. Regenelli explained that legalization will boost the economy. The United States could exceed \$24 billion in revenue by 2025. He mentioned in Colorado, for every dollar that was spent on marijuana to make it, about 2.40 was generated from the sale of it. However, the silent costs far outweigh the revenue generated by the product. The Southwest Council is concerned with legalization and youth rates, or those under the age of 21. Because marijuana has been decriminalized, Regenelli stated that whether or not Vineland were to allow the retail sale of Marijuana in the City, there will no longer be any arrests for simple possession.

Upon completion of the presentation, Solicitor Tonetta had some poignant comments concerning the sale of Marijuana and members of the Governing Body briefly weighed in. Regenelli and Tonetta agreed the main issue the Governing Body will have to decide is how much can the City of Vineland make via the revenue made from the retail sales versus how much can be prevented by not having it sold in the City. It's a game of percentages. Councilman Franceschini asked questions concerning the research and percentages within the County.

Dr. Arthur thanked Mr. Regenelli for his educational presentation. Dr. Arthur asked Kathleen Hicks, City of Vineland Principal Planner, to add her comments as it relates to the Planning Division of the City in regards to the adult use of cannabis. Hicks provided the governing body with a summary that was submitted to the Zoning board. She stated she is in the process of drafting a land-use ordinance and hoped to have it to the Planning Division next week. Hicks stressed the City must do something. As previous laws were written, anyone having a prohibition (Vineland was one) was repealed. She stated the City has until approximately August 20th of this year to enact an ordinance, and if not, all the licenses in her summary report except “Retail” would be allowed in Vineland in every industrial zone in an unlimited number. The Retailer would be allowed in every Retail and Commercial zone without limitation to number.

President Arthur asked if anyone from the public would like to comment.

Steve Lewis, Vineland resident, handed out a newspaper article from the Daily Journal concerning how new laws are handcuffing police. The new law by Attorney General stated police to be careful when encountering underage people under the influence of marijuana/alcohol as they cannot arrest or search one beyond what is in plain view. This means contraband cannot be confiscated. Why does Vineland have to be the town that approves the recreational sale of marijuana? How much is the City to make from this and how is the City going to be able to keep it safe for our children.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2020

There being no one to comment, the Deputy Clerk reviewed the agenda.

Councilman Spinelli noted that the VDID is continuing plans for the "Christmas in July" event. The Landis Theater will begin its concert series again after the successful finish of "American Idiot" musical.

Public Safety Director Alicea reported that progress is being made for the Hometown Heroes banners honoring veterans. Also, the annual police memorial service will be on Thursday, May 13 at 6 p.m.

The President entertained a motion by Councilman Acosta, and seconded by Councilman Spinelli, to adjourn the meeting. The Deputy Clerk called the roll: YEAS: Councilman Acosta
Councilman Franceschini, Jr.
Councilman Spinelli
Councilman Vargas
President Dr. Arthur

Meeting adjourned at 7:27 P.M.

Dr. Elizabeth A. Arthur
President of Council

ATTEST:

Richard G. Franchetta, E.J.D.
Deputy Municipal Clerk