



Minutes

Deschutes County Cannabis Advisory Panel

Meeting #10: Monday, January 24, 2024, 6:00 p.m.

Deschutes Services Building, Allen Room, 1300 NW Wall Street, Bend

This meeting was conducted in person and by video. It was video recorded and can be accessed at the Deschutes County Meeting Portal website www.deschutes.org/meetings.

I. Introductions / Call to Order

This meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Cannabis Advisory Panel Chair Liz Lotochinski. Present in person: Phil Chang, Deschutes County Commissioner, Jen Patterson, Deschutes County Strategic Initiatives Manager; Liz Lotochinski; Mary Fleischmann; Jeremy Giffin; Matt Hurt; Hunter Neubauer, Detective Dustin Miller, Deschutes County Sheriff's Office; Detective Tony Ramos, Deschutes County Sheriff's Office, Jessica Jacks, Deschutes County Public Health, Jess Neuwirth, Deschutes County Public Health, Joe Brundage, Deschutes County Sheriff's Office, Angela Havniear, Deschutes County Community Development, Trevor Stephens, Deschutes County Community Justice, and Jake Chandler, Deschutes County District Attorney's Office.

II. Approval of October 23, 2023, Minutes

Hunter Neubauer moved to approve the minutes. Dustin Miller seconded the motion. Minutes approved unanimously.

III. Presentation on mid-year updates from Departments who received Cannabis Revenue Tax Dollars

Trevor Stephens spoke on behalf of Community Justice who received funding for training of counselors and staff on youth substance use disorder treatment. Currently, Community Justice has not spent any of the funds. Community Justice conducted an assessment ahead of using the funds for training purposes, the assessment was just completed. Community Justice is expecting to launch the training pilot program in March or April which will utilize the funding designated from the cannabis revenue tax. The participants in the pilot program will be youth in the County participating in court ordered supervision programs.

Angie Havniear thanked the CAP members for the \$20,000 that was designated to CDD. CDD has a lead investigator that works with the Sheriff's Office to support law and code enforcement of illegal grow operations, CDD provides code enforcement on callouts with the Sheriff's office. CDD will be onsite during callouts anywhere from several hours to half a day to investigate wire, plumbing and other hazards. All cases are still open, there are currently 6 properties with 17 violations. Potentially the cases go through an administrative hearing which can be a long process and can ultimately implement fines and fees depending on the type of violations. CAP members have requested that the County Legal department

reviews and provides clarification SB 326, specifically addressing which department would be responsible for enforcing violations. Liz Lotochinski would prefer not to see Cannabis Revenue Tax dollars to be used for property/waste removal and/or cleanup. CDD clarified that the money allocated from the CAP is used for staff support.

Jessica Jacks and Jess Neuwirth presented on Public Health's prevention approach: Adolescent Cannabis Prevention. Funds are used to improve parent and children dialog, which includes a conversation campaign. A total of four spots were developed and disseminated in English and Spanish. Additionally, an updated website was launched in March 2023: sharedfuturecoalition.org. The new website has seen seven times the number of user visits compared to the previous website. Jessica shared some of the media spots that were produced. The click through rate of these media spots is much higher than industry standards, the spots are receiving around 97%-98% click through rates. Current media spots will run through June 2024. At that time Public Health will conduct an efficacy assessment of the campaign reach to Spanish-speaking parents.

Joe Brundage presented an overview of the use of the revenue dollars received. The Sheriff's Office received \$92,000 for staff support, which covers about 67% of one detective. The grant funding helps fund the marijuana detective work over the entire County. In the mid-long run without these funds, there would need to be a broader conversation on whether they could continue to fund marijuana detectives. The investment helps the group collectively fight illegal marijuana operations.

IV. Presentation on current marijuana trends and culture throughout Deschutes County

Dustin Miller and Tony Romas presented marijuana trends throughout the County. Jake Chandler from the DA's office also participated in the presentation. The marijuana detective team has fluctuated over the years from 1-3 people. Currently there are two detectives on the team and Tony Romas specifically covers marijuana issues.

Over the past year the DA's office had a grant that allowed the detectives to investigate environmental crimes. The grant allowed the team to bring out environmental experts to educate the detectives as well as the DA's office on how to investigate environmental crimes on illegal grow operations. DOJ has offered to give presentations and support to the County including providing co-chair defense for such crimes. The original environmental grant ran out this month and the Sheriff's Office and DA's office are looking to receive additional grant funds to keep this program going.

The Sheriff's Office has been working very closely with CDD and Oregon Water Resources, the partnerships have been very supportive and helpful in investigations.

Governor Kotek signed legislation to increase penalties in relation to marijuana production which has assisted the detectives in their work.

A civil court ruling in Yamhill County has impacted the decision of how and what can be prosecuted for criminal and civil cases. The ruling has changed the style of investigation for the detectives.

In 2023 ODA reduced the number of authorizations for hemp licenses for new growers and the price of hemp has drastically reduced in the last two years. Last year there were 60 hemp licenses and this year there are only eight licenses.

In 2024 the detectives have focused more of their investigations into indoor grows. Indoor grows pose a lot more challenges because they are harder to find.

Hazards and concerns with illegal grows include trash, unsafe fertilizers, chemicals, and gasses, mold, Butane Honey Oil (BHO) labs, firearms, water usage, unsafe electrical wiring, outdoor living conditions (tents, trailers, and shanty style houses), and human trafficking.

Trends and challenges: Bubble Hash labs are becoming more frequent than BHO labs, community complaints with little follow up, investigating outgrow vs indoor grows, manpower to execute search warrants, educating the public is still an ongoing process (educating land/homeowners on responsibilities when renting), and legal questions about the future of civil forfeiture.

V. Proposed PSA Outreach Campaign

Liz Lotochinski drafted a memorandum to present to the Board of Commissioners for consideration as well as a draft PSA for potential distribution. Mary Fleischman suggested getting the conversation started in the Bulletin and other media outlets. Commissioner Chang mentioned working with the media to provide information to landowners being mindful of their responsibilities on what is being conducted on their property. One strategy could be highlighting a bust of an illegal grow operation. Dustin Miller discussed being sensitive to the issue, not to fear monger or public shame a specific person, recommending coming from an educational approach not a scare tactic approach. Mary discussed having a more open ended public conversation about what is and isn't allowed and what it means to be in code compliance. CDD suggested a two-pronged approach: public educational component followed by what an enforcement process would look like.

CAP members discussed bringing the realtors and or escrow agents as part of a public education outreach component. CAP members will consider recommending allocating tax revenue funds toward some type of public education campaign during the next meeting.

VI. Public Comments

No public comments

VII. Next Steps

Next meeting topics will include allocation of FY 24'-25' Cannabis Tax Revenue with presentations from departments requesting budget allocations.

VIII. Wrap up and Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m. The Advisory Panel agreed that the next meeting would be held on Monday, April 22, 2024, at 6:00p.m. in the Allen Room.

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Jen Patterson, Strategic Initiatives Manager,
Deschutes County Administrative Services