

Proposed Planning Board Warrant Article – 12/4/17
Temporary Moratorium on Recreational Marijuana Establishments

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town’s Zoning Bylaws by adding a new Section 9.8, TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA ESTABLISHMENTS, that would provide as follows, and further amend the Table of Contents to add Section 9.8, “Temporary Moratorium on Recreational Marijuana Establishments.”

Section 9.8

A. Purposes

By vote of the State election on November 8, 2016, the voters of the Commonwealth approved a law regulating the cultivation, processing, distribution, possession and use of marijuana for recreational purposes (new G.L. c94G, Regulation of the use and Distribution of Marijuana Not Medically Prescribed). The law, which allows certain personal use and possession of marijuana, took effect on December 15, 2016 and (as amended on December 30, 2016 by Chapter 351 of the Acts of 2016 and thereafter, on July 28, 2017 by Chapter 55 of the Acts of 2017) requires a Cannabis Control Commission to issue regulations regarding the licensing of commercial activities by March 15, 2018 and to begin accepting applications for licenses no later than April 1, 2018.

A non-medical Marijuana Establishment (hereinafter, a “Recreational Marijuana Establishment”), as defined in G.L. c94G s1, is currently not specifically addressed in the Northfield Zoning Bylaws as a permitted use in the Town. Regulations to be promulgated by the Cannabis Control Commission may provide guidance on certain aspects of local regulation of Recreational Marijuana Establishments.

The regulation of recreational marijuana raises novel legal, planning, and public safety issues, and the Town needs time to study and consider the regulation of Recreational Marijuana Establishments and address such issues, as well as to address the potential impact of the State regulations on local zoning and to undertake a planning process to consider amending the Zoning Bylaws regarding regulation of Recreational Marijuana Establishments. The Town intends to adopt a temporary moratorium on the use of land and structures in the Town for Recreational Marijuana Establishments so as to allow sufficient time to address the effects of such structures and uses in the Town and to enact provisions of the Zoning Bylaws in a consistent manner.

B. Definitions

“Recreational Marijuana Establishment” shall mean a “marijuana cultivator, independent testing laboratory, marijuana product manufacturer, marijuana retailer or any other type of marijuana-related business.” For purposes of this moratorium, the definitions set forth in G.L. c94G s1 shall apply.

C. Temporary Moratorium

For the reasons set forth above and notwithstanding any other provision of the Northfield Zoning Bylaws to the contrary, the Town hereby establishes a temporary moratorium on the use of land or structures for a Recreational Marijuana Establishment and other uses related to

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recreational marijuana. The moratorium shall be in effect through December 31, 2018 or six months after the state regulations are issued, whichever is later. During the moratorium period, the Town shall undertake a planning process to address the potential impacts of marijuana in the Town, to consider the Cannabis Control Commission regulations regarding Recreational Marijuana Establishments, and shall consider adopting new Zoning Bylaws in response to these new issues.

Or take any action relative thereto.