

Ad Hoc Marijuana Committee Minutes – September 19, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 5:37 pm.

Roll Call

Members present were: Karen Farber, Andy Jones, Claudia King, and Amy Lamontagne.

Item 1 – Approve Minutes of September 6 Meeting

Claudia motioned and Karen seconded with all in favor 3-0.

Item 2 – Special Guest - Representative Teresa Pierce

Representative Pierce is the Chair (House) of the Joint Select Committee on Marijuana Legalization Implementation. She co-chairs the committee with Roger Katz who represents the Senate. The committee recently went to Colorado to observe their marijuana operation (legal for four years). In addition to visiting Marijuana retail establishments, the group also toured grow facilities and met with the Colorado Legislature and the Department of Revenue. In addition to taxation, Rep. Pierce said the committee is committed to safety and prevention. They are researching data collection and analysis, safety marketing campaigns, and training for more drug recognition experts.

Rep. Pierce also discussed the state licensing requirements which include applicants being 21 years or older, having Maine residency for a specific time, having a clean criminal record, etc. Originally, there was discussion in Augusta to have licensing done at the local level but as a former Town Councilor, Rep. Pierce said that would be a burden on municipal resources.

The biggest issue in Colorado is home cultivation. The Maine committee is looking at regulations including number of allowed plants as well as permitted locations (1000 feet away from schools, etc.). Another large issue is taxation. The State of Maine will set one tax rate but also allow municipalities to receive percentages (TBD) based on different Marijuana operations.

Rep. Pierce explained that everything is subject to change and the bill process will take time. A Public Hearing is scheduled in Augusta on Tuesday, September 26. A Special Session is scheduled the last week of October and the pass could pass immediately. After the bill is passed, Rulemaking will commence and Rules could be passed in the Spring. The bill could become effective no earlier than July 1, 2018.

Item 3 – Other Business

The committee decided to cancel the placeholder for the September 27 meeting. The next meeting will be October 3 at 5:30 pm with Special Guest Justin Brown. There is also a meeting scheduled on October 16 at 5:30 pm.

There was also general discussion about touring a local medicinal Marijuana facility. Amy will inquire about the possibility.

Item 4 – Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 pm.