

A Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Oxford was held on October 12, 2021, at the Village Hall - 20 LaFayette Park, Oxford, NY 13830 at 7:30 P.M.

Present were Mayor Terry Stark, Trustee Dale Leach, Trustee Dustin Hendricks, Trustee Richard Marks, Trustee Richard Rice, Clerk-Treasurer Shelly Marks.

Mayor Terry Stark called the Special meeting to order at 7:29 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was given.

PUBLIC HEARING – CANNABIS OPT OUT:

Trustee Leach moved and Trustee Hendricks seconded a motion to open the public hearing on the NYS Cannabis Law Opt-Out. All voted aye and motion was carried. Mayor Stark declared the public Hearing was open. The mayor provided the following background information prior to opening the floor for comment:

Prior to the September 28th, 2021, Regular board meeting, information was provided to the Board regarding the Cannabis Law from the following sources: The State of New York and Association of Towns, NYCOM (New York State Conference of Mayors) and the Cannabis Management Office. The Board reviewed the information given to them followed by discussion. The Board decided to adopt a local law pursuant to Cannabis Law § 131 opting out of licensing and establishing retail cannabis dispensaries and/or on-site cannabis consumption establishments within the Village of Oxford, New York. The law needs to be implemented by December 31, 2021, or the Village will automatically be opted in.

Mayor explained that the Board believed that the first tangible step toward a functioning cannabis industry in New York is the formation of the five-member Cannabis Control Board, which will oversee and determine its regulatory framework and licensing as well as to nominate an executive director of the Office of Cannabis Management, who will lead the implementing agency of this process. However, this has yet to be done . There are many details we still want to know, and there’s much that remains unsettled about how this will work. **Consequently, by opting out, the Village of Oxford reserves the choice to opt in at a later date.**

The proposed Opt Out local law passed by the Village Board at its Regular meeting on September 28th shall take effect immediately upon filing with the Secretary of State. However, pursuant to Cannabis Law § 131, this local law is subject to a permissive referendum and thus may not be filed with the Secretary of State until the applicable time period has elapsed to file a petition or a referendum has been conducted approving this local law.

Following the unanimous passage of the local law and within ten days, the Village Clerk provided notice of a Public Hearing in the Village’s official paper (Norwich Evening Sun) on October 5th as follows:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the Village Board of the Village of Oxford will conduct a Public Hearing at the Village Hall , 20 Lafayette Park, Oxford, New York 13830 on Tuesday, October 12th at 7:30 p.m. on a proposed Local Law adopted at a Regular meeting of the Board of Trustees on September 28, 2021, entitled “NYS Cannabis Law Opt-Out Legislation”;

The Mayor then opened the floor for public comment.

The following individuals attended the special meeting regarding the NYS Cannabis Law Opt-Out: Erich Coelho, Melissa Gross, Nate Gross, Jessica Henning, Edith Holtz, Jeremy Wakefield

Residents addressed the Board and made the following comments:

- 1) The Village is making a mistake to opt out and we are missing industry, etc. This could be a new goldrush for Oxford to help get more people to visit the Village.
- 2) It will be more difficult to opt back in once we opt out. There has been a war on drugs for 50+ years and they have given up now. They want us to leave our options open for now. There is no licensing required for farmers. It is less work now to opt in and not to try to opt in later.

- 3) We should opt in to make it more convenient to participate in the medical marijuana industry. Participants must now travel one hour to participate in the program for health reasons. Options to have this available in the village would be easier for them and others in the same situation. Does not want us to wait for everyone else to decide and we should move forward to be one of the first to opt in. They feel strongly about this bill. They came back to Oxford to raise their family after being in the Army. Convenience is the key.
- 4) One resident was at the meeting to understand more. They have heard about the opt out option but was not clear and wanted to find out more information. They are not sure how they feel about the whole thing right now. They want a better understanding once we find out more about the bill.
- 5) One resident in support of this declared "Our town is dying" and we need to do something new and soon so we rise above all of this. They want us to be an innovator.
- 6) One resident wants options left open for Oxford. There are six (6) places to consume alcohol in the village. This is an opportunity for a small town to get ahead. There are many farmers here in our town/village. If we wait, all other towns will pass us. People will go elsewhere where it is legal and Oxford will miss out. If we opt out and do nothing, people will drive by if there is no dispensary here. We are missing the opportunity taking away from the villagers that are here.

There being no more comments, Trustee Marks moved and Trustee Leach seconded a motion to close Public Hearing. All voted Aye and the Public Hearing was closed at 8:10 PM.

HALLOWEEN:

A request was given to the village board regarding the interest in putting together Trunk or Treat around Lafayette Park this year. The Board discussed having this event at this park and it will not work due to the traffic around the center of the village. We suggested the possibility of using the back row of parking at The Stadium to allow cars to participate in this event on October 22nd from 5:00 – 7:00. Mayor Stark will talk to Rebecca at The Stadium then write a letter to Jeff Barrows. Mayor Stark will talk to OIC Francis regarding his thoughts as well.

CHICKENS:

The Village continues to receive complaints about many residents with chickens in the Village. Most complaints are based upon noise, odor and wandering chickens. Trustee Marks says we must enforce the law that we currently have. Rodents follow along with the chickens and other farm animals. Trustee Rice would like to vote for chickens but there are too many rules to follow in enforcement. Trustee Hendricks said he lives in the village to avoid farm animals. Trustee Leach agrees with all these comments. Trustee Leach moved and Trustee Hendricks seconded a motion to not amend the current code to allow chickens in the Village. All voted Aye and the motion was approved. Mayor Stark will write a letter Colette Kappauf regarding the decision to not grant her request and to explain the reasons.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor summarized the Public Hearing as follows:

Six people spoke at the public forum. Five spoke against the Opt-Out and one was in favor of the Opt-Out. Those speaking against the Opt-Out did so based upon reason of economics and local convenience. The person for the Opt-out did so based on reason that the Opt-Out provided more time to understand all the regulations and details of the Cannabis law and kept the Option open for the Village to opt back in at some time in the future. All attendees were provided the opportunity and ample time to address the Board. Following no more comments from the Attendees the Board closed the Public Hearing at 8:10 pm.

Based upon Board discussion following the Public Hearing, the Board indicated that no added information was provided that would lead to a decision not to submit the law to the Secretary of State should no valid referendum petition be submitted to the Village Clerk within 30 days of the passage of the law on September 28th.

TRUSTEE COMMENTS:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Stark made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 p.m.

Next Regular meeting will be October 26th at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shelly W. Marks
Clerk-Treasurer