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AMESBURY CITY CLERK

2017-013

Amesbury

Mayor C. Kenneth Gray

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Administrative Order **2017-02**

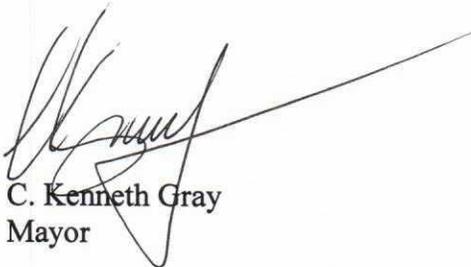
January 6, 2017

Pursuant to Section 6-1(a)(2) of the City Charter, the Recreational Marijuana Committee (the "Committee") is hereby created and established upon effect of this Order.

The Committee shall consist of seven members appointed to two-year terms in accordance with Section 2-3 of the City Charter. One such member shall be a City Councilor.

The Committee shall be charged with gathering research, data, and public input relative to the impact that the legalization of recreational marijuana will have on the City. The Committee will advise the Mayor on such matters and may, from time to time, be tasked with other miscellaneous duties and responsibilities as assigned by the Mayor.

The Committee shall be disbanded as of January 1, 2019, provided, however, that said date is subject to change by any future action taken under Section 6-1 of the City Charter, provided that such action is filed and effective prior to January 1, 2019.



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MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council
DATE: January 6, 2017
FROM: Ken Gray, Mayor
RE: Administrative Orders 2017-01 and 2017-02

Councilors,

Please see the below descriptions and background information relative to Administrative Orders 2017-01 and 2017-02.

2017-01 – Quality of Life Capital Advisory Committee

As you know, we have now gone two consecutive years with a budget that has allocated funds specifically for capital expenditures. It is my intent to continue that trend with my budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2018 and beyond.

Heading into our third year of a plan that has successfully funded some of the city’s long-overdue capital needs, it is time to directly involve Amesbury residents in efforts to identify creative opportunities that allow for responsible, targeted capital investment aimed at further enhancing quality of life in our community. The Quality of Life Capital Advisory Committee, as proposed by the above-referenced administrative action, is designed to provide a mechanism for residents (and other community stakeholders) to directly participate in exactly that type of involvement.

The Committee will assist the administration by advising my office on capital priorities related to quality of life within the city. The Committee’s goal, among others, will be to identify, thoroughly analyze, and prioritize potential projects which will improve quality of life for the Amesbury community. I intend to file appointments as soon as reasonably possible in order to get this initiative off the ground in time for the Fiscal Year 2018 budget development process.

I look forward to continuing our ongoing public dialogue through this latest opportunity to expand public outreach.

2017-02 – Recreational Marijuana Committee

In November of last year, Amesbury voters elected to support Question 4 by a sizeable margin. As you know, Question 4 was a ballot question that proposed a plan for the limited legalization of the recreational use of marijuana/cannabis in the Commonwealth. The proposal was approved by voters across the Commonwealth.

While some aspects of the legalization plan have not yet taken effect (including some such aspects which were recently further delayed through legislative action), other aspects – such as legalization of possession of marijuana/cannabis in limited amounts – are already effective provisions of state law.

Since Massachusetts voters approved the statute on November 8, the statewide conversation has been largely dominated by concerns related to alleged linguistic ambiguities within provisions of the law itself. Regardless of whether one considers such concerns to be valid or invalid, the politics of the ongoing statewide discussions – while surely worth monitoring – should not be the primary focus of Amesbury's own local considerations regarding the new law, in my opinion.

Instead, I think we as local officials would better serve community interests by collectively directing our principal focus to the ways in which this law will impact Amesbury, rather than diverting attention toward the ways in which it may or may not potentially affect business on Beacon Hill.

To that end, the above-referenced Administrative Order proposes the creation and establishment of a Recreational Marijuana Committee. The Committee shall be primarily tasked with identifying all potential local options that the City could conceivably pursue under the law, gathering research and extensive community input relative to public favorability of each such option, and ultimately recommending the course of action that, in the opinion of the Committee, would best serve the interests of the Amesbury community.

When this proposal was in an earlier stage of development, in a more conceptual form, I reached out to Councilor Bob Lavoie and asked him to take the lead on this initiative. Of the nine sitting City Councilors, Councilor Lavoie is the longest-tenured. With deep roots in the community, and as a full-time attorney with extensive experience in municipal law, I think Councilor Lavoie is uniquely qualified to take the lead on this important community effort. It is my intent to appoint Councilor Lavoie to the Recreational Marijuana Committee, and it is my hope that he will serve as its Chairman. I extend my thanks to him for his cooperation and willingness to tackle what will be a very valuable public dialogue.

I thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions or concerns relative to the Administrative Orders referenced herein.