

The April 6 meeting of the Youth Advisory Council (YAC) was called to order at 9:05. In attendance were Dr. Malcolm Astley, Ms. Corrie Dretler, Ms. Sarah Greenaway, Dr. Dossie Kahn, Ms. Brenda Ross and Mr. Jason Verhoosky.

Mr. Verhoosky began with an update on the state's marijuana situation. He noted that the Cannabis Control Commission had sent its finalized regulations to the Attorney General's office for final approval. The state has begun accepting online license applications for dispensaries of recreational marijuana and cultivation sites, and was finalizing the application process for testing and research facilities. Rulings on marijuana cafes – private clubs where people can go to smoke/ingest pot products – and delivery services will not be ruled on by the CCC until January 2019.

He said that Wayland's situation regarding retail pot establishments was unchanged. The town's moratorium on retailing ends on December 31, and applications can start coming in on October 1. An opt-out – whereby a community can say it will not allow retail establishments on a permanent basis -- will be a ballot initiative on the Sept. 4 polls. If the opt-out passes at the polls, it will then be voted on at the fall town meeting, which will most likely be Nov. 5 or Nov. 13, with a 2/3 majority required.

The YAC wants to meet with Wayland's Board of Health (BoH) and Planning Board, both of which have attended training sessions related to marijuana, to discuss the boards' general understanding of the current regulations. Julia from The Wayland Department of Public Health attended training on how the current laws related to marijuana and tobacco stack up. Wayland has strict laws related to tobacco, such as being 21 or over to purchase, limits on flavored tobacco, licensing restrictions, smokeless workplaces, and no indoor smoking. But some of the laws related to marijuana will likely differ. For instance, if the CCC allows marijuana cafes, there will be indoor smoking at these sites.

In response to a question about vaping, Mr. Verhoosky said that vaping is considered a tobacco product. It is a grey area; regulations regarding vaping vary town by town. In some towns, vapers can vape inside store, but there is a Framingham store where customers had to vape outside the front door.

The town's Planning Board wants the YAC to take the lead on the issue of the opt-out. The town's BoH has concerns over the question of retail establishments from a health standpoint, but as yet has not expressed a clear stance of where they stand on an opt-out. The BoH was to hold an open meeting on Monday, April 9, at which its members were to clarify its stance. A YAC representative will attend the following BoH meeting at the end of April. The plan is for YAC representatives to meet with Planning, BoH and Board of Selectmen before the beginning of summer and get all the paperwork in order to prepare the article for the actual opt-out vote. The YAC will use the rest of May to get its wording in order for the ballot, have it okayed by town counsel and have everything submitted by the beginning of June.

Ms. Sarah Greenaway said it will be easier to create the wording for the article on the opt-out than it was for the article on the moratorium because there is no zoning issue

involved to complicate the matter. The sole focus of the article is whether the community of Wayland will allow recreational marijuana retail establishments. In addition, whoever at YAC writes the article will be able to leverage other communities' existing boilerplates and modify the state-approved language of those boilerplates for Wayland. However, while some communities have opted out of all marijuana-related businesses, others opted out of only public dispensary sales, but still allow cultivation sites and testing facilities. So it will need to be determined whether Wayland is voting to ban marijuana businesses at large, or whether it will allow the possibility of a certain subsegment of marijuana businesses to come to town.

The role of the YAC in Wayland's opt-out

As mentioned above, the Planning Board wants the YAC to take the lead on the opt-out, while the BoH may or may not feel the same way. However, Dr. Malcolm Astley questioned whether the YAC has the authority to spearhead an opt-out, noting that it is chartered as an advisory committee. Its role is to advise Wayland Youth & Family Services, not push the community to a particular action. His view was that while the YAC can lead the discussion on the topic, it would be better if the BoH spearheaded the opt-out.

Ms. Corrie Dretler suggested that if enough people went to the BoH and told them, "This is a health issue and we want you to take action on it," they might agree to take the lead on the opt-out. She also said that the YAC should seek input from the community on the issue, rather than drive the matter or let its members' personal opinions rule the council's advocacy.

Dr. Dossie Kahn said the question is, which group is the best qualified to educate the voters about the choices and public health issues related to the retailing of recreational marijuana? With legalization come concerns about greater availability, the perception of decreased harm, and increased rates of use. She asked, "Is it the YAC's role to keep putting time and effort into informing Wayland about these issues?"

Mr. Verhoosky said that the BoH views the YAC as the most logical organization to spearhead the opt-out because the YAC took the initial step on the legalization and moratorium issues, because it works with Youth and Family Services, and because it provides educational resources about marijuana.

Ms. Dretler expressed the concern that, if the opt-out vote at the Fall Town Meeting were to be as rancorous as the vote over the library at the recent Town Meeting, that the YAC could find itself in the crosshairs and possibly see its funding taken away.

In response to a question about who determines which town board "owns" a particular issue and whether we should hold discussions with town administrator Nan Balmer, Mr. Verhoosky replied that under Wayland's town government structure, the boards themselves have the final decision on their budgets and what actions they take, not the town administrator. He added that because the town had never taken any action

regarding medical marijuana, there are no bylaws in its books – the ruling law would be state law. He said that the concept of an overlay, including where the most commercially viable space for retail establishments is, has been discussed. He said he has also seen projections that, by 2030, sales of marijuana nationally will outpace those of wine. And, he notes, the taxes on marijuana will be far more beneficial for the states and communities than those on wine.

Ms. Sarah Greenaway said that although she views the YAC as the logical lead for the opt-out because it has a “well of knowledge about prevention,” i.e., Mr. Verhoosky, she expressed concern that if Mr. Verhoosky was viewed as leading the move for the opt-out, that as director of Youth & Family Services, he might be put at risk. As important as the opt-out is, she thought it might be worth saying that the YAC can’t take it on, to avoid putting Mr. Verhoosky at risk. Furthermore, she noted that if the BoH were to serve as the lead in the opt-out, it could tap into Mr. Verhoosky’s prevention expertise and he would not be put at risk.

Ms. Brenda Ross suggested that the most appropriate role for the YAC in all this might be to try to convince the BoH to take the lead on this issue by focusing on the impact that marijuana retail establishments would have on the well-being and health of Wayland’s families and youth. This would make it a BoH matter.

At this point Ms. Greenaway said that she would attend Monday’s meeting of the BoH and bring with her a list of concerns.

At this point Mr. Verhoosky, who has met with the BoH, described its attitude toward the opt-out in this manner: *The BoH feels that they have already discussed the matter re medical marijuana. The town has already decided that the majority of its citizens want legalization; the BoH is just here to regulate it. The BoH doesn’t view recreational marijuana as having a major impact on the public health of Wayland. Medical marijuana falls under the purview of public health, but recreational marijuana falls to law enforcement. Furthermore, it is not regulated as tobacco but as alcohol, and that makes it fall to the purview of the Board of Selectmen.*

Ms. Dossie Kahn said that the opt-out could be viewed as a substance prevention issue. It was discussed that WaylandCares promotes substance abuse advice and will continue to offer parent education nights.

Mr. Verhoosky said he felt it was appropriate for the YAC to sponsor the option to vote on the opt-out, just as it was the right of the community to decide whether they want it. He said the YAC could say it has new information available to share with the community, but make it clear that it is not pushing an agenda. He said that regardless of whether Wayland allows pot shops, such establishments will be in some neighboring towns. So while the members of the YAC can do what they think is in the best interest of Wayland, and show Wayland’s families that it is passionate about their health, in the end, nothing will stop someone from going to a town that does allow recreational pot to be sold and bringing it back to Wayland.

Ms. Greenaway suggested another stance. “If we are preventing or reducing access, that is part of prevention, and we could say this is why we are sponsoring this.” She said it was worth telling the BoH that these are the YAC’s concerns.

Mr. Verhoosky suggested that, at the minimum, the YAC could ask the town’s director of public health, Julia Junghans, to go to her board and say that members of YAC would like to meet with the BoH, discuss our findings and discuss the next steps related to the opt-out in Wayland.

New software

Next came a discussion of Titanium, the new clinical schedule tracking software deployed by Youth & Family Services. Dr. Kahn said it is her department’s responsibility to report this data to the YAC, and she proposed performing a review of the data twice a year, and that one of those reviews would take place this coming September and would involve a complete review of the past school year. Then, she said, we would come back in October to take questions. The second meeting would be held in June and would involve an update on the data, and then process and analyze that data over the summer. She provided a printout from the software and explained to the group what they were looking out and the features and capabilities of the software compared to the way things were done previously. Ms. Dretler said that she felt it was important that the new software still have the capability of showing how many hours Dr. Kahn and her colleague, clinician Kelsey Sanclemente, spend on administration.

Mr. Verhoosky said that on May 17, there will be a presentation in Canton on the impact of legal marijuana on communities and emerging trends in the area. One of the speakers will be John Carmichael, Chief of the Walpole Police Department. Representatives from the towns of Braintree and Stoughton, which have opted out of retail, will report how the communities achieved that.

Dr. Astley proposed having Ms. Rebecca Mooney, executive director of Melrose Alliance Against Violence, make a presentation to the YAC. There was a discussion of whether it would make more sense to schedule her presentation at one of the two remaining YAC meetings this spring or in the fall (which Mr. Verhoosky pointed out might be crunch time for the YAC regarding the opt-out). The next step is for Dr. Astley to find out which Fridays Ms. Mooney was free.

At 10:45 the meeting was adjourned.