

**Palmer Town Council  
Meeting Minutes  
March 12, 2018**

1 **Call to Order**

2           The Palmer Town Council Meeting of Tuesday, March 12, 2018 was called to order at 6:30pm by  
3           Town Council President Barbara Barry. Councilors Mary Salzmman, Lorinda Baker, Karl Williams  
4           Robert Lavoie, Matthew Lemieux, and Michelle Sikes. Also present was Town Manager, Charles  
5           Blanchard and Executive Assistant, Nicole Parker.

6 **Public Comments**

7           Resident Richard Opper, of Central Street, inquired about the Converse Middle School property. C.  
8           Blanchard filled him in on the developments for the proposed use. A subcommittee was created to  
9           investigate the reuse the building as senior housing and a community space.

10          Donald Blais, of Palmer Road, stated that he is continuing to follow up with the east west rail plan and  
11          will keep the Council updated.

12          Pat Gardner, Superintendent of Palmer Schools, spoke on opposition of a recreational marijuana  
13          approval.

14 **Meeting Minutes**

15          There were none available.

16 **New Business**

17 Welcome Home Vietnam Proclamation

18          Now known as National Vietnam Veterans' Day, it will be celebrated on March 29, 2018. R. Lavoie read  
19          the proclamation which was presented to the Vietnam Veteran's present.

20 Board of Health Animal and Bodyworks regulations

21          The Board of Health Agent requested to present the draft Regulations for the Council's information. The  
22          Board of Health Agent was not present. B.Barry stated that they can review the Council and if they have  
23          any comments they can speak to the Board of Health directly.

24 Police Reimbursement Agreement for Police

25          The Chief presented a reimbursement agreement requiring an officer to reimburse the town for the cost  
26          of the Academy and all associated costs in the event they do not stay with the Town for five years. The  
27          Chief stated that the agreement had been reviewed by Counsel and stated other towns are adopting it.  
28          It is a tool to allow the Town to get reimbursed and also an incentive for the cadets to finish the  
29          Academy.

30          Motion was made to adopt the regulation by M.Lemieux. Seconded by K.Williams. Motion passed (7:0)

31

1 Town Manager Bonus

2 Motion was made to approve a bonus in the amount of \$4,704.00 by L.Baker. Seconded by M.Salzman.  
3 Motion passed (5:0:2) Lavoie; Sikes

4 Veteran Emergency Fund

5 Troy Brin, veteran Agent, brought forward a proposal for an emergency fund for Veteran needs. It was  
6 recognized that it would be a voluntary contribution from taxpayers and go in to a separate account  
7 specifically established for emergencies. B.Barry explained that under MGL the funds will be put in a  
8 separate revenue account and requests will go through the warrant like any other requests. The item  
9 will be on the next agenda.

10 7:00PM Public Hearing; Photovoltaic Ordinance Amendment

11 R.Lavoie read the public hearing notice.

12

13 M. Salzman inquired about large capacity and the meaning. M.Marciniec , Planning Board Chairman  
14 was present and stated that large scale constitutes the capacity of over 250 kW. M.Salzman inquired as  
15 to the requirements of the procedure and wanted to ensure that all zoning was adhered to but believes  
16 the PV is good for the town .

17

18 It was explained by Chairman Marciniec that the reason for the amendment was to allow as ancillary  
19 structures in General Business. This was initiated by Wing Hospital to put Canopy Parking over their  
20 parking lot. It was reiterated that it cannot be used as a primary use in Business zones.

21

22 The public hearing was closed at 7:04PM. The vote will be taken at the April meeting.

23

24 Recreational Marijuana Ban

25 There was discussion between the Council on how the process of banning recreational marijuana sales is  
26 done. C.Blanchard stated that he spoke with Town Counsel who stated that the Council can vote to draft  
27 simple language to ban the sale of recreational marijuana, and it will go on the ballot. If the vote passed,  
28 the Council then has the opportunity to pass the vote or not. It was also stated that if the Council does  
29 not vote to put it to ballot, it is approved and never goes to the ballot.

30 M.Sikes stated that her interpretation of the law has many facets to it and banning or not banning is not  
31 a fair explanation of the complexity of the provisions of the statute.

32 B.Barry stated that the Council still has opportunity to not ban It if they do not believe an outright ban is  
33 the way the Town should go. She believes that if there is opportunity to get a vote to the residents, they  
34 should embrace it.

35 M.Salzman stated that the ban is for retail sales of recreational marijuana, and that it is legal for  
36 individuals to grow and process it. M.Lemieux stated that the law states that if a town bans the sale of  
37 recreational marijuana that it does not prohibit individuals from having it delivered from another town  
38 or other source. He believes the Town should reap the financial benefits of the sale of recreational  
39 marijuana.

1 M.Sikes stated her opinion is to have public hearing to have people bring their concerns forward.

2 B.Barry stated that the vote was the place where they could gather the opinions. Meetings and social  
3 media are not as good of an indicator as to what the town wants as a vote at an election.

4 It was stated that June have historically have had low turnout.

5 The discussion was opened to the public.

6 Phil Hebert spoke about being in favor of the sales and the fact that there are presently recreational  
7 marijuana sales in Town. He inquired as to why the Town would not want to have the control and the  
8 revenue from it. He stated that if it went to the ballot, he believes no matter the turnout, the Council  
9 should vote what the people voted.

10 Allison Peddit, Interim Assistant Principal at Old Mill Pond stated that she has seen a drastic change in  
11 the dynamics of the children that are coming though the school system. She stated that some are just a  
12 sign of the times but has concerns the Town is moving in the wrong direction. She believes marijuana is  
13 a gateway drug to other drugs and is very much against the sale of recreational marijuana and that it is a  
14 bad idea.

15 Billy Burns, of Bondsville stated that he completely disagrees with the decision to bring recreational  
16 marijuana in to Palme. He stated that it will just enhance the drug problem in Town.

17 Palmer Police Chief John Janulewicz stated that he is in favor of putting it on the ballot. He stated that  
18 he understands that it passed during the general election but people may feel differently if they know a  
19 recreational marijuana retail store will be in their neighborhood. He also believes that children are more  
20 at risk, especially when it becomes legal to purchase at retail stores. It sends the wrong message to our  
21 youth as we are trying to clean up the drug problem and keep kids drug free.

22 L.Baker stated that as a parent of a heroin addicted adult child she does not believe that marijuana has  
23 anything to do with opioid addiction and is not a gateway drug. She does not take this subject lightly. By  
24 allowing the sale of recreational marijuana, she believes the revenue source is the best thing for the  
25 town.

26 B. Barry stated that she understands where everyone is coming from, but still believes putting it on the  
27 ballot is the best action. As the Town Council, in her opinion it is their obligation to decide, after the  
28 vote, if there has been a sufficient amount of input for them to either pass or fail the ban.

29 M.Sikes stated that she believes as Town Councilors, it is their obligation to make informed and  
30 educated decisions for the voters and is what they were elected to do.

31 M.Salzman stated that it's legal, people are growing it, people have and will get it if they want it. What  
32 the Council is essentially saying tonight is do we want the revenue source or not. She stated that in her  
33 opinion the opioid problem has nothing to do with marijuana.

34 R.Lavoie believes strongly that it should be on the ballot. He said there are three months to educate and  
35 get the word out to people.

36 After more discussion it was decided not to put the question of banning the sale of recreational  
37 marijuana on the ballot.

1 Motion was made to vote in favor of the sale of recreational marijuana by M.Sikes. Seconded by  
2 M.Salzman. Motion passed (6:1) Lavoie

3 **Sub Committee reports**

4 The Town Manager Goals subcommittee have completed their goals but have not had a chance to meet  
5 and will be meeting next week and can present to Council next meeting.

6 The Ordinance committee met and one of their discussions was junk and debris ordinance to address  
7 miscellaneous waste. There is a current ordinance that addresses tag sales and the items people then  
8 leave for free on tree belts, etc for 2 days. There is also a nuisance ordinance but the committee is  
9 concerned with enforcement. The committee also proposed some language regarding private  
10 residences and the debris that is on private property. It was requested it go to the Town Attorney for  
11 review.

12 **Town Manager Report**

13 The first draft of the budget was presented to the Council. B.Barry stated that the subcommittee  
14 consists of herself, L.Baker and M.Lemieux. She stated that any Councilors that have any questions bring  
15 them forward to the subcommittee and the subcommittee will bring them to C.Blanchard. A  
16 subcommittee meeting will be set up in early April.

17 **Miscellaneous Correspondence**

18 There were none.

19 **Town Council Roundtable**

20 M.Lemieux stated that he attended the Hemlock Hill reunion and it was a great historical event.

21 **8:20PM Adjournment**

22 Motion was made to adjourn at 8:20PM by R.Lavoie. Seconded by L.Baker. Motion passed (7:0)