

SHELBY TOWNSHIP PRESS RELEASE

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Feb. 19, 2015

Shelby Township adopts medical marihuana dispensary, growth facility moratorium

With a unanimous vote on a moratorium regarding facilities associated with dispensing, selling or growing medical marihuana Feb. 17, the Shelby Township Board of Trustees stood with the Township's public safety professionals.

The Board of Trustees unanimously approved a moratorium on permits, approvals, certificates and/or licenses for the sale and/or dispensation of medical marihuana and for all medical marihuana facilities, including, but not limited to, medical marihuana growing or use facilities in order to review and implement revised land use ordinances addressing the regulation of dispensaries.

"The moratorium will give the Township an opportunity to regulate our ordinances and dispensaries. Currently, we cannot regulate use and sale within the Township, and this will give us an opportunity to do that," Township Attorney Rob Huth said.

The need for the moratorium stems from a voter referendum in 2008 that approved the use of medical marihuana. In the years since the referendum was approved, state regulations have not addressed the appropriate land uses that can be associated with the activities.

During the period of the moratorium, the Township Board will work with its attorneys to draft ordinance amendments that will change the law with respect to marihuana here in Michigan.

"Part of the problem we have with this drug is with the people that are growing it locally," Shelby Township Fire Chief Jim Swinkowski said. "They have a license to grow it and they need 24/7, 365 days a year climate control. They are augmenting their electrical systems and are adding services to their houses without getting proper permits or inspections.

"With the mix of chemicals that they use, they do not have proper ventilation, some of them are hurting themselves. All of this can be prevented with a proper ordinance to ensure that this activity is conducted in a safe and responsible manner."

In addition to the issue associated with the technical aspects of the grow operations, Police Chief Robert Shelide cited concerns that unregulated operations for growth and dispensation could contribute to illicit drug activity.

"I do not want this pollutant in our community," Police Chief Robert Shelide said. "Ninety-nine point nine percent of those with marihuana in the Township are buying and selling it illegally. It creates havoc within families; it creates an urge to try other drugs and that can potentially lead to deaths. Within our experience of our investigations, we do not want this in our communities."

Township Supervisor Rick Stathakis said the moratorium was in line with the Board's previous actions to support its public safety agencies for the overall protection of the community and its residents.

"Whether it's the full support the Board has shown for the Police Department's D.A.R.E. program or it's Narcotics Unit, or the way the Board joined with local families in the fight against synthetic drugs in our community, the message remains the same," Stathakis said. "We, as a Board, are steadfast against illicit drugs and the harm they pose to our community, our neighbors and our families."

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