

WILL HALTON HILLS ALLOW POT RETAIL IN TOWN?

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After the Oct. 22 election, one of council's first decisions will be to opt in or out of having recreational marijuana dispensaries in town.

In anticipation of marijuana becoming legal in the fall, the town of Halton Hills has formed a working group on how legalization will affect aspects of town and what regulations would need to be put in place.

"The town does not currently have bylaws specifically regarding cannabis production," said Susan Silver, senior adviser of strategic planning and continuous improvement with the town of Halton Hills.

She gave a presentation to council on the various aspects that the working group is looking at, and potential policies that will be proposed to council in coming months.

This will include a planning policy to deal with zoning for marijuana production facilities like the application at 1 Rosetta St. that was recently denied by the committee of adjustment.

Silver noted that the production at the facility was strictly of a personal, medical nature.

Town staff already have experience dealing with files regarding medical



Carmine Marinelli / QM Agency

Jacob Hunter spokes person for The Yaletown Medical Dispensary displays a variety of marijuana in Vancouver, BC.

marijuana use and production, Silver said, and will use that experience to come up with a framework.

The town, along with municipalities across Ontario will be asked by the province to opt in or out of hosting marijuana dispensaries in their community.

"It will be up to the new council to make decisions regarding opting out," said Silver, noting that the current council would not be expected to make that decision before the election.

The working group will be analyzing issues that would affect the bylaw department, age restrictions, possession limits and impaired driving regulations.

"Certainly, details are very thin," said Silver, noting that they are eagerly awaiting more information and legislation from the province, including details on timelines of when coun-

cil would have to make a decision on having marijuana stores, and if they can opt in at a later date, if they choose to initially opt out.

"One of the key issues is the land use," said Mayor Rick Bonnette, noting that the town needs to consider the proximity to schools as one factor in choosing a retail location.

"I hope that the province will give us a little bit of slack," he said, noting that the new council will need time to gather their bearings before making such a decision.

Coun. Dave Kentner said that given the lack of guidance by the province, he would like to initially opt out, and then make a decision to opt in at a later date once more details are fleshed out.

Marijuana officially becomes legal on Oct. 17.

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