

# COUNCIL DEFERS DECISION ON PRIVATIZED POT SALES AFTER URGED BY RESIDENTS

VERONICA APPIA  
vappia@metroland.com

After a lengthy discussion, with some council members feeling reluctant to stray from the original path, the Town of Halton Hills voted to defer the decision to opt out of privatized pot sales until some semblance of public consultation can be completed.

This decision came after three impassioned delegations from local residents, and a gallery of vocal citizens who made it clear that they were not going to accept any decision being made by the town on their behalf regarding pri-

vate cannabis stores - even if that decision was only to opt out temporarily to give the town more time to conduct the consultation.

Now, the town has until Jan. 21 to consult with the public and decide whether it will be opting in to having private cannabis stores in town, and has until Jan. 22 to communicate that decision to the provincial government.

Senior planning adviser Susan Silver addressed council on Monday evening, providing them with an update on the latest news regarding cannabis legislation and retail.

Regarding retail store regulations, Silver said



Veronica Appia/Metroland

Georgetown resident Abe Verghis presents his arguments in favour of cannabis retail stores to council.

stores must be standalone and located at least 150 metres from schools. The products sold at these establishments must be sourced solely from the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation. Those entering the store must be 19 years of age or older and hours of operation can be between 9 a.m. and 11 p.m.

As well, the municipality is restricted from using licensing or land-use by-

laws to control the location or density.

Silver says the private Ontario cannabis stores that do come into fruition will be chosen by the provincial regulating body (the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario), lottery-style, with a total of 25 stores being selected by April 1, 2019.

With regards to funding, the Town of Halton Hills will be given an allo-

cation of \$27,747 in January regardless of any decision to opt out.

Then, following the Jan. 22 deadline date, municipalities will be given a second payment. Those that opted out will only receive \$5,000.

The funds received can only be put toward costs relevant to legalization.

While Silver concluded her presentation recommending council opt out of

cannabis retail stores until the consultation period, slated to begin in January and run until March, can be completed, local residents had something different to say.

"The Liberal government had promised that they are going to take away \$7 billion from the hands of criminals and legalize it, so if the Town of Halton Hills decides to opt out, you are effectively putting that money back into the hands of criminals," Abe Verghis said, to an applauding gallery.

Verghis is a Georgetown resident who works for a company that manufactures drug and alcohol testing equipment.

"What we are trying to do is we are trying to discourage the illegal sale of cannabis. If the minors continue to use it, and they will, there is nothing you or I can do to stop that, but what we can stop is the illegal trade of cannabis."

In a second delegation, local resident David Greb,

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45 Mountainview Road North, Georgetown

905.877.7958

hassellsauto@bellnet.ca • hassellautomotive.com

## 35 YEARS AND COUNTING

What was our little town is now exploding with expansion. There are many new families who may not have known they've picked a jewel of a town to live in.

To them, welcome! To those whose history has always been here, thank you for giving my family and I a great place to call home for 35 years!

Thanks to all of our awesome customers, many of whom have been coming here since we started in 1984.

Our success is fundamentally basic – be totally honest and treat all customers with mutual respect. I am incredibly proud of our employees who reflect the integrity we live by.

*David*

**Merry Christmas**

