



# CITY OF LEXINGTON

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I wanted to attempt to address a few of the concerns that have been expressed to me related to the Retail Cannabis Dispensary issue that has been before the City Council.

There has been several letters in our local paper on this subject, but one in the Pantagraph today asked "Why an issue of this importance is not being publicized more openly?" Well we have been discussing retail cannabis since July 22<sup>nd</sup> and has been on the Agenda every meeting since. Also, the writer's husband covers these meetings for our local paper and I believe has attended all of them. We post our meetings on our website and on the bulletin board in front of City Hall. We allow public comment at every meeting.

First, the council and I respect everyone's opinion and have done our best to listen to both sides of this. But to describe this as "*City leaders are considering bringing drugs to our community*" I believe that to be unfair. We are considering allowing Recreational Cannabis Sales **only**. As you may know, I spent twenty some years in Law Enforcement protecting this community and its children. So I don't take this issue lightly. Prior to that I served in the Armed Forces, protecting and defending the rights of all Americans.

One of those rights is a free society. In a free society individuals are free to live their lives as they wish, as long as they do not infringe on the rights of others. Owning and operating you own business falls under this. In May, the State of Illinois made Recreational Cannabis sales legal effective January 1, 2020. Some may be opposed to this idea, but believe it or not some are in favor of it.

That being said, when the City was approached by Jon Kemp, someone who has operated a successful and upscale business in this community for the past 15 years with an idea to open up a new business in our community; we, in order to maintain that concept of a free society were obligated to consider it and give him, as we should any person the opportunity to go before the Council, and in this case, the people, in several public hearings, to discuss his idea. I might add, that except for a liquor license no other business must go through this process.

Jon Kemp, has and continues to encourage anyone who has questions to visit him and address any concerns they might have. I would strongly suggest if you have questions to reach out to him.

I will defend this Councils action in this process. If we ever get into the position that we reject any new ideas without giving equal consideration, I would ask you, is this what we want to teach our children?

I applaud the efforts of the school and the Red Ribbon Program, and teaching our children the dangers of drugs. That should not change. This, like alcohol, tobacco and gambling are still against the law for anyone under the age of 21. The fact is, that Recreational Cannabis Dispensaries will be opening up across our State and residents will be able to purchase it anywhere and bring it back to their homes, regardless of how we vote in Lexington.

All of us should continue to teach our children the dangers of drugs, alcohol, tobacco and gambling and continue to instill in them the importance of making the right choices in life.

Reality is, we cannot keep our children from interacting with the world, and we cannot control their lives. We have to give them good information and trust they will make the right decisions by creating an environment where everyone can speak openly, live in a free society, be kind to each other and more importantly continue to show them love and respect.

Sincerely,

Spencer Johansen, Mayor

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