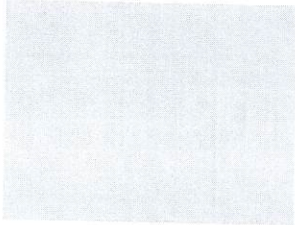


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'Change Is The Law Of Life' - Editorial

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With the town taking on the decision of whether or not marijuana can be sold in Bourne, we want to be the first to say that residents are doing their due diligence. It is evident in our letters section, in public meetings and what we imagine are daily conversations among residents.

Our concern, however, is that the residents of Bourne are being perhaps a bit too diligent by overthinking it. It seems many cannot see the forest for the trees.

Legal marijuana has existed for nearly five years in Massachusetts so, luckily, Bourne does not have to reinvent the wheel in lifting its town-wide ban. The Cannabis Control Commission has stringent guidelines and regulations, like Host Community Agreements, specifically to make this process easier and more beneficial for municipalities. But still, a sect of Bourne residents has been and will likely continue to fight tooth and nail against the very principle of it.

We understand the reason for this: anyone born before the turn of the millennium would agree that buying marijuana had a certain stigma. It was illegal, first and foremost, but also felt like a generally illicit and sketchy task.

This is no longer the case, and dispensaries are a far cry from the old days of nervously buying a joint on a dark street corner. One of the biggest battles of legalized marijuana, proponents have said, is breaking that dark stigma. We agree, and we implore those who hold these views to

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PB Handout 6.22.23
from Steve Strojny

consider that changing times are best matched with adaptive attitudes. John F. Kennedy said it best when in 1963 he said, "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."

Food for thought: although the days of Prohibition are far behind us, if you told a person that lived through it how easy it was to get booze nowadays, they would probably croak on the spot. But, despite the ban back then, people still found alternative—albeit risky—ways to get drunk. The same can be said for banned substances like marijuana: legal or not, it is out there and to think otherwise is silly. That said, would it not be in the interest of the town to participate in regulation and make it safer for those consumers? We think so.

Some of our newsroom staff visited Capeway Cannabis in Carver, owned by Bourne residents, and were wholeheartedly impressed with how charming the dispensary is. It is, like all government-regulated dispensaries, a high-security facility, but you would never know it just by looking at its inconspicuous facade and welcoming interior—that is, until you notice the cameras. One owner facetiously told us, "You can't pick your nose here without being on camera."

That security and strict regulation should make Bourne residents feel more comfortable with the idea. One of our editors told us, for example, that when Sandwich recently legalized marijuana sales at its own Town Meeting, the police chief was asked if he had any objections. Not only did he not object, he actually said the town has had zero problems with medical sales, he does not foresee any problems with recreational sales, and that he could get behind this.

Sandwich's dispensary, In Good Health, is located just a stone's throw from Route 6 heading down Cape. In fact, it is being promoted as having easy access on and off the highway in an attempt to appeal to highway commuters and tourists.

This approach, we think, is the best business practice for siting these establishments—accessibility and revenue are good, after all—but there have been objections to similar proposals for Bourne's potential dispensaries. Proponents of lifting the ban have noted that they do not want to imitate Mashpee's siting of Triple M, which is more out of the way and not as easy to get to. We agree, and think that the proposed areas of MacArthur Boulevard, Sagamore and downtown Buzzards Bay are all good options.

Some have argued against these proposed areas, using Bourne's unique position as a regional gateway as reasoning, but this perspective is shortsighted. At the end of the day, dispensaries are still retail establishments; how much good (and revenue) can they bring if they are hidden away,

tucked off the beaten path? Though some in town would undoubtedly object to living close to a marijuana dispensary, those of the younger generations may actually view it as a perk of the neighborhood. Generational differences are stark these days, and the town should consider that siting a dispensary in the downtown area, for example, might draw more younger people to the area, for both shopping and living. Is that not the goal?

All things considered, it is not hard to understand why the stigma is hard to break: people get stuck in their ways, as is human nature. But Bourne has an opportunity here, one that would be worth its while to consider.