

February 21, 2017

Last night the Village of Queen Charlotte Council gave first reading to an amendment to our Zoning Bylaw 98-2017 (cited as Zoning Amendment Marijuana Operation Bylaw). The amendment to the Bylaw is being made to ensure that those wanting to legally sell marijuana will need to apply individually to Council for a Temporary Use Permit until we have time to seek feedback from our residents regarding this industry in our community.

This action is not intended to affect those with medical marijuana licenses, or licenses to grow for personal purposes and we will review the language to ensure that is clear before the second reading. A bylaw needs to pass three readings prior to being adopted.

With the expected legalization of marijuana in Canada, many municipalities are seeing the need to pass bylaws and policies to help regulate dispensaries and growing sites. Those that have had pop-up dispensaries without regulation have faced challenges as 'grandfathering' can occur making it more difficult to regulate them in the future.

We have a long growing season and a mild climate here on our beautiful islands. The commercial growing and dispensing of marijuana could add a number of full-time jobs to our economy, or even more if ventures prove profitable. In order to fully assess the potential benefits and pitfalls the Council will be facilitating opportunities for public input in the month of March.

We should soon be hearing more from the Federal Government regarding their plans and we want to be ready with a plan that will work for our community. The Council appreciates the residents who came out last night in the snow to learn more about the Zoning change. More information will be available soon.