

Dispensaries will have 8-day window to open in Manitou

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David Schiller, owner of the All Good Care Center medical marijuana dispensary on East Pikes Peak Avenue in downtown Colorado Springs, has his eye on Manitou Springs, and the Ute Chief Spring on the city's west end in particular, as a potential spot for a new care facility.

"Indians came to Manitou a long time ago, they laid down their arms, and if they were sick, they'd use mineral water to heal their body," Schiller said. "I thought, how perfect would it be to rebuild that building back to the historical way it used to be and prove to people that before we became so intellectual, this is how people healed themselves? The premise is, there are a lot of ways naturally that we can heal our body."

Schiller, who has given Councilman Matt Carpenter and Police Chief Mary Jo Smith a tour of his facility in Colorado Springs, envisions setting up a museum in the spring building's front where locals can learn about the history of Manitou's springs, natural methods of healing, and take classes on growing their own fruits and vegetables.

A door behind the building would be the entrance into the dispensary. Schiller was at the Tuesday, June 1 Manitou Springs City Council meeting, providing input on some of the finer points of Colorado's new boom crop.

The ramifications of House Bill 1284 on medical marijuana dispensaries in Colorado will be far reaching, but most germane to Manitou is the one-year moratorium on the opening of any new dispensaries, which should go into effect July 1.

The potential impacts of the house bill were discussed at the Tuesday meeting, where Council passed its third moratorium on the processing and approval of any application for medical marijuana businesses in the city.

Council hopes to lift the latest moratorium just eight days prior to the July 1 deadline for dispensaries to register with the state.

Entrepreneurs who have their ducks in a row (i.e. money and a location scouted out) could potentially find a home in Manitou Springs, but it will be difficult.

"They'll only have eight days to get (their application) in," said Manitou Planning Director Dan Folke. "I don't think we'll be flooded. They'd have to have a premises identified already. There's only a few people who really have it together enough to come before us at this time."

House Bill 1284 will also throw a few more wrenches into the marijuana machinery because it mandates that all dispensaries be growing 70 percent of their own product by September 1.

But since Manitou has an aging infrastructure, council members were very leery of allowing cultivation centers into the city.

"I'm leaning toward banning manufacturing in town," said Mayor Marc Snyder. "As long as the product is available to our citizenry, I think we've met that constitutional mandate."

With the limitations of Manitou's aging infrastructure, those dispensaries that get their applications in before July 1 might still need to have an existing grow operation outside of the city. Schiller would be one of those folks.

Council was scheduled to meet yesterday to present the conditional use guidelines for operating a dispensary in Manitou.

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