

## **Council extends ban on medical pot shops**

**By Jeanne Davant**

Manitou Springs City Council on Tuesday extended the city's temporary moratorium on medical marijuana dispensaries for another 90 days.

Council enacted a 90-day moratorium on Dec. 15, intending to wait until the state came up with regulations for medical marijuana businesses so the city's regulations would not conflict. Council members also wanted to watch the development of county regulations, federal laws and court cases that might impact the city's authority to regulate medical marijuana dispensaries.

"I wish I could report to you that the state now has clear guidelines, but that is not the case," Mayor Marc Snyder said Tuesday. "We're still looking for some kind of guidance from the state. It's an area in incredible legal flux right now—a legal open field."

Four of the five bills that have been introduced in the Legislature died; a fifth is still pending. Snyder said

Meanwhile, Council has asked Planning Director Dan Folke to research regulations that have been enacted by other Colorado towns and draft an ordinance for Manitou.

Snyder said he thought the ordinance ultimately would set up a process similar to liquor licensing, where applicants would be authorized to do business by the state and the city. Folke was asked to update Council and hopefully to craft an ordinance by the April 13 work session.

"If the state Legislature fails to give us any guidance, we will be ready to act when the legislative session ends," Snyder said.

Council passed the emergency ordinance extending the moratorium 6-0. Councilman Ed Klingman was absent.

## **Debate on fees and waivers continues**

Also Tuesday, Council continued to discuss increases to use fees for city parks and City Hall and a fee waiver policy.

Council granted more than \$18,000 in waivers on a case-by-case basis last year, when the city's budget was barely in the black.

Councilwoman Ingrid Richter drafted a fee waiver policy setting up criteria for "signature" and community events that would be eligible for partial or full exemption from use fees.

Richter said her goal is for staff to handle requests for fee waivers under a clear policy.

"I don't feel my time as a Council member is well spent by listening to fee waiver (requests)" Richter said. "There should be a process that everyone knows so you know exactly what you're going to pay."

But coming up with a policy that would allow the city to recoup more of its costs, but would not place such a financial burden on sponsors that they have to cancel their events, has proven to be a difficult balancing act.

Councilman Matt Carpenter has argued for higher use fees and fewer waivers because of the city's precarious financial position. Other Council members view waivers as part of economic develop costs encouraging the events that draw hundreds or thousands of visitors to Manitou Springs and increase revenue.

After Tuesday's discussion, which included input from sponsors of Carnivale, the Commonwheel fair and Chamber events, Council had not resolved all of the fine points of the waiver policy.

The discussion is expected to continue at an upcoming work session. Fee increases and the waiver policy would not go into effect until Council enacts them by resolution.

### **In other business, Council...**

- Approved three contracts for a total of \$62,000 in connection with the Fountain Creek restoration and bank stabilization project. This phase of the project focuses on the Memorial and Mansions Park portions of the project. It will be paid for primarily by state and private grants and donations. The ultimate goal is to restore the creek from arch to arch.

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