

Council passes rules for medical pot shops

By Jeanne Davant

Owners of medical marijuana dispensaries or centers will be allowed to operate in some parts of Manitou Springs under new regulations approved Tuesday night by City Council. Growing and manufacturing operations, however, will not be allowed anywhere in town.

The ordinance approving the regulations requires a medical marijuana center owner to pay a nonrefundable application fee, obtain a special medical marijuana license and a regular city business license, and go through a conditional use approval process.

Centers can be located only in the commercial zoning district and cannot be within 500 feet of a school, child care business or alcohol/drug rehab facility. All applications will be reviewed by Council.

The ordinance, originally drafted by Planning Director Dan Folke, has been through several rounds of revisions. The latest version incorporates regulations recently enacted by the state Legislature.

Council briefly discussed the ordinance before unanimously approving it.

Councilman Rick Barry said he thought medical marijuana centers should be allowed downtown and that banning grow and manufacturing operations "is micromanaging that industry ... I think it's overregulation."

Mayor Marc Snyder said he disagreed because of concerns about the impact of grow and manufacturing operations on the city's infrastructure and on parking downtown. Folke said he thought centers would be incompatible with other downtown uses.

"I'm hoping we can work toward allowing manufacturing and grow operations that are compatible with our infrastructure," Councilwoman Aimee Cox said. "I agree with the spirit of not having unnecessary regulation."

The ordinance will come before Council for a public hearing and second reading at its next meeting June 15. If approved then, it would go into effect in five days, allowing potential center owners eight days to apply before July 1. That is a deadline set by the state for center owners to submit applications and register.

Council also set application fees of \$2,000; annual license fees of \$2,000, a transfer of ownership fee of \$1,000 and a change in location fee of \$1,000. Applicants also would have to pay for the cost of a background check.

In other business, Council approved chip seal contracts with EWS and Miller Asphalt for chip sealing work on Crystal Hills Boulevard, Pawnee Avenue, Canon Avenue, Clarksley Road, Old Crystal Park Road, Roca Avenue, Modoc Place and Delaware Road, and on dirt roads including Shoshone Place, Oklahoma Road, Delaware Road, Canon Avenue, Michigan Avenue and Duncan Avenue.

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