

**CONTINUATION of PUBLIC HEARING ON LOCAL LAW 13 of 2021  
DECEMBER 02, 2021**

A Public Hearing continuation was held on December 2, 2021 in person at 1 Town Hall Way, Ulster Park of Proposed Local Law #13 OF 2021, ENTITLED A LOCAL LAW OF THE TOWN OF ESOPUS, ULSTER COUNTY, NEW YORK TO OPT OUT OF ALLOWING CANNABIS RETAIL DISPENSARIES AND ON-SITE CONSUMPTION SITES AS AUTHORIZED UNDER CANNABIS LAW ARTICLE 4. THIS MEETING WAS IN PERSON ONLY DUE TO THE VIDEOGRAPHERS LAST MINUTE NOTICE OF NOT BEING ABLE TO ATTEND THE MEETING.

The following persons in attendance:

**Councilman Laura Robinson  
Councilman Evelyn Clarke  
Councilman Kathie Quick  
Councilman Chris Farrell  
Supervisor Jared Guess**

**Administrative Recorder: Holly A. Netter, Town Clerk, RMC**

WAYS TO GIVE PUBLIC COMMENT:

In-Person – Attend the Workshop  
EMAIL - [outreach@esopus.com](mailto:outreach@esopus.com) with the subject line “Public Comment”  
MAIL – mail written comments to:  
*Town of Esopus, P.O. Box 700  
Port Ewen, NY 12466*

**Administrative Recorder: Holly A. Netter, Town Clerk, RMC**

Proposed Local Law 13 was introduced on October 7, 2021 and noticed in the Daily Freeman on October 17, 2021. Public Hearings were held 11/4 and 11/18 and were held open. The proposed law was available for review at [www.esopus.com](http://www.esopus.com).

**DEPUTY SUPERVISOR SHANNON HARRIS MADE A MOTION TO CONTINUE THE PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED LOCAL LAW TO BE KNOWN AS LOCAL LAW #13 OF 2021, ENTITLED A LOCAL LAW OF THE TOWN OF ESOPUS, ULSTER COUNTY, NEW YORK TO OPT OUT OF ALLOWING CANNABIS RETAIL DISPENSARIES AND ON-SITE CONSUMPTION SITES AS AUTHORIZED UNDER CANNABIS LAW ARTICLE 4. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN KATHIE QUICK. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Decan Timothy Dean** Presentation & Sacred Heart Church, read a letter from Father Arthur Rojas asking the Board to OPT OUT attached as **addendum A**.

**John Affronti** 670 Old Post Rd – Asked board to vote OPT OUT. He said there is a sign on 9W that says “ if you drive high you are out of your mind”; 9W has had several head on collisions and does not need to add dispensaries or lounges. Cannabis has a role for medical purpose for relieving pain within a home.

**Jamie Barton** – Bruderhof Church Communities read a message from Joann Huleatt.

On behalf of the 3 Bruderhof communities in the Town of Esopus I wanted to voice the support of our community of the proposed Local Law #13 that would opt out of both the retail sales and consumption sites of recreational marijuana. There are a number of reasons why, including that purchasing and consuming drugs has a negative influence on the children and young adults.

**Guy Brought** – 170 Horton Lane – concerned and thinks the town should OPT OUT, He commented on people’s comments from the previous meeting regarding revenue. He said it would be minimal and the revenue would be absorbed by the need of additional police and emergency personnel. Marijuana has long term health issues; psychological, heart, breathing etc. If people want it they can put it out for a referendum and put it in the people’s hands not just the Board’s hands.

**Nancy Rosen** 572 Old Post If we OPT out what is the cost of a referendum? Is it feasible? Has complicated feelings of not allowing a potential legal business in our town. She said many in the room have tried it when they were younger and have grown up to be responsible adults and elected officials.

**Marie Omura, Connelly** – Feels strongly that it is not a good idea -Asked to OPT OUT.

**George Post** – Asked Board to OPT Out He has been Veteran; drugs are not welcomed in the military and although it is legal marijuana is a gateway drug. This will cause more problems which we do not need.

**M.C. Edwards** – 730 Second Ave Sleightsburgh Against opting out. She understands the state has not worked out the details regarding rules and regulations but opting out puts us behind those townships opting in loss of huge sales tax revenues. It is regulated and the Town Board would have control over zoning; asked Board to OPT IN Asked the Board if they will be transparent and share the research that they have personally done before they vote.

**Arlene Post** Ulster Park, no amount of money is worth having pot in our town, Go across to a neighboring town and buy it; we do not want it here. Money is the root of all evil. She asked the Board to OPT out and asked to vote tonight. Don’t look at money- look at crime and people’s lives.

**Bernice McNierney** East Main Street, Asked Board to OPT out. The influx of new people has been amazing and more are coming because the area is offering so much. It is not necessary to

have retail sales and lounges when Town of Ulster is a commercial area. Opt Out, there is no reason we need it in the town.

**Jessica Smith** Ulster Park – OPT IN Read her public comment attached **addendum B**.

**Chris Marta** – Parsell St. There are millions of pros and cons. Personal views need to be put behind and look at the long term. He appreciates the catholic faith group of individuals, but it is not representing totality of the community. Whether we OPT IN or OPT OUT it is coming to our town and the Town will have to deal with it. He canvassed people in the Sleightsburgh Residents Association and the outcome was support for dispensaries but opting out of lounges. Should consider having a resident advisory board to help guide the board through this.

**Barbara McCabe** – lifelong resident. pointed out there are many diverse religions not just Catholics speaking on the subject. She wants children brought up in a safe healthy environment. Don't bring churches into it. She said she wants to know where the Board stands on this issue. So, the next vote we know if we are voting for cannabis or a healthy young community. Supports Opting Out.

**Keith Shore** Parsell St. new to the community grew up on Long Island. Much higher taxes and better school districts. This towns need more revenue. He goes to the Berkshires its beautiful and there is not more crime. IF there is an opportunity to gain revenue through the taxes, why wouldn't you set yourself up to get it. Agreed it is not about any religion or church, it's about finding money for our town to make the schools better for the kids. Town should OPT IN.

**Stephanie Lettieri** Ulster Park – OPT OUT – read highlights from letter included as Addendum C.

**Zena Matera**, Ulster Park – OPT OUT Does not dispute the use of medical marijuana for chronic pain and illness. She said pride should trump monetary gain; outlet stores are not the answer.

**Trish Lewis** Sleightsburgh – OPT IN emailed the board missing a huge opportunity for job opportunities attached as addendum D.

**Kathleen Larson** Clay Rd. Loves this town safe and activities for children. How important is family? Be careful of changing the economy, you may not get what you are looking for. Why do we need more? Keep TOE a good, safe space for families – OPT OUT.

**Perry Gallo**, Sleightsburgh – It is fiscally irresponsible not to OPT IN. There are 17 liquor licenses in the Town. Dispensaries are not for children and they are liable under the law. The money will help pay for children's programs at the park, water department improvements and reduce our taxes OPT IN and do not wait.

**STEPHEN LEWIS** Sleightsburgh felt the last meeting broke down because of moral issues; NYS made cannabis legal -Law supersedes moral arguments. Dispensaries delivery. Even if we opt out pot comes into our town regardless. It will not be a gated community. We can use the money for things like a rec center in town and children's programs. There are a lot of big items

like the water treatment and firehouse that will cost taxpayers a lot of money this is an opportunity to accept funding from the tax revenue. Board should OPT IN.

**Deacon Timothy** – (participant yielded his time to Deacon Tim. He has seen dispensaries in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. People drive up, order and go. Lounges are like smoking clubs; we do not want that in Esopus. People hang out there all day long. Marijuana is personal and should be done in the sanctity of the home. Are dispensaries going to be worth the money and where is it going to go.

**COUNCILMAN CHRIS FARRELL MADE A MOTION AT 8:05 TO HOLD OPEN AND CONTINUE THE PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED LOCAL LAW #13 OF 2021 ON DECEMBER 16, 2021, 7 PM AT 1 TOWN HALLWAY, ULSTER PARK NY. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN KATHIE QUICK. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED. 4AYE-1-ABSENT.**

*Respectively Submitted,  
Holly A. Netter  
Town Clerk, R.M.C.P*

## ADDENDUM A – FATHER ROJAS

Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
Father Kelley Drive, P O Box 904  
Port Ewen, NY 12466  
Phone 845-331-0053 Fax 845-331-3836



Adendum A.  
Sacred Heart  
1055 Broadway, P O Box 200  
Esopus, NY 12429  
Phone 845-384-6828 Fax 845-384-6234

December 2, 2021

Hon. Jared Geuss, Supervisor,  
and Town Board, Town of Esopus  
Town Hall  
1 Town Hall Way  
Ulster Park, New York 12487

Re: Proposed *Local Law 13*

Dear Supervisor Geuss and Councilpersons:

On behalf of Presentation-Sacred Heart Parish, I am asking Deacon Timothy Dean to read tonight this statement **in support** of the *Local Law 13* bill, which **wisely** would opt our town out of allowing **so-called** "cannabis retail dispensaries and on-site consumption sites" pursuant to Article 4 of the *New York State Cannabis Law*. Although my annual spiritual retreat requires me to be away from Esopus this week, I am grateful to Deacon Dean for enabling these comments to be placed on public record as well as to our parishioners and other people of good will who are attending or returning tonight to ask you to keep Esopus a **family-friendly** place to live.

In light of my comments at the Board's public hearing on November 18<sup>th</sup>, I would like to reiterate that we Catholics hold that **true** economic development respects the dignity of the human person, **including** that of impressionable children, youths, and their hardworking parents who seek a **wholesome** place to raise their families. As local schools and religious education programs aim to teach our minors to make **good** choices, **opting in** instead of **out** will send a **mixed message** to our children and youths as weed stores and pot lounges would be treated by our town the **same** as a grocery store or a bank. No amount of **promised** tax revenue, no thirty pieces of silver, are worth **selling out** the family-friendly present **and** future of Esopus!

In the name of **so-called** "compromise", please do **not** imitate the Town of Ulster by opting out of only **one** of the two categories permitted by Article 4. The **complete** opt-out by the Village of Rhinebeck is a **much better** example for Esopus.

Instead of turning Esopus into the **gateway** to a gateway drug, please vote **YES** to *Local Law 13* and keep Esopus a **family-friendly** place to live! May God bless you.

Cordially,  
Rev. Fr.   
Rev. Fr. Arthur F. Rojas  
Administrator

## ADDENDUM B – Jessica Smith

LL#13 Cannabis OPTOUT

Addendum B

Town of Esopus  
Public Comment, 12/02/2021  
Re: Local Law #13  
Honorable Supervisor and Town Board Members,

Thank you for keeping the discussion open for public comment regarding Local Law #13, Opting-out of NYS MRTA Recreational Cannabis Dispensaries. In viewing the last public session on 11/18, it seemed the majority of comments were based on feelings and antiquated beliefs about cannabis. As a mother, educator, life-long resident and Roman Catholic, I would like to share some evidence-based research and facts to counter the social stigmas surrounding this debate.

- Cannabis has been utilized for thousands of years for a multitude of purposes. Only in the past century did it become demonized and criminalized for political, economic and racial injustices. (I will not take up your time with history lessons, but it could be helpful to look into the history of cannabis in the U.S. and how it came to be radically opposed.)
- Cannabis is used to treat and help alleviate symptoms from anxiety, stress, irritability, depression, diabetes, cancer (preventative), autoimmune disease(s), arthritis, generalized pain and inflammation, PTSD, Alzheimer's and dementia, sleep disorders, alcoholism and opioid addiction, heart disease, high blood pressure, glaucoma, etc. etc. It truly has profound medicinal purpose. (The majority of these conditions do not qualify for a medical use card in NYS, and the Federal Government still follows the subjugated laws in regards to cannabis.)
- Studies conducted by Regional Science and Urban Economics found that in towns of @10K people the addition of cannabis dispensaries actually reduced crime by 19%. There is absolutely no link between cannabis use and criminal behavior. According to the DEA database, there are ZERO overdoses attributed to marijuana, EVER.
- Cannabis dispensaries are the fastest growing businesses in the U.S. today, with a 26% compound growth rate each year. American consumers spent more than \$17 billion on cannabis products in 2020. The average annual income of a recreational dispensary is \$3,000,000. These dispensaries create jobs, stimulate the local economy and provide funding for community programs and infrastructure.
- Studies published in JAMA Pediatrics have shown that Recreational marijuana laws are associated with an 8% decrease in teen use. As a parent and educator, a conversation with my children about use of substances is not relative to a dispensary being located in the town we reside in. The Town

holds a fiscal responsibility to its residents, not a religious/moral one in creating laws.

Having read through the Town's Comprehensive Plan, the #1 Goal listed under the priority of Economic Development is "to support business development to strengthen the tax base and meet community needs." Although there were no specific mentions of cannabis dispensaries in the Comprehensive Plan, it is important to note that the data for the Comprehensive Plan was compiled in 2017-2018, while NYS MRTA was signed into law in March of this year. What was clear throughout the Comprehensive Plan was the need for new business and economic development, which is exactly what a recreational cannabis dispensary would provide, given they would even find our town viable. In opting-out, the Town essentially sends the clear message that the industry is not welcome here.

The 2022 Budget that was recently passed carries a 2.7% property tax increase; Port Ewen just passed a \$6.4M proposal for a new fire house; after Federal and State funding, the town still needs \$3.3M to replace to existing water infrastructure; Town Hall is in need of repairs to the roof; many Town residents were furious over the increase in cost for the Town's Summer Camp program and; more than 30% of the Town's land is wholly tax exempt. Discouraging ANY new business from setting up in our town would be counter-productive, in particular one that promises such a tremendous yield in return.

I have put together a petition of signatures of Townof Esopus residents, all of whom are morally-sound, hard-working adults, having raised/currently raising their families here in Esopus. I will be turning that in at the meeting Thursday evening. It reads as follows: "We, the undersigned residents of the Town of Esopus, petition the Town Board to NOT opt-out of the NYS Marihuana Regulation and Taxation Act of 2021, which allows the legal sale of cannabis through regulated dispensaries. In opting-out, the Town would potentially lose the opportunity to generate hundreds of thousands of dollars in tax revenue. There would be an imposed 4% excise tax on every purchase made at the dispensaries, with 75% of those revenues staying in the Town. We respectfully ask that the Board not hinder the economic development and growth of our town by passing Local Law #13."

Please note, none of these residents expressed any interest or desire in allowing on-site use at a dispensary. The Board does have the option to consider solely opting-out of allowing on-site use.

Thank you for all of your time and consideration in this matter. I am submitting my comments in advance in the hopes of saving some of your time. We ask that you please take these facts and information presented into serious consideration, and NOT opt-out of allowing a recreational cannabis dispensary in the Town of Esopus.

Respectfully yours,

Jessica Smith  
Resident, Ulster Park

## **ADDENDUM C – Stephanie Lettieri**

Dear Supervisor Geuss, Esopus Town Board Members and Fellow Community Members:

I've been thinking about this Opt Out vote for several weeks. When I attended the second Public Hearing, I attended with emotion. Over the last two decades, I've seen, first-hand, many people affected by drug addiction. I have personal knowledge of couples who have lost a child to overdose, families who have been devastated because of this addiction, and an adult I was very close to who died

from an overdose. In EVERY SINGLE ONE of these incidents the person who was overtaken by a drug addiction started with “just” marijuana. And any family or close friend who has watched the first joint become the thing that overtakes a loved one – well, it can’t help but be an emotional topic. I also had the great joy to watch a very close friends’ son attend TLC in Esopus and walk away from it. I’ve now been able to see this young man enter a career where he helps people, find the love of his life, marry and become a father.

But I realized at the meeting that there were people who didn’t agree with me and who also felt as strongly as I did on the same topic. So I began to do research. And what I found was alarming.

I ask that after reading this information which includes information from our own Federal Government, law enforcement officers, DEA, CDC, WebMD, and HHS – anyone on the Town Board who feels that Esopus should NOT opt out, I would like to know and understand the reasoning behind this decision.

To complete my research on all of this, I re-read the Town of Esopus Comprehensive Plan. I see no logical or factual way that voting against Local Law #13 works towards any of the goals cited in the plan.

And so I share the following research with highlights followed by sources.

1. Alcohol vs. Drugs – we allow the sale of alcohol and have bars in town. After researching the NY Liquor Authority website I found that we have 7 licenses in Port Ewen, 3 in Esopus, and 6 in Ulster Park. Interestingly enough, many of the arrests and arraignments that I see that take place in the Town of Esopus are DWI. And don’t we all know about MADD? And do you know of anyone who has been in an accident with a drunk driver? I have personally been in one accident caused by a drunk driver and my husband has been in three. It was awful! And it takes years to get over the effects of one.
  - a. According to <https://cannabis.ny.gov/adult-use> “Driving under the influence of cannabis is illegal and can slow motor coordination and other skills needed to drive safely.



- If you drive under the influence of cannabis, you will get a DUI and risk hurting yourself or others. Using cannabis products while driving is illegal.”
- b. Many articles have been written from the Police perspective on what will happen in communities because of MRTA –  
<https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/marijuana-law-enforcement-mental-health> - **“Although correlations have been made between cannabis use and psychotic events, brain development, and long-term health risks, little to no attention has been paid by the mainstream media to these links.”**
  - c. So to the people who say we have alcohol why not marijuana – I say let us learn our lesson with alcohol.
2. Don’t throw away hundreds of thousands of dollars in tax revenue away.
- a. Tax on cannabis - <https://cannabis.ny.gov/adult-use>  
According to this state website, tax will be 13% with the state receiving 9%, and the additional 4% being split by the county and town, the town receiving 75% of the 4%.
  - b. When the math is done, in order for Esopus to earn \$100,000 in sales tax revenue, THREE MILLION DOLLARS worth of cannabis would need to be sold in our town. According to  
<https://oxfordtreatment.com/substance-abuse/marijuana/average-cost-of-marijuana/> - in 2020 the average cost of a joint was between \$6 and \$8 – that would be approximately 375,000 joints.
  - c. We can use the sales tax revenue to pay for a new roof on Town Hall, children’s programs, and all other items stated at the meetings.  
Mathematically, if enough marijuana was sold in the town to pay for all of the items that were outlined in the meetings, thousands more joints would need to be sold.
  - d. On the other hand, the federal government will spend \$3.28 BILLION on drug enforcement  
(<https://www.dea.gov/data-and-statistics/staffing-and-budget>) And the average a state spends on drug control is \$81,289,000 which includes Presentation research and treatment, Justice, Education, Health, Child and Family Assistance, Mental Health, Public Safety, State workforce and Regulation and Compliance.
  - e. <https://recoverycentersofamerica.com/economic-cost-substance-abuse/>

- f. And the drug situation only got worse during covid. <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/issue-brief-increases-in-opioid-related-overdose.pdf>
- g. In our own community –  
November 15, 2021 – Pat Ryan talks about double down efforts on overdoses  
November 10, 2021 – Pat Ryan talks about Proposal to reinvest in mental health and addiction recovery - \$3.3 million for a Recovery Center and 413.2 in the Operating Budget.  
<https://ulstercountyny.gov/sites/default/files/2022BudgetSummary.pdf>  
And while I know other towns around us will have dispensaries and lounges, why should Esopus add to the problems and expose our children 12 years and older (as addressed in these reports) to something that costs so much to earn \$100,000 in tax revenue?
3. All the other towns are opting in – it’s coming here you can’t stop it. Absolutely not factual.
  - a. New Jersey – more than 63% of townships in NJ opted out.  
<https://nj1015.com/over-63-of-nj-towns-block-marijuana-businesses-at-least-for-now/>
  - b. In New York as early as October 15 of this year, 135 town opted out, with only 41 opting in. Biggest reason reported by these towns is there ARE JUST TOO MANY UNKNOWNNS about how towns – especially small ones – are going to be able to handle all that comes with this new law.
4. We don’t need to be concerned about children getting marijuana. EVERY SINGLE STUDY I looked at said the starting age for date on marijuana use begins at the age of 12.
  - a. During President Obama’s reign, New York was one of the top ten states for drug use of persons TWELVE and older.  
[https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/state\\_profile\\_-\\_new\\_york\\_0.pdf](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/state_profile_-_new_york_0.pdf)
  - b. The [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Agency](#) reports that marijuana is the most commonly used illicit substance in the United States, according to results from the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. An estimated 43.5 million individuals reported using marijuana during the past year.<sup>1</sup> Marijuana use is widespread among young people. Some statistics of its use include<sup>1-2</sup>

1. 3.1 million adolescents aged 12 to 17 (about 1 in 8) used marijuana in the past year
2. 11.8 million young adults aged 18 to 25 (about 1 in 3) used marijuana in the past year
3. 14% of 8th graders have used marijuana in their lifetime
4. 33% of 10th graders have used marijuana in their lifetime
5. 44% of 12th graders have used marijuana in their lifetime
6. 22% of 12th graders have used marijuana in the past month
7. 6% of 12th graders (about 1 in 16) use marijuana on a daily basis

<https://americanaddictioncenters.org/marijuana-rehab/effects-of-marijuana-on-teenage-brain>

5. Do we care what the DEA has to say about this product?  
“The short-term effects of marijuana include: • Problems with memory and learning, distorted perception, difficulty in thinking and problem-solving, and loss of coordination The effect of marijuana on perception and coordination are responsible for serious impairments in learning, associative processes, and psychomotor behavior (driving abilities). Long term, regular use can lead to physical dependence and withdrawal following discontinuation, as well as psychological addiction or dependence. Clinical studies show that the physiological, psychological, and behavioral effects of marijuana vary among individuals and present a list of common responses to cannabinoids, as described in the scientific literature:  
• Dizziness, nausea, tachycardia, facial flushing, dry mouth, and tremor initially • Merriment, happiness, and even exhilaration at high doses  
Marijuana/Cannabis • Disinhibition, relaxation, increased sociability, and talkativeness • Enhanced sensory perception, giving rise to increased appreciation of music, art, and touch • Heightened imagination leading to a subjective sense of increased creativity • Time distortions • Illusions, delusions, and hallucinations are rare except at high doses • Impaired judgment, reduced coordination, and ataxia, which can impede driving ability or lead to an increase in risk-taking behavior • Emotional lability, incongruity of affect, dysphoria, disorganized thinking, inability to converse logically, agitation, paranoia, confusion, restlessness, anxiety, drowsiness, and panic attacks may occur, especially in inexperienced users or in those who have taken a large dose • Increased appetite and short-term memory

impairment are common. [https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/Marijuana-Cannabis-2020\\_0.pdf](https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/Marijuana-Cannabis-2020_0.pdf)

6. Other websites worth investigating:
  - a. US Department of Health and Human Services - <https://www.samhsa.gov/marijuana>
  - b. National Institute on Drug Abuse <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana>
  - c. WebMD : <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/addiction/marijuana-use-and-its-effects#1>
  - d. CDC - <https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/health-effects/index.html>
7. Who lobbied NY Government to make marijuana legal? <https://www.lohud.com/story/news/investigations/2018/10/09/new-york-marijuana-legalization/1535138002/>
8. What do doctors, educators and police think of the new law? <https://www.lohud.com/story/news/investigations/2019/02/14/new-york-recreational-marijuana-under-attack-cops-educators-doctors-cannabis/2815260002/>
9. Colorado is touted as to how good it all worked out:
  - a. Since legalization, traffic deaths have increased by 24%
  - b. Deaths in accidents related to marijuana have increased by 135%
  - c. <https://www.hudson.org/research/17052-the-colorado-experiment-legalized-marijuana-s-impact-in-colorado>
  - d. <https://www.krqe.com/news/marijuana/the-effect-of-legalizing-marijuana-colorados-warning-to-new-mexico/>
  - e. <https://www.aspenridgerecoverycenters.com/colorado-legalization-results/>

#### **ADDENDUM D – TRICIA LEWIS**

**Subject:** Vote No on Local Law 13

Good morning,

I'm writing today to emphasize my position on Local Law 13, and to respectfully respond to statements made by the board to justify their pro-opt out stance.

I cannot state more strongly that I believe the Town of Esopus is missing out on a rare opportunity if the Board chooses to opt out of dispensaries at this early juncture. I understand a conservative position is to wait, and pass the ball on to the residents for a vote. But the town is set to lose many new job opportunities, and hundreds of thousands

of dollars in tax revenue if it delays, possibly much more than that if it misses out on capturing and building a lucrative market by getting in early. Also, there is the risk of license availability. Please act in the best interest of the Town's fiscal future and vote no on opting out.

Jared:

- When the public outreach for the Town Comprehensive Plan was held, recreational marijuana was not legalized, nor had then-governor Cuomo switched his position to pro-legalization yet. I think it's a stretch either way, but considering legal recreational dispensaries weren't on the table at the time of public outreach. I do not believe that is a fair argument. Two things in the list of top things town residents asked for in the comprehensive plan? Retail and tourism, both of which legal dispensaries support.
- While I agree that our retail market is dismal compared to New Paltz and Kingston, I believe this is one of the strongest arguments to not opt out! This is an opportunity to grab and GROW the local economy. The Town is a major gateway to Kingston and should be grabbing those tourist dollars as they pass through town. A cannabis dispensary will benefit local restaurants, shops, and businesses. Maybe a great coffee shop is even in our future! I frankly don't see any other industry or business coming into Esopus that has the tremendous financial impact a dispensary can have on a town's revenue and retail growth.

Evelyn:

- I was flummoxed by your comment that "a friend told you" that only medical dispensaries would be getting recreational licenses. Why would the state be implementing deadlines for towns opting out of NEW recreational dispensaries coming to towns, if that was the case? I've read nothing about medical dispensaries ONLY receiving recreational licenses but have read that they automatically get a recreational license if wanted. Please consider your sources of such misinformation, especially when it comes to the fiscal health of the town you represent.
- You are on the Parks board, and cut thousands of dollars for summer camp, the costs of which were a very hot topic for residents last summer. Surely you can see the benefit of having a huge increase of tax revenue, in future, that could be used for programs like summer camp.

I ask the board to please not take the safe route but dream big for Esopus and do the right thing for its future. This town is filled with enormous, non-profit, non-tax paying entities, so to turn away lucrative tax revenue with property taxes going up and many big-ticket items to be funded, is to have no vision for the future of its tax-paying residents, not all of whom have paid off their homes, or are retired on a pension, or are even gainfully or well-employed.

Thank you for listening to my position and offering another board meeting for residents to express their opinions! I hope a diverse selection of town residents also take this opportunity to speak up.

Best,  
Tricia Lewis  
Sleightsburgh, NY

### **Addendum E - Carol Tomassetti**

I am unable to make the meeting tonight to provide in person public comment. I would like to offer this written input to the board regarding the decision on whether to opt out of allowing cannabis dispensaries in The Town of Esopus.

I would like to voice my opposition to the proposed law Local Law #13 of 2021 to opt out of allowing cannabis retail dispensaries. I would however, like to propose that the board consider tabling the current proposed law and pursue an alternative structure to the law, only **opting out of lounges** that support on site consumption of cannabis, while **not opting out of retail dispensaries**.

When one considers this is a legal business that can drive much needed significant local tax revenue, it seems very short sighted to opt out of the opportunity. I offer the following points of view.

- Currently we pay substantial taxes. This is in large part due to the large number of non-profit, non-tax paying entities. Strategies to provide relief on a high tax burden via new economic development and tax revenue would be very helpful.
- This is not a moral issue. The decision to legalize the sale of cannabis has been made. It is time for the town to think strategically about how to leverage the opportunity for economic growth.
- Surrounding towns will be supporting dispensaries. Attempts to create a perfect little town like "The Truman Show" are unrealistic and short sighted. The world is changing. I would rather a progressive board that looks for strategies and plans to embrace and adapt to change rather than hide from it.
- In researching the effects in other towns, I spoke to my friends from Boulder Colorado. Their town experienced the same choices and challenges. The dispensaries went in, they drove economic growth and society did not collapse in moral decay as some people feared.

Although opting out may feel like a politically safe choice to the council members, I encourage you to think carefully about broader strategies for economic growth and tax revenue. Please consider adjusting the proposed law, opting in to dispensaries and opting out of lounges.

Thank you for your consideration

Carol Carson Tomassetti

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