

There was quite a myth going around in 2014 that Ballot Proposition #2 was only to legalize marijuana. In fact, as many people are finding out with over 50 zoning permits issued, it did little for legalization, it mostly was for commercialization. This has led to many establishments being proposed and approved in residential neighborhoods. A lot of those starting those business don't seem to care about neighborhoods, or even borough and state rules.

Here's some examples.

- 1) There is a cultivation operation being put in an adjacent lot to Camp Li-Wa, a Christian youth camp that has been here since statehood. That's up for protest next Thursday night (23rd) at 7pm.
- 2) There is a retail establishment that got a borough zoning permit, but it is within the borough zoning buffers for schools next to the Sprucetree Montessori School. It is also within the state buffer distance from churches, being close to Immaculate Conception Church off Illinois.
- 3) There is a cultivation facility that got a conditional use permit from the planning commission, but it is in violation of state buffer distances from both a nearby church and a daycare that it's only 50' away from (and is right next to a residential neighborhood).

There have also been a few establishments that the Borough Assembly has voted down protests for that were in residential neighborhoods.

While there is a small window for people to protest and testify against these at the State and Borough level, it's complicated to keep track of it all and to be able to testify on regulatory details, and comes with tight timeframes.

One common theme that has come out from talking to people is that while they wanted legalization or decriminalization, they had no idea that all these establishments would be so pervasive and in their neighborhoods.

Drug-Free Fairbanks has started a petition to create a ballot initiative to ban all marijuana establishments outside of the city boundaries. The logic is clear on this, in the cities there are local police forces that can maintain order and enforce the laws, outside of the city we only have the State Troopers who are spread pretty thin, and may not have the resources to do full-on drug investigations.

Also, a large amount of the residential neighborhoods outside of the cities have general use zoning, so they have virtually no protection from these facilities coming in and affecting their neighborhoods.

The sponsors of the petition have to gather 2000 signatures in about two weeks. No one who is a city resident can carry a petition or sign one, you have to live in the borough but outside of the cities. So they need all the help they can get from non-city residents to get petitions and get them signed. You can pick up the petitions at the Borough offices, 809 Pioneer Rd. After you gather signatures, and get your petition copy notarized you can call Drug-Free Fairbanks at 378-8229. You can also sign the petition at the Midnight Sun Festival, or call the above number to find somewhere you can sign. This is the one real chance you have to stop these establishments, and remember it doesn't change the legalization status of marijuana, it just stops the pot shops from being next door.