

March 16, 2016

Dear City Council Members,

On March 9 the planning commission passed the zoning code amendment for retail marijuana on a 3-1 vote. I believe that we thoroughly discussed the issue, and heard from a record number of citizens on the topic. I am very proud of how the commission conducted itself on behalf of the city.

As I was the dissenting vote, I want to explain my reasons.

- The public comment on this issue, in person, via email, and through the online questionnaire was overwhelmingly opposed to the introduction of retail marijuana stores in the city. This testimony was very compelling to me, and my vote was in part representing these citizens.
- Given that retail stores located in Bellevue, Kirkland, or Issaquah are only a few minute's drive from most anywhere in Redmond, I don't believe that not having stores in Redmond will deprive any citizen of convenient access to marijuana. Thus I don't see it as essential that Redmond have such stores too.
- While I grant that marijuana sales and use are legal under Washington law, it remains illegal under federal law. This bothers me deeply: I don't like the idea that we are permitting an illegal (under federal law) business to operate in the city.

Regards,

Robert O'Hara

Chair, Redmond Planning Commission