

sales would have become legal without the question going to the voters. Havenar moved to table the ordinance; Bass, Trustee Nicole Currier, Trustee Jessica Farr, Havenar, Padgett, and Stuth voted in favor. Trustee Darin Dawson was not present at the meeting.

Town Attorney Matthew Krob presented two approaches to the ballot language that he thought embodied the board's discussion to date: a simple yes or no question, with the board to draft the rules and regulations later, or a more complicated question that, in addition to authorizing sales, would reference an ordinance detailing the rules and regulations that would be written and posted on the town's web page for review before voters cast their votes.

Havenar said she wanted to hear from the residents at the meeting. Residents commented on how the ballot language should be worded and discussed the implications of having retail sales and a mill levy increase on the same ballot.

Resident Jim Parco explained that 9.5% of all retail cannabis sales would return to the town in the form of tax revenue. He also made the point that the most important question was whether to permit retail sales.

John Cressman, previously the mayor of Palmer Lake, and Paul Banta, who served on the board, both advised the board to make the ballot language a simple yes or no question.

Stuth said she preferred ballot language that included the rules and regulations that would govern sales.

Havenar moved that the board approve putting a ballot initiative before the voters in the simplest form, without rules and regulations. Bass, Currier, Farr, Havenar, and Padgett voted in favor, passing the motion. Stuth voted no.

The final decision on the retail sales initiative was made at the Aug. 25 meeting. The board considered this language: "SHALL THE TOWN OF PALMER LAKE ENACT AN ORDINANCE PERMITTING THE OPERATION OF NOT MORE THAN TWO (2) REGULATED RETAIL MARIJUANA STORES WITHIN THE TOWN?"

Stuth pointed out that previous versions of the language had specified, in addition to a cap of two businesses, that the businesses must be in their "current locations."

In light of Stuth's comment, the ballot language was amended to read:

"SHALL THE TOWN OF PALMER LAKE ENACT AN ORDINANCE PERMITTING THE OPERATION OF NOT MORE THAN TWO REGULATED RETAIL MARIJUANA STORES IN EXISTING MARIJUANA BUSINESS LOCATIONS IN THE TOWN?"

Stuth moved to accept the amended language. The motion passed, with Bass, Currier, Havenar, and Padgett voting yes and Farr voting no. Dawson was not present at the meeting.

Mill levy increase language decided

In August, the board continued its efforts to draft a ballot initiative that would increase the town's mill levy. They held a special meeting devoted to this topic on Aug. 15. The focus at the special meeting was on whether to ask voters for a single larger increase or for two smaller increases over two years, on how much to request and on how a mill increase would relate to the retail sales of adult-use cannabis.

At the Aug. 15 special meeting, Krob put three versions of the mill levy ballot language before the board: the first for a single increase, the second for two increases to the mills over two years, and the third tying the mill increase to the revenue generated by cannabis sales, should that initiative pass.

At the Aug. 25 meeting, the board returned to this issue, focusing on the first and third options presented at the special session. Town Administrator Dawn Collins explained some of the legal requirements for the initiative language to the board, pointing out the initiative would have to specify the amount of any increase and state the current mills collected. She added that the board had previously agreed to tie the mill increase to tax revenue generated by the retail sales of cannabis.

The board considered two updated versions of the mill increase ballot language. The first version reads:

"SHALL THE TOWN OF PALMER LAKE TAXES BE INCREASED BY NOT MORE THAN \$1,370,000 IN TAX COLLECTION YEAR 2023 AND BY WHATEVER ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS ARE GENERATED ANNUALLY THEREAFTER BY INCREASING THE GENERAL OPERATING MILL LEVY FOR GENERAL MUNICIPAL PURPOSES BY 15 MILLS FROM THE CURRENT 11.238 MILLS TO A MAXIMUM OF 26.238 MILLS IF BALLOT QUESTION 1A PASSES, OR BY 30 MILLS FOR A MAXIMUM OF 41.238 MILLS IF BALLOT QUESTION 1A DOES NOT PASS."

The second updated version reads:

"SHALL THE TOWN OF PALMER LAKE TAXES BE INCREASED BY NOT MORE THAN \$1,370,000 IN TAX COLLECTION YEAR 2023 AND BY WHATEVER ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS ARE GENERATED ANNUALLY THEREAFTER BY INCREASING THE GENERAL OPERATING MILL LEVY BY 30 MILLS FROM THE CURRENT 11.238 MILLS FOR GENERAL MUNICIPAL PURPOSES AND SHALL THE TOWN BOARD BE AUTHORIZED TO ADJUST THE RATE WITHOUT FURTHER VOTER APPROVAL SO LONG AS THE RATE DOES NOT EXCEED 41.238 MILLS?"

Resident Jim Parco commented that the real question before the community was how to save the town. He pointed out that voting yes to both retail sales and a mill increase would save the town using other people's money. Voting no on both would send the town into receivership, he said.

Stuth moved to accept the first version of the language. That motion was amended to replace "maximum" with "not to exceed." The motion passed with Bass, Currier, Havenar, Padgett and Stuth in favor, and Farr voting no. Dawson was not present at the meeting.

Bass thanked the board for doing the work required to reach a consensus on this issue.

Executive session

The Aug. 11 meeting ended with an executive session to consider matters that may be subject to negotiations, possible annexation, open records requests, and personnel matters.

The next two board meetings are scheduled for Sept. 8 and 21. The Sept. 21 meeting is a joint meeting with the Planning Commission that starts at 4 p.m. See the town's website at www.townofpalmerlake.com to confirm times, dates, and locations of board meetings and workshops. Meetings are typically held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Information: 719-481-2953.

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