

January 2022 Supervisor's Report

First of all, I would like to thank Town Clerk Kimberly Whelan and Town Supervisor Clerk Joanna Messina for their help in assisting in the transition to a new administration. We have a new supervisor, two new councilman, and a new highway superintendent. We are 5 days into the New Year and each of us is working hard to “hit the ground running.”

As we move forward, my monthly supervisor's report will be more substantive. In this report, I would like to focus on how we will operate as a board and as your town government. Each of us elected officials are here to serve you, the citizens of the Town of Greenwich. There is no place for partisan politics in Town government. Yes, we may differ in opinion on certain issues, which is not a bad thing as different perspectives allow each of us to see an issue from all sides. But in the end, the deciding factor in making decisions should always be “What is best for the citizens of Greenwich.”

Citizen input is extremely important in determining priorities and helps shape the operation of Town government. This administration is committed to providing the citizens of Greenwich ample opportunity to provide input into issues that come before the board. Public Comment sessions at each monthly meeting are an important part of obtaining citizen input. In addition, there are times when Public Meetings dedicated to an issue should be held. I assure you they will be.

Transparency in all Town government actions will be a major goal of this administration. This can only be achieved by providing information in a timely manner and providing ample opportunity for questions to be answered. There may very well be instances when dedicated Information Sessions need to be held in order to explain a process and answer questions. This will happen.

The one substantive issue I would like to address tonight is the issue of cannabis. As most people know, New York State has legalized the possession and use of cannabis. This must be emphasized – Growing, Possessing and Using cannabis **will** be legal. With respect to smoking and vaping, cannabis will be treated the same as tobacco.

What Towns and Villages do have a say in is whether they will have retail dispensaries and on-site consumption lounges within their borders. Option one is to do nothing and thus opting in to having dispensaries and consumption lounges. Option two is to pass a local law banning both dispensaries and consumption lounges. (Or allowing one and banning the other.) This is how a Town “opts out.”

On 14 December 2021, the Town Board voted to opt out of licensing and establishing retail cannabis dispensaries and on-site cannabis consumption establishments within the jurisdiction of the Town of Greenwich, outside of the Village of Greenwich. Approximately 30% of towns in

New York State chose this option. Most towns stated they opted out by New York State's 31 December 2021 deadline because they didn't have enough relevant information from the state.

If within 45 days of the 14 December opt out decision, the Greenwich Town Board receives the required number of signatures on a petition to hold a permissive referendum, it must do so. A permissive referendum puts the decision to a vote by the public. Alternatively, the Town Board can vote at any time to Opt In to allowing cannabis dispensaries and/or onsite consumption lounges.

I believe this is an issue that requires more information from New York State, more input from the citizens of the Town of Greenwich, and consideration of all the implications of each possible course of action. In the coming months, this issue will be addressed again after we gain more input.