

Mayor and Council,

My name is Rich Sebens and I'm submitting this letter in support of banning the Psilocybin facilities in Stayton and referring it to the voters.

I wish I could be here in person this morning, but I am out of town and not able to attend in person or by zoom.

As you know, I was the previous Police Chief and retired in 2019. During my time as Police Chief, the marijuana recreation law went into effect. At that time, there was one marijuana shop in the downtown area, a medical grow in the industrial area, and another shop about to open by Dairy Queen (not the current shop). The Council debated whether to ban them and refer it to the voters, like what happened last Monday night. At the time, the Council was in a tough spot. If they banned them, they would not be able to regulate the shops already in town and would not receive the tax revenue from them to enforce the problems associated with having them in town. The Council opted to allow them because we were stuck with them already. Since that decision was made, I regret not pushing the issue as a Police Chief more. I did not see any positives from the experiences of having the shops in town. Some of the issues we encountered included:

- an increase in marijuana DUI's (which are difficult to detect)
- complaints from neighboring business owners due to the smell
- complaints from parents and families not wishing to have their kids in the area around the shops.
- An increase in drug paraphernalia being sold in the convenience stores to kids (this was more of a general issue related to legalization)
- a huge increase in marijuana issues in the schools from it being brought into the schools.

While some of these issues occurred because of the recreational laws in general and not exclusively because of the shops in town, the shops in town made it more accessible. This was compounded when the surrounding towns banned the sales, bringing more sales to Stayton. One of the first DUI arrests the officers made after the stores opened in town, the driver had a bag of marijuana from the Stayton shop on the car seat with him.

In the last several months, there has been a huge increase in drug overdoses in town. While these have not been from mushrooms, it is still from controlled substances that kids are getting from parents and other kids. Having these types of businesses in town makes it that much easier for young people to get them either from the stores illegally, from their parents, or from other adults who purchase for them. This is very similar to how kids get other adults to buy them alcohol from the local stores. Yes, kids are resourceful and will find a way, but it makes it one step easier when the source is in town.

During the last general election, the voters in the State also approved decriminalizing user amounts of several drugs such as meth and heroin with the hope of getting people access to treatment instead of charging them with a crime. This act has been very damaging to the communities, and the results have had the opposite effect with more overdoses and more drug issues than ever before - very few are going into treatment. (These numbers were recently posted in the Statesman Journal showing how few were actually getting treatment) I am very afraid if we allow the Psilocybin mushrooms to be sold in town, we will continue to see the problems like these continue to get worse instead of getting better.

Some people may say government should not be regulating what they feel are moral issues. Some feel regulating this type of activity is one of those moral issues and they feel people should make their own decisions on using it or not. Based on the many issues we have seen from deregulation of drug use, this is not just a moral issue but a public safety issue and livability issue for Stayton. It affects all of us, even those that are not partaking in the activities. I have lived in this community for over 20 years. I have raised my older kids here and continue to raise the ones I still have at home here, and hope my grandkids have an opportunity to live here as well. I love Stayton and want it to be a safe place. I feel we are headed in the wrong direction by not taking a stand against it and the deregulation of other previously illegal substances.

Some believe those with PTSD have received a benefit from Psilocybin mushrooms. While I have not personally researched the validity of these claims, I am aware of Psychologists who are studying the effects and I am aware there are those who believe they have benefited from it. I personally have a place in my heart for those who are suffering from PTSD and have family members who suffer from it. I'm guessing many of you do as well. While PTSD is a severe issue, I don't believe having a Psilocybin facility in town is the solution. I believe these types of treatments should be done under the care of a licensed medical doctor, psychiatrist, or a true research center - not a local shop.

Some of you have said you are concerned because of a lack of comments from the public, but please look at the voter results for this area to see what the community has already stated. According to the election results for Stayton, the community overwhelmingly voted against allowing Psilocybin mushrooms to be sold in town by 13%. These numbers alone should show you; Stayton does not want it. I also believe the lack of comments were largely from people being unaware the Council was considering. I believe community members would have voiced their concerns had they known it was on the agenda Monday night.

Thank you for your time in considering this and please support what the voters desires are by banning these facilities in town.

Thank you for your consideration of this!

Rich Sebens  
Stayton Resident