



Memorandum

To: City Council
From: Ben Cowan
Date: 3/31/2016
Re: Marijuana Use Prevention Education/Teen Programming

During the 2016 budget process, the City Council allocated \$11,000 for marijuana use prevention education and \$11,000 for teen programming. There have been some preliminary discussions regarding the use of these funds and we would like to get the Council's direction as City Staff works to develop programming.

The City has recognized that, while marijuana use has been legalized for adults, its use is not appropriate for youth for a number of reasons. According to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, brain development is not complete until age 25 and marijuana has a damaging effect on memory, mental resiliency, etc. For the best chance to reach their full potential, youth should not use marijuana. Youth who use marijuana regularly are more likely to have a hard time learning, problems remembering and lower math and reading scores. Marijuana is addictive. It is harder to stop using marijuana if started at a young age. Youth who use marijuana – even occasionally – may be more likely to do risky things later in life.

The best practices for effective reductions of marijuana use include implementation of programs that are based on research to effectively restrict access and prevent use by youth. To this end, Community Resource Officer Rob Whiting has partnered with the Gunnison County Substance Abuse Prevention Program (GCSAPP) to attend an upcoming class in mid-April for substance abuse prevention education. The Parks and Recreation Department (Dan Ampietro and Dan Vollendorf) has also engaged RE1J officials and Kari Commerford with GCSAPP to come up with some potential options.

The goal of the work session is begin developing a strategy to implement or enhance effective programs resulting in reduced youth marijuana use, starting with looking at risk and protective factors specific to our community.