

## St. Helena mulls medical pot rules

Written by Wskroger

Thursday, 18 February 2010 17:12 - Last Updated Thursday, 01 April 2010 20:22

---

It could soon become legal to open a medical marijuana dispensary in St. Helena.

On Tuesday the city council voted 4-1 to direct staff to draft regulations concerning marijuana dispensaries as quickly as possible.

City staff had asked the council to consider an urgency ordinance placing a moratorium on new medical marijuana dispensaries, which are not prohibited by current city regulations.

But councilmembers said any potential applicants should just hold off until the regulations are adopted.

City Councilman Eric Sklar said his father, who died last January of pancreatic cancer, benefited from medical marijuana.

"If it wasn't for medical marijuana his last months would have been miserable in a way they didn't have to be," said Sklar.

He said the city should adopt an ordinance within six to eight weeks that would regulate how and where marijuana dispensaries could operate, as well as how to handle any leftover product.

"We don't want Bob Pestoni's pigs getting stoned from eating it out of the garbage," Sklar joked. Pestoni is the owner of Upper Valley Disposal Service.

In 2009 the city granted a business license to Napa Valley Marijuana Growers, an Internet business operated by St. Helena resident Crane Carter that sells marijuana-themed hats and T-shirts, but not marijuana itself.

Planner Shelley Mills said the city has received an inquiry about establishing a marijuana dispensary in St. Helena.

Carter, a vocal advocate for the legalization of marijuana, urged the council to adopt an ordinance to regulate marijuana clinics and provide easier access to medical marijuana for patients and hospice workers.

"There's millions of people out there who can't speak as I do," said Carter. "They're at risk from their insurance companies or their employers. I'm speaking for a lot of people."

Carter said he would consider opening a dispensary, but he'd be

## St. Helena mulls medical pot rules

Written by Wskroger

Thursday, 18 February 2010 17:12 - Last Updated Thursday, 01 April 2010 20:22

---

willing to wait for the council to adopt new regulations.

Mayor Del Britton cast the only vote opposing a new ordinance. He said the city should look at the issue as part of its General Plan Update.

"I don't have a problem with marijuana, but my fundamental problem is can we do this somewhere else besides downtown?" said Britton. "I just don't like the idea of a marijuana shop downtown."

Sklar said that question will be part of the council's discussion as they craft the new ordinance.

Councilwoman Bonnie Schoch said the city can model the new regulations on similar laws adopted successfully in other cities. "Let's not re-create the wheel," she said.

The California Supreme Court recently shot down restrictions that limited how much marijuana patients who are authorized to use the drug are allowed to possess.