

CITIZEN COMMENTS
AUGUST 20, 2021 – SPECIAL MEETING

1) Samantha Crockett, 270 Heywood Avenue

Good afternoon. My name is Samantha Crockett and I reside with my family on 270 Heywood Avenue. I am speaking as an active citizen and not as a member of the School Board.

I urge council members to listen to community members when voting on issues that affect all of us. Your recent vote to ban cannabis and raise taxes makes me feel like council members are not open to listening to the community and making the necessary adjustments that we proposed. We can get so much more done for Orange if we work together and listen to each other.

I am opposed to banning cannabis in our community. Regardless of my own personal opinion, the State of New Jersey voted to legalize the use and sale of cannabis. Allowing the legal sale of cannabis will support **legitimate** small businesses and bring revenue into Orange. This can be used to offset the extremely high property tax that you place on us each year.

I am also opposed to the tax increase. Especially during a pandemic and during a time when you have accumulated grant money the support many of the challenges that COVID-19 created. As a citizen, it makes me question whether our budget is being monitored and/or whether the council cares about the burden they are placing on individuals who are paying a mortgage, taxes, raising a family, and making sure their property is up kept. If the council truly cares about Orange and its community, I recommend that a private auditor be hired to review the budget to make suggestions on how lower it each year while maintaining the most important parts. (Until the budget is at a place where it makes sense)

When you raise taxes each year, it causes many of us to make tough decisions to try to continue to survive, especially in a time where I personally have not received a raise in two years because of COVID-19. This may look like me pulling my son out of daycare, not being able to upkeep my home to cut costs, and ultimately our community gets worse vs. better. I am watching older citizens lose their homes and younger families move to neighborhoods that don't exploit their tax money. This does not build a strong community.

My hope is that the council works together with each other and the community to make tough decisions that begin repairing our city, so that families can live here for generations to come.

2) Christopher Jackson, cjacks726@gmail.com

1. Have the administration or municipal council received a written summary defining the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory, Enforcement Assistance, and Marketplace Modernization Act, and if so, will it be publicized to inform the citizens as well?
2. What information was compiled that informed the decision made in Ordinance 14-2021?
3. Was the public consulted regarding this position, and if so, who was communicated with, when, and what did they say?

4. What proposals for implementing appropriate regulations were discussed and why were they defeated?
5. What are the positions of the OBE, OPD, OFD, the municipal court, and the administration (including the various departments and offices in their unique roles) regarding legal cannabis businesses in Orange?
6. Were the ABC Board, Zoning Board, or Planning Board consulted or informed regarding cannabis business in Orange?
7. What inquiry was made directly to citizens regarding cannabis businesses here and how did they respond when information meetings were conducted?
8. Which entrepreneurs have shown interest in establishing a cannabis businesses in Orange - please describe the business proposed?
9. Has the Chamber of Commerce been consulted or taken a position regarding cannabis businesses in Orange?
10. Has any business currently based here registered an invitation, concern, or complaint regarding cannabis business here?
11. What plans have been made to further explore and consider the issue of cannabis business in Orange following the passage of Ordinance 14-2021?
12. Why delay taking action to build a system for conducting appropriate cannabis businesses for Orange now and not wait to follow someone else's example?

Thank You, Always,