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Council hears candidates for marijuana cmte.

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The Cortez City Council interviewed the final three candidates for an ad-hock medical marijuana committee Tuesday.

Paul Newcomer told the council he is applying for a position on the board because he suffers from epilepsy and believes medical marijuana is expensive and difficult to acquire.

“That would be something to think about,” he said. “To make it legal so we can get into the marijuana business to help jobs here.”

Newcomer said he believes medical marijuana should be available for those with a medical need, but it should be kept from the hands of children.

Travis Pollock, Durango resident and owner of Natures Own Wellness Center in Cortez, said he was applying to the committee to work with the community of Cortez to draft ordinances and policy.

“I have a real passion for government relations and working with local municipalities,” Pollock said. “And that’s where I’d like to try to give my expertise in this industry and continue forward — not only as a dispensary owner but at the same time that I’m providing advocacy for this industry. The position that I hold as a dispensary owner, but at the same time being able to work with municipalities and members such as yourselves so that you’re correctly informed of what really is occurring in this industry.”

Cortez resident Karen Sheek said she is applying for the committee because she believes individuals with certain health conditions could benefit from medical marijuana.

“But I have some concern that we may be stretching the limit,” Sheek said. “When I read that businesses have doctors on-site that can write prescriptions, I have some scepticism about is this really a medical to treat thing or are we pushing the boundaries toward recreational use of marijuana.”

In previous meetings, the council interviewed Patricia Grant, Garth Greenle, Paul Coffey, Kirsten Krzysztofiak, Fred Blackburn, Jeb Boyd, Dave Kelly and Chad Davis.

The committee will advise the city council on medical marijuana policy. The group could make a wide range of recommendations — from only allowing existing medical marijuana centers to operate, to a licensing system similar to liquor sales, to an all-out ban on centers in the city limits.

The committee is aimed at providing a broad base of information and perspectives for the council on the subject.

Also in the equation are individual medical marijuana caregivers, which had previously gone unregulated, but under new state legislation may be subject to local oversight.

The advisory group is expected to disband after making its recommendations to the council.

The committee's proposed makeup comprises three city council members, three participants in the medical marijuana field and four Cortez residents-at-large.

Three city council members — Tom Butler, Matt Keefauver and Bob Archibeque — have shown an interest in serving on the committee.

City Attorney Mike Green and Cortez Police Department representatives likely will work with the committee on legal issues. Committee meetings probably will be open to the public, but it is not yet known how the committee will accept public feedback.

The council recently passed an ordinance extending a moratorium barring new licenses to medical marijuana centers in the city limits. There are five existing centers in the city that were not directly affected by the moratorium extension.

The medical marijuana committee is scheduled to meet at 6:30 p.m. on the first Tuesdays of the month. Final appointments are expected to be made at the Aug. 9 city council meeting.

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