

MONROE TOWNSHIP, MIDDLESEX COUNTY

ORDINANCE NO.: O-6-2021-015

AN ORDINANCE BY THE TOWNSHIP OF MONROE IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY PROHIBITING THE OPERATION OF ANY CLASS OF LICENSED CANNABIS BUSINESSES WITHIN ITS GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES BY CREATING A NEW CHAPTER 61 ENTITLED “CANNABIS, PROHIBITION OF ALL CLASSES OF BUSINESSES” OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MONROE

WHEREAS, in 2020 New Jersey voters approved Public Question No. 1, which amended the New Jersey Constitution to allow for the legalization of a controlled form of marijuana called “cannabis” for adults at least 21 years of age; and

WHEREAS, on February 22, 2021, Governor Murphy signed into law P.L. 2021, c. 16, known as the “New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory, Enforcement Assistance, and Marketplace Modernization Act” (the “Act”), which legalizes the recreational use of marijuana by adults 21 years of age or older, and establishes a comprehensive regulatory and licensing scheme for commercial recreational (adult use) cannabis operations, use and possession; and

WHEREAS, the Act establishes six marketplace classes of licensed businesses, including:

- Class 1 Cannabis Cultivator license, for facilities involved in growing and cultivating cannabis;
- Class 2 Cannabis Manufacturer license, for facilities involved in the manufacturing, preparation, and packaging of cannabis items;
- Class 3 Cannabis Wholesaler license, for facilities involved in obtaining and selling cannabis items for later resale by other licensees;
- Class 4 Cannabis Distributer license, for businesses involved in transporting cannabis plants in bulk from on licensed cultivator to another licensed cultivator, or cannabis items in bulk from any type of licensed cannabis business to another;
- Class 5 Cannabis Retailer license for locations at which cannabis items and related supplies are sold to consumers; and
- Class 6 Cannabis Delivery license, for businesses providing courier services for consumer purchases that are fulfilled by a licensed cannabis retailer in order to make deliveries of the purchases items to a consumer, and which service would include the ability of a consumer to make a purchase directly through the cannabis delivery service which would be presented by the delivery service for fulfillment by a retailer and then delivered to a consumer; and

WHEREAS, section 31a of the Act authorizes municipalities by ordinance to adopt regulations governing the number of cannabis establishments (defined in section 3 of the Act as “a cannabis cultivator, a cannabis manufacturer, a cannabis wholesaler, or a cannabis retailer”), cannabis distributors or cannabis delivery services allowed to operate within their boundaries, as well as the location manner and times operation of such establishments, distributors or delivery services, and establishing civil penalties for the violation of any such regulations; and

WHEREAS, section 31b of the Act authorizes municipalities by ordinance to prohibit the operation of any one or more classes of cannabis establishments, distributors, or delivery services anywhere in the Township; and

WHEREAS, section 31b of the Act also stipulates, however, that any municipal regulation or prohibition must be adopted within 180 days of the effective date of the Act (*i.e.*, by August 22, 2021); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to section 31b of the Act, the failure to do so shall mean that for a period of five years thereafter, the growing, cultivating, manufacturing, selling and reselling of cannabis and cannabis items shall be permitted uses in all industrial zones, and the retail selling of cannabis items to consumers shall be a conditional use in all commercial and retail zones; and

WHEREAS, at the conclusion of the initial and any subsequent five-year period following a failure to enact local regulations or prohibitions, the municipality shall again have 180 days to adopt an ordinance regulating or prohibiting cannabis businesses, but any such ordinance would be prospective only and would not apply to any cannabis business already operating within the municipality; and

WHEREAS, the Township Council of the Township of Monroe has determined that, due to present uncertainties regarding the potential future impacts that allowing one or more classes of cannabis business might have on New Jersey municipalities in general, and on Township of Monroe in particular, it is at this time necessary and appropriate, and in the best interest of the health, safety and welfare of Township of Monroe's residents and members of the public who visit, travel, or conduct business in Township of Monroe, to amend the Township of Monroe's zoning regulations to prohibit all manner of marijuana-related land use and development within the geographic boundaries of the Township of Monroe; and

WHEREAS, officials from two prominent non-profit organizations that have been established for the purpose of advising New Jersey municipalities on legal matters such as have been presented by the Act (those organizations being the New Jersey State League of Municipalities and the New Jersey Institute of Local Government Attorneys) have strongly urged that, due to the complexity and novelty of the Act; the many areas of municipal law that are or may be implicated in decisions as to whether or to what extent cannabis or medical cannabis should be permitted for land use purposes or otherwise regulated in any particular municipality ; and the relatively short duration in which the Act would allow such decisions to be made before imposing an automatic authorization of such uses in specified zoning districts subject to unspecified conditions, the most prudent course of action for all municipalities, whether or not generally in favor of cannabis or medical cannabis land development and uses, would be to prohibit all such uses within the Act's 180-day period in order to ensure sufficient time to carefully review all aspects of the Act and its impacts;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Township Council of the Township of Monroe, in the County of Middlesex, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. Pursuant to section 31b of the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory, Enforcement Assistance, and Marketplace Modernization Act (P.L. 2021, c. 16), all cannabis establishments, cannabis distributors or cannabis delivery services are hereby prohibited from operating anywhere in Township of Monroe, except for the delivery of cannabis items and related supplies by a delivery service.

2. **Chapter 61, "Cannabis, Prohibition of All Classes of Businesses"** is hereby created to read as follows:

§61-1 Findings and Declarations. All classes of licensed cannabis establishments or cannabis distributors or cannabis delivery services as said terms are defined in section 3 of P.L. 2021, c. 16, but not the delivery of cannabis items and related supplies by a delivery service, are hereby prohibited within the geographical boundaries of the Township of Monroe.

3. Any article, section, paragraph, subsection, clause, or other provision of the Code of the Township of Monroe that is inconsistent with the provisions of this ordinance is hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

4. If any section, paragraph, subsection, clause, or provision of this ordinance shall be adjudged by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such adjudication shall apply only to the section, paragraph, subsection, clause, or provision so adjudged, and the remainder of this ordinance shall be deemed valid and effective.


5. This ordinance shall take effect upon its passage and publication and filing with the Middlesex County Planning Board, and as otherwise provided for by law.


MIRIAM COHEN, Council President

RECORDED VOTE – INTRODUCTION – June 2, 2021						
COUNCIL	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Councilman Baskin	X		X			
Councilman Van Dzura					X	
Councilman Dipierro					X	
Council V. President Schneider		X	X			
Council President Cohen			X			

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the foregoing Ordinance was introduced and passed on first reading at a meeting of the Monroe Township Council held on June 2, 2021. Said Ordinance will again be read and considered for final passage at the next scheduled meeting of the Monroe Township Council to be held on June 28, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. virtually via Zoom. At said time and place all persons having an interest in the foregoing Ordinance will be granted an opportunity to be heard concerning the same prior to consideration for final passage by the Council.


 CHRISTINE ROBBINS, Deputy Township Clerk


RECORDED VOTE – SECOND READING & FINAL ADOPTION– June 28, 2021						
COUNCIL	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Councilman Baskin		X	X			
Councilman Van Dzura				X		
Councilman Dipierro						X
Council V. President Schneider	X		X			
Council President Cohen			X			

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MAYORAL APPROVAL

By virtue of the Optional Municipal Charter Law of 1950 and Chapter 3, Section 19 of the Code of the Township of Monroe, my approval of this Ordinance is effected by the affixing of my signature hereto.



 STEPHEN DALINA, Mayor

Date signed: 6/29/2021