

# City Council and the Police Chief discuss the city marijuana decriminalization ordinance (4)

The Bethlehem Gadfly George Floyd killing, Marijuana, Police July 1, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts about the Bethlehem Police* 

## **Marijuana Possession ordinance** **Marijuana statistics** **Marijuana Enforcement Policy March 11, 2020**

The March 3 Public Safety Committee was courteous but tense.

Council was obviously frustrated that its progressive legislative move on the subject of small amounts of marijuana was somehow frustrated by Police practice.

Council members kept hitting the wall of the Chief's belief that enforcement was in the hands of officer discretion and that he had no means or power to create change.

Fortunately, the meeting had a surprise happy ending. The Chief suggested that officers charge those caught with a small amount of marijuana under both the state law and the local ordinance — and the judge would sort things out at the hearing.

The Chief “buried the lead,” as President Waldron cracked. You could have saved us an hour if you had suggested this at the beginning, Councilman Reynolds said.

You could feel the meeting lighten up immediately. Here was an “out.”

The decision on enforcement was now “punted” to the magistrate.

And Council could review later in the fall to see how that was working out.

Crisis averted (for now).

Linked above are the original 2018 decriminalization ordinance, the statistics provided by the Chief (what do you see there?), and the actual

police department directive on this what-we-might-call “compromise”  
new policy.

Not quite end of story.

Gadfly would like to go on one more step.

*to be continued . . .*