

## Voters Corner

*(This article appeared in the Bridgton News week of July 2, 2020)*

This year, Bridgton voters are being asked to consider a host of amendments to the Town's Site Plan Review and Land Use Ordinances, in the form of 12 secret ballot questions.

Questions 1-8 ask the voters to amend the Town's ordinances to allow and regulate marijuana establishments, and Questions 9-12 ask the voters to amend the Land Use Ordinance to clarify existing standards and change the list of allowed uses in certain districts.

### **Marijuana-Related Ballot Questions**

Question 1 asks the voters if they wish to enact local standards for large-scale Medical Marijuana caregiver operations and allow these operations to be located in the Inner and Outer Corridor.

These large-scale operations are different from small-scale caregiver operations. Small-scale caregivers are home-business type caregivers that grow a limited number of marijuana plants for a limited number of patients. There are many of these already operating in Maine. Large-scale caregivers are a more commercial type operation. Large-scale caregivers may serve unlimited patients and may process marijuana with chemicals and solvents.

A "yes" vote on Question 1 would not change local rules for home cultivation or small-scale caregivers (these would continue to be allowed Town-wide), but it would enact new local regulations, locational restrictions, and permitting requirements on commercial-scale caregiver operations.

Questions 2 through 8 ask the voters if they wish to allow certain medical and adult use marijuana establishments in the Inner and Outer Corridor Districts.

Although registered caregivers are already allowed to operate in Bridgton, other types of marijuana establishments are prohibited until such a time that the Town votes to allow them. Thus, Questions 2 through 8 ask the voters if they wish to allow or "opt-in" to certain types of medical and adult use marijuana establishments.

A "yes" vote for any one of these questions 2 through 8 would add that particular type of establishment to the list of allowed uses in the Inner or Outer Corridors, as follows:

- Question 2 asks if Bridgton voters wish to allow Medical Marijuana Retail Stores. These stores are operated by a registered caregiver to sell medical marijuana directly to qualifying patients.
- Question 3 asks if Bridgton voters wish to allow Medical Marijuana Manufacturing Facilities. These facilities produce marijuana products and concentrates such as oil extracts, creams, and food for medical use. These facilities are not open to the public.
- Question 4 asks if Bridgton voters wish to allow Medical Marijuana Testing Facilities. These are accredited public or private laboratories that analyze contaminants, potency and cannabinoid profiles of marijuana samples using certified protocols and equipment common to analytical laboratories. These facilities are not open to the public.

- Question 5 asks if Bridgton voters wish to allow Adult Use Marijuana Cultivation Facilities. These facilities grow marijuana for wholesale to retail stores, manufacturing facilities and other grow operations. Proposed new local standards would limit the number of such cultivation facilities with 20,000 square feet of plant canopy to no more than two total and would require all cultivation to be indoors. These facilities are not open to the public.
- Question 6 asks if Bridgton voters wish to allow Adult Use Marijuana Stores. These are retail establishments that purchase marijuana from cultivation and manufacturing facilities and then resell marijuana and related products directly to consumers for adult use (age 21+). These stores are open to the public.
- Question 7 asks if Bridgton voters wish to allow Adult Use Marijuana Manufacturing Facilities. These facilities manufacture and package marijuana products such as oil extracts, creams, food, and marijuana cigarettes for resale to adult use marijuana stores. These facilities are not open to the public.
- Question 8 asks if Bridgton voters wish to allow Adult Use Marijuana Testing Facilities. These are state-licensed laboratories that develop, research and test marijuana products using certified protocols and equipment common to analytical laboratories. These facilities are not open to the public.

A “yes” vote on any one of these questions 2 through 8 would also impose on these establishments new local regulations and would require new local permit approvals before such establishments could operate in Bridgton. The proposed new local regulations include requirements for odor mitigation, waste disposal, setbacks from residences, and buffers from sensitive uses such as churches, schools, and public parks.

A “no” vote would be a vote to continue to “opt out” of allowing that type of establishment anywhere in Bridgton.

### **Land Use Ballot Questions**

Questions 9 through 12 ask the voters to amend the Town’s Land Use Ordinance to clarify existing standards and change the allowed uses in certain districts, as follows:

- Question 9 asks if Bridgton voters wish to adopt certain “housekeeping” changes to clarify the dimensional requirements (including lot size, frontage, lot coverage, setbacks, and height) that apply to new development in each Land Use District.
- Question 10 asks if Bridgton voters wish to exempt subdivision applications from requirements in the Land Use Ordinance and instead regulate subdivisions based on existing standards in the Bridgton Subdivision Ordinance.
- Question 11 asks if Bridgton voters wish to allow additional uses in single-story structures in the Downtown Village Business District (DVB-I).
- Question 12 asks if Bridgton voters wish to add Assisted Living Facilities to the list of allowed uses in Downtown Village Neighborhood District (DVN). Assisted living facilities are residences for the elderly that provide housing, limited care, meals, personal care, and supervision, and may provide other services such as recreational activities, financial

services, and transportation. Currently, these facilities are allowed in the Inner Corridor (IC), Outer Corridor (OC), Mixed Use Corridor (MUC), and Rural Neighborhood (RN) Districts.

For more information or to get a copy of the amendments, please contact Linda LaCroix, Community Development Director, at [llacroix@bridgtonmaine.org](mailto:llacroix@bridgtonmaine.org).

***We encourage you to become fully informed before voting and to vote by absentee ballot or in person on July 14<sup>th</sup>.***