

Regulating residential cannabis cultivation



Devi Sharma

**OLD KILDONAN CITY
COUNCILLOR
WARD REPORT**

Over the last few years, many of you have raised concerns about the cultivation of medical cannabis in residential areas. I've heard your concerns — and now all of city council has, too — about the noise problems, safety issues, property value worries, and health implications of the odour coming from cannabis growth.

This is a complex issue that has involved a lot of research and valuable input from residents.

It's important to understand that individuals with a prescription for medicinal cannabis can register with Health Canada, which authorizes production of a prescribed amount of cannabis within their residences, or they can designate someone else to produce it for them at another property. However, when too many cannabis plants are grown in a single dwelling, there is the potential to create or contribute to negative

impacts within neighbourhoods, including odour complaints, long-term damage to buildings, and increased risk of criminal activity.

From the first time these concerns were raised, I sought to consult with members of the community through town halls, with political representatives from all levels of government, and with Health Canada. I then worked with my fellow councillors and Winnipeg public service staff to explore bylaws to set guidelines for residential areas which would require operators of grow sites to obtain valid licences from the city.

As City of Winnipeg staff and councillors worked to find policy solutions, we found that other Canadian cities rarely regulate non-commercial (residential) cannabis growers but that some smaller communities, such as Norfolk County and Georgina in Ontario, have established zoning bylaws to limit grow sites to industrial or rural zones and create air-filtration requirements. Winnipeg would be the first major Canadian city to actively take steps toward addressing the issues created by medical cannabis grow sites in residential neighbourhoods.

This spring, we expect formal bylaw amendments to be brought forward at



Dreamstime.com

Ensuring that communities are vibrant, thriving and safe is the goal of proposed bylaw amendments regarding regulation of cannabis grow sites in residential areas.

a public hearing of the standing policy committee on property and development, heritage and downtown development. To be approved, the bylaw amendments must then also be passed by city council.

If this is an issue of special interest, I invite you to sign up to speak at delegations in

these public hearings. Please reach out to me with any questions or ideas you may have on this or any other issue. I can be reached at devi@winnipeg.ca or at my office number, 204-986-5264.