



Ever watch a City Council meeting... On WEED!

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I don't smoke weed, but there was a point on Monday afternoon where I thought to myself that I should really start.

In fact, there were many moments during the special City Council session on Monday where I wished I had been high. And it wasn't just because it was a session to essentially decide what a lot of the new rules would be for legalized marijuana.

It was just an exhausting experience. I realize that it was a very important decision and I don't envy the City Council for having to make it, but after over four hours and literally dozens of public speakers, I found myself so annoyed that I began tweeting about the merits of the smooth jazz that plays on CityTV during council recesses.

There was a moment during the meeting where a guy who looked like Jerry from *Parks and Recreation* just leaned over and face-palmed himself while another guy blathered on and on about how legal weed was essentially going to lead to some kind of grand, Rome-is-burning-type scenario for San Diego. That face-palm dude was me. That dude was all of us.

There were times where I wish I'd been high while having to listen to police chief Shelley Zimmerman rattle off one-sided statistics about what legalized marijuana has done to cities like Denver. Of the two options that were being debated at the Monday session, Zimmerman was arguing in favor of Option 1, which would not allow for local cultivation and distribution of marijuana and essentially only allow for testing facilities to check the safety of imported marijuana.

"If you don't vote for option number one, the continued negative consequences and secondary effects of an expanded marijuana industry will be detrimental to the public safety of our neighborhoods," Zimmerman said to the Council.

Now, had I been high, I would have been more empathetic with the chief. Her assessment of what's happening in Denver is contradicted by more reliable studies from the University of Colorado Denver and the Cato Institute, but hey, we're talking about a police chief overseeing what seems to be a never-ending police shortage so it's tempting to spark one up and be all like, "Shelley, I feel your pain."

The same kind of empathy was not extended to councilmember Lorie Zapf, who went off on some tangential speech about a friend of hers who lived in Denver and told Zapf that the city's downtown is now filled "with young kids just hanging out and getting high and doing nothing." Um, the last time I was in Denver was 12 years ago and it was like that then! Hell, I could go to P.B. right now (Zapf's district) and find her dozens of kids who fit that description. Had I been high, she would have totally harshed my mellow with her car crash statistics (which, while true that there has been an increase in car crashes in weed-legal states, the ones caused by alcohol still massively outnumber the ones caused by marijuana. But hey, we're not calling for prohibition yet).

Oh, and there was the anti-weed guy with signs of dabbing emojis and who plopped down a one-pound bag of weed like he was dropping a mic (uh, no word on where that weed ended up). There were speakers who claimed that marijuana odor causes death. There were the gee-whiz, Tiny Tim-looking high schoolers who bemoaned the idea that marijuana business expansion would surely lead to more teens like them smoking marijuana. Um, OK kid, but if you're in high school, then not only are you not allowed to vote but why the hell aren't you in school right now?

In the end, the council rightly voted 6-to-3 to have a fully legal and well-regulated industry that includes local cultivation and distribution. Yeah, the council punted on the issue of what to do about delivery services, but I can't say I blame them after a long day. For now, I have a big indica-induced smile on my face that the council decided, to paraphrase councilmember Chris Ward finally nip this issue in the bud. Well, not really, but it's a smile nonetheless.