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STAFF

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Medical marijuana advocates protesting pending decision by Ann Arbor City Council

Local medical marijuana advocate **Chuck Ream** says **Ann Arbor** officials mustn't underestimate the tenacity of those fighting for the rights of cannabis patients in Michigan.

"We will protect our patients by any means necessary," Ream said in an e-mail sent out to the media in advance of tonight's **Ann Arbor City Council** meeting.

The City Council meets at 7 p.m. to vote on a new [licensing ordinance](#) for medical marijuana businesses and home grow operations in the city. Ream and his supporters oppose the ordinance and are planning to stage a public protest before the meeting starts.

"We will initiate recalls against officials who break the law," he said.

Because of renovation work going on inside city hall, the meeting will be held at the Washtenaw County administration building at 220 N. Main St.

"Lots of our people will be at this meeting, and they will speak," Ream said, adding the planned demonstration outside the building will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Council members are being asked by the city attorney's office to [add a new chapter to the Ann Arbor City Code](#), requiring medical marijuana cultivation facilities, dispensaries and home occupations to be licensed by the city and to adhere to city regulations.

The licensing ordinance is intended to complement a proposed medical marijuana zoning ordinance that would regulate where dispensaries can and can't locate in Ann Arbor.

Tonight's consideration of the licensing ordinance is only a first reading, which often times is merely ceremonial and is passed unanimously. Both the licensing and zoning ordinances are expected to come back for final approval on Jan. 18.

Ream claims the city still has illegal inspections and zoning compliance permits in the drafted ordinance, and he's demanding that language be removed. He said Ann Arbor must have a model ordinance or "we will be in deep trouble statewide."

City Attorney **Stephen Postema** disagrees with claims that the city's proposed ordinances conflict with state law, including the licensing process Ream opposes.

"It's not illegal language. There's nothing in the state act that would prohibit the licensing regulation," he said. "And it's still on first reading. It's really for the council to make these decisions. It's one of those things where the process needs to play out."

Postema said Ream has made his views known to the council, and he's sure council members will take that feedback into account when they deliberate.

In his e-mail, Ream said 2011 is shaping up to be "the year that the ham-fisted totalitarians of the Michigan Municipal League think they will take over the Michigan Medical Marijuana Program." He and supporters are expected to carry signs and petitions tonight, demanding that Ann Arbor and other Michigan cities resign from and boycott the League.

- [Click here to view the petition.](#)

Ream accuses the League of conspiring with the federal Drug Enforcement Administration to spend taxpayer dollars to commission the creation of a white paper called "A Local Government View of the Michigan Medical Marijuana Act."

[Click here to download a copy](#) of the Oct. 5 report prepared by consultant Gerald Fisher.

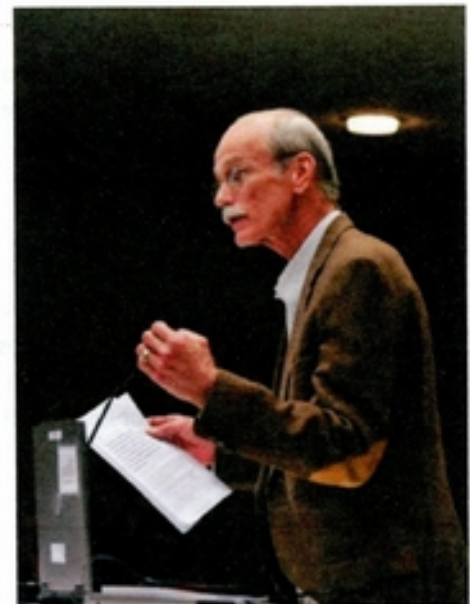
Postema, president of the [Michigan Association of Municipal Attorneys](#) and chairman of the League's Legal Defense Fund, said Ream's claims are off-base.

"The white paper is just an outline of legal issues with the state act," Postema said. "It doesn't really tell communities what to do. In fact, communities are doing all sorts of different things, including the city of Ann Arbor. It's really up to each city. This is sort of an unprecedented situation. Each city needs to decide for themselves how they're going to analyze the law."

Ann Arbor's licensing ordinance aims to limit the number of medical marijuana dispensaries and cultivation facilities in the city to 15. It also states no one can be eligible for a license to operate a cultivation facility, dispensary or home occupation if they have been convicted of a misdemeanor involving any controlled substance or any felony.

"We have confidence that council will toss the garbage that the legal department has sent them," Ream said. "If they ever did pass the draft as it stands now, there would be mass non-violent civil disobedience and mass arrests. I will go first."

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Medical marijuana advocate Chuck Ream addresses Ann Arbor officials at a meeting back in October.

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