



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
CANNABIS COMMISSION

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A regular meeting of the CNMI Cannabis Commission will be held on **Monday, May 8, 2023, at 3:30 P.M.** at the office of the CNMI Cannabis Commission Conference Room at Ascension Ct. Bldg. 1341, Capitol Hill, Saipan.

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call/Determination of Quorum
- III. Consideration and adoption of Agenda
- IV. Consideration and adoption of Minutes of prior meetings
- V. Public Comment
- VI. Acting Chair Report

- VII. Old Business

- VIII. New Business
 1. Election of Commission Board Officers

- IX. Acting Managing Director's Report

- X. Executive Session

- XI. Adjournment

Copies of this notice and agenda have been posted at the Administration Building Entrance Hall, House of Representative Entrance Hall, Senate Entrance Hall, and at the CNMI Cannabis Commission's office location.

Written comments on the agenda may be submitted to the office of the CNMI Cannabis Commission located at Ascension Ct., Bldg. 1341, Capitol Hill, Saipan or emailed to info@cnmicannabis.org on or before the meeting date. Oral testimony may also be presented during the meeting on Monday, May 8, 2023.

CNMI Cannabis Commission
Regular Session Meeting Minutes
May 08, 2023

I. Call to Order

Commissioner/Acting Chair Journie Hofschneider called the CNMI Cannabis Commission's meeting to order at 3:33 p.m., which was held at the Office of the CNMI Cannabis Commission Conference Room located at Ascencion Ct., Bldg. 1341, Capitol Hill, Saipan.

II. Roll Call/Determination of Quorum

Acting Chair Hofschneider called roll of the commissioners:

Commissioner Thomas Songsong, representing Rota, was present via Zoom; Commissioner Juan Iguel, representing the Northern Islands, was present; and Commissioner Jose Palacios, representing Saipan, was present.

The acting chair introduced herself representing Tinian, confirmed quorum and acknowledged the presence of the commission's executive secretary, Ms. Natasha Palacios and thanked her for joining the meeting during a non-work day austerity Monday, and then indicated that the AAG was not present at the moment but would be joining momentarily and acknowledged Saipan Select's Mr. Clyde Norita's presence.

III. Consideration and adoption of Agenda

The acting chair asked if there was a motion on the agenda. Commissioner Songsong motioned to adopt the meeting's agenda, seconded by Commissioner Palacios. There was no discussion. All commissioners voted in favor of the motion; motion carried.

IV. Consideration and adoption of Minutes of prior meetings

The acting chair stated that she circulated the commission's *meeting minutes* of *November 30, 2022, December 14, 2022, and January 31, 2023*, to all commissioners for review and indicated that is where the previous meetings ended prior to the new Commissioners Palacios and Iguel joining the commission.

Commissioner Iguel motioned to adopt the above-mentioned meeting minutes dates, seconded by Commissioner Palacios. There was no discussion. All commissioners voted in favor of the motion; motion carried.

V. Public Comment

The acting chair opened the floor for public comment and asked the executive secretary to verify if there were any members of the public outside the conference room for public comment, which was subsequently reported that there were no members of the public present for public comment.

The acting chair then opened the floor for public comment to Mr. Clyde Norita who was present in the conference room.

Mr. Norita commended the commission's Acting Managing Director Mr. Erik Basa for his responsiveness to Saipan Select's concerns, request and for holding the commission together while a full board was being formed, and then welcomed the new commissioners and expressed his understanding of pending issues needing to be resolved and wished the commission luck with its endeavor.

VI. Acting Chair Report

The acting chair stated that she did not have anything to report in this meeting and expressed gratefulness with the incoming new commissioners forming a full board and excitement to collaborate with the experience they will bring to the commission.

VII. New Business

1. Election of Commission Board Officers

Acting Chair Hofschneider stated for clarification purposes that she is currently acting chair, and that Commissioner Songsong is a member, and then opened the floor to initiate the nominations and election process for the commission's board officers, which resulted as follows:

- Chair, Commr. Jose B. Palacios; nominated by Commr. Hofschneider, seconded by Commr. Iguel.
- Vice Chair, Commr. Journie M. Hofschneider; nominated by Chair Palacios, seconded by Commr. Iguel.
- Secretary, Commr. Thomas L. Songsong; nominated by Vice Chair Hofschneider, seconded by Chair Palacios.
- Treasurer, Commr. Juan Iguel; nominated by Chair Palacios, seconded by Vice Chair Hofschneider.

There was no discussion on the nomination and election process. All commissioners voted in favor of the nominations and election of the above-named commissioners to their respective board officer positions.

Chair Palacios expressed understanding that there has been a lot of discussions and follow-up phone calls regarding pending licensing and other matters, and wanted to reiterate that it can be agreed that the cannabis industry is a viable industry, although an industry in its current environment that is rather over regulated because of its infancy and over taxed to an extent where growth and expansion is too cost restrictive, and suggested for discussion the commission's thoughts in regards to the type of licenses that should be prioritized and how best to collectively share ideas and thoughts on how to ensure that the current industry does not become a fatality of the commission's pressure to approve licenses; the commission might need to look at and reconsider the long term effects that it would have and not just for the short term high of having extra taxes this year and next year; it does not do the commission any good when the industry does not exist three years later knowing how viable it is; even in stateside markets, how they are looking at ways, involving U.S. congress and states, to allow the industry to grow because it really is something if handled properly; working with stakeholders, these are people that have invested their hopes, dreams and livelihoods into the promise made to them through the Taulamwaar Cannabis Act and that the commission owes it to them as commissioners to ensure we work with them, hear each other out and find a compromise in between to ensure that we attain that sustainability to move forward.

Mr. Clyde Norita excused himself from the meeting and thanked, congratulated, and wished the commission luck with its challenges ahead.

The chair continued that he would like to hear the thoughts of the commissioners about the cannabis industry.

The vice chair expressed agreement in finding ways to make the cannabis industry viable and available to everyone and the need to review taxation figures/reports because tax collections have yet to be reported and reviewed.

The commission members then entered into executive session.

VIII. Executive Session

The chair later announced exiting executive session and back into regular session at 6:09 p.m. and stated that topics discussed involved the following:

- Accomplishments and challenges to bring Chair Palacios and Treasurer Iguel up to speed with the commission's operations;
- Industry expansion on the islands of Rota and Tinian;
- Personnel matters on the hiring of a managing director, enforcement officer, and possible independent auditor and counsel;
- Pending decisions for cannabis licensing;
- Commission Order No. 2022-01 regarding the establishment of personnel and licensing committees;
- Compliance advisories;
- Cannabis advertisement based on regulations;
- Treasurer Iguel's mention of the need to track financial data collections; and
- The inclusion of Commission Order No. 2022-01 in the next meeting's agenda, which was scheduled for May 12, 2023.

Chair Palacios asked the commission members if they had any other subject matters they would like to discuss. There were no further discussions or comments.

IX. Adjournment

Treasurer Iguel motioned for meeting adjournment, seconded by Vice Chair Hofschneider. All commissioners voted in favor of the motion; motion carried.

The CNMICC's May 08, 2023, meeting adjourned at approximately 6:42 p.m.