



RALPH DLG. TORRES
Governor

ARNOLD I. PALACIOS
Lieutenant Governor

COMMONWEALTH of the NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
CANNABIS COMMISSION

A meeting of the CNMI Cannabis Commission will be held on **Friday, September 25, 2020, at 10:30 A.M.** at the Office of the Commonwealth Cannabis Commission Conference Room located at Ascencion Ct., Building #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. Old Business
 1. Election of Board officers for Fiscal Year 2020-2021
 2. Discussion and Adoption into Regulation: (Part 1400 Laboratory License) Cannabis Laboratories as it relates to cannabis licensees and research certificate holders: Laboratory Licensing Requirements, Laboratory Tracking and Reporting and Laboratory Licensee Prohibited Conduct

- VII. New Business
 1. Discussion and Adoption of regulations governing cannabis events
 2. Managing Director's Report

- VIII. Adjournment

Copies of this notice and agenda have been posted at the Administration Building Entrance Hall, the House of Representatives Entrance Hall, and the Senate Entrance Hall.

Written comments on the agenda may be submitted to the CNMI Cannabis Commission, through the Office of the Governor or emailed to info@cnmicannabis.org on or before the meeting date. Oral testimony may be presented during the meeting on Friday, September 25, 2020.

**CNMI Cannabis Commission
Regular Session Meeting Minutes
September 25, 2020**

I. Call to Order

Chairwoman Nadine Deleon Guerrero called the CNMI Cannabis Commission's meeting to order at 10:33 a.m., which was held at the its conference room located at Asencion Ct., Building #1341, Capitol Hill, Saipan.

II. Roll Call/Determination of Quorum

Chairwoman called roll of the commissioners:

Vice Chairman Matthew Deleon Guerrero, representing Saipan, was present;
Treasurer Valentino Taisacan, representing Northern Islands, was present;
Secretary Journie Hofschneider, representing Tinian, was present (telephonically);
Member Thomas Songsong, representing Rota, was present (telephonically).

Chairwoman announced the presence of all five commissioners and confirmed quorum, and acknowledged AAG Ms. Keisha Blaise's presence and that Special Advisor Joseph Deleon Guerrero will not be attending today's meeting. Also in attendance was Commission Managing Director, Monique Sablan.

III. Adoption of Prior Meeting Minutes

Chairwoman requested the Secretary to apprise the Commission on prior meeting minutes for adoption; Secretary motioned to table prior meeting minutes, which was seconded by Treasurer. All Commissioners voted in favor to table prior meeting minutes, motion carried. Chairwoman announced the tabling of prior meeting minutes to the Commission's next meeting.

IV. Public Comment

Chairwoman opened the floor for public comment; after verifying for the presence of members of the public, Chairwoman announced that no members of the public were present for public comment.

V. Consideration and Adoption of Agenda

Chairwoman called for the adoption of agenda; Vice Chairman motioned to amend agenda by adding to new business *discussion on the directive for the formation of an inter-agency taskforce group for enforcement purposes of cannabis law and regulations*, seconded by Chairwoman. All commissioners voted in favor, motion carried.

**CNMI Cannabis Commission
Regular Session Meeting Minutes
September 25, 2020**

VI. Old Business

1. Election of Board Officers for Fiscal Year 2020 – 2021

Before proceeding with the nomination and election process, Chairwoman expressed her appreciation to the commissioners and managing director for their work, contributions and support during her tenure as Chairwoman.

Chairwoman opened the floor to commence the nomination and election process as follows:

- a) Chairwoman - Ms. Nadine Deleon Guerrero
- b) Vice Chairman - Mr. Matthew Deleon Guerrero
- c) Treasurer – Mr. Valentino Taisacan
- d) Secretary – Ms. Journie Hofschneider

All nomination motions were seconded and all commissioners voted in favor of the above election of officers for FY 2020 - 2021, motion carried.

2. Discussion and Adoption into Regulation: (Part 1400 Laboratory License) Cannabis Laboratories as it relates to cannabis licensees and research certificate holders: Laboratory Licensing Requirements, Laboratory Tracking and Reporting and Laboratory Licensee Prohibited Conduct

Chairwoman opened the floor for discussion and adoption into regulations laboratory cannabis license and research certificate.

Managing Director noted the need to add to the laboratory license regulation requirement for the research certificate holder to share its research findings with the Commission, which the Vice Chairman acknowledged.

The mandating of cannabis product testing was brought up by the Secretary as the initial Commission regulation did not initially require lab testing. Vice Chairman agreed that the Commission did not initially require cannabis lab testing in its initial regulation because the Commission did not have regulations for laboratories, but phased its approach in formulating its laboratory/research certificate regulation beginning with phase I bare-bone full structure regulation; phase II is where we are at this time in considering the adoption into regulation for laboratory license, and phase III with

CNMI Cannabis Commission
Regular Session Meeting Minutes
September 25, 2020

medicinal (or medical marijuana) is where cannabis lab testing requirement will come into play.

Chairwoman mentioned that a potential investor for laboratory license recommended that *cannabis lab testing be mandated for all commercial cannabis establishments and limiting laboratory licenses.*

Member Songsong pointed out that because of the mandate for cannabis lab testing, *inter-island transport of cannabis samples for lab testing on Saipan* is something to be aware of for Rota commercial establishments as potential laboratory applicant may find it unfeasible to establish a lab on Rota because of a lack of commercial cannabis licensees, and that hemp, although USDA approved, also require lab testing.

Vice Chairman responded with the uncertainty on how the federal government would relate to inter-island transport of cannabis, but hemp on the other hand may have more leeway on the federal side on inter-island transport if the CNMI has a state plan and regulatory processes.

Secretary inquired with AAG Keisha Blaise whether she came across the Commission's inquiry on transporting cannabis inter-island; AAG Blaise suggested that this topic may have been discussed previously and recalled that this matter was brought to her attention by AAG Mike Ernest, and that she will provide the Commission a case matter involving cannabis transport. AAG Blaise continued that with hemp there may be inexpensive testing tools or equipment available in the market according to some cannabis newsletter which she shared with Commission Managing Director, Monique Sablan.

Vice Chairman motioned to *adopt the laboratory license regulation and to include permission requiring cannabis research certificate holders to share its findings/results from its cannabis research with the Commission,* seconded by Secretary.

Vice Chairman noted for the record that the Commission is currently setting up its laboratory licensing structure and will look into ISO standards (*International Organization for Standardization*) if available (for accreditation purposes), or if it is something that is possible for a laboratory applicant to accomplish, and that it is the full intent of the Commission, as it advances in its review of laboratory accreditation processes, to consider future amendments to its laboratory licensing regulation.

**CNMI Cannabis Commission
Regular Session Meeting Minutes
September 25, 2020**

After hearing no further discussions, Chairwoman moved to vote to:

“Adopt into Regulation: (Part 1400 Laboratory License) Cannabis Laboratories as it relates to cannabis licensees and research certificate holders: Laboratory Licensing Requirements, Laboratory Tracking and Reporting and Laboratory Licensee Prohibited Conduct”

(With the inclusion of permission requiring cannabis research certificate holders to share its research findings/results with the Commission)

All commissioners voted in favor for its adoption, motioned carried.

RECESS: Chairwoman called for a 5-minute recess at 11:03 a.m.; meeting was called back to order at 11:08 a.m.

VII. New Business

1. Discussion and Adoption of regulations governing cannabis events

Vice Chairman began the discussion, cited part 1500 of the regulation on appropriate use relating to *marijuana events* and the *temporary use of marijuana items in special events* as statutorily expressed, and stated that the language for the cannabis events regulation is being structured after review of other CNMI government agency regulations, e.g., Dept. of Public Lands, DLNR, etc., relating to temporary use authorization.

Vice Chairman further explained that a “*Special Events Plan*” is required by law and described the criteria, and that if an applicant is approved to host a special cannabis event, the Commission will issue a *Temporary License Premises Designation*. Fees or fee structure for cannabis events, event size and duration, etc., and review of cannabis use during the duration of a cannabis event was also discussed.

After hearing no further discussion, Chairwoman motioned to table the adoption of regulation governing cannabis events to the next meeting, seconded by Vice Chairman; all commissioners voted in favor to table, motion carried.

2. Taskforce

CNMI Cannabis Commission
Regular Session Meeting Minutes
September 25, 2020

Chairwoman moved to discuss the matter of an *inter-agency taskforce*. Vice Chairman expressed that his meeting with DPS (Department of Public Safety) suggested that a directive from the governor's office would be preferred rather than a memorandum of understanding from the Commission to initiate the DPS's formation of a taskforce to oversee compliance with CNMI Cannabis law and regulations.

Vice Chairman pointed out that there are options for the creation of an inter-agency taskforce group on cannabis, e.g. directive, MOU, or executive order, however, an executive order was deemed unnecessary, and that the taskforce group shall be the agency that shall coordinate the enforcement of all aspects of the sale, production, manufacture and transport of cannabis in the CNMI. The Managing Director reminded about the inclusion of the offices of the mayors of Tinian and Rota in order for the Commission to have direct coordination with their respective taskforce appointees.

Vice Chairman brought forth open questions for consideration on particular agency involvement, e.g., customs, ports authority police, CHCC, CUC, AG, etc., including protocol establishment and inter-agency information sharing as follows:

- a) Inclusion of appointed taskforce members from the Offices of the Mayors of Tinian and Rota;
- b) Taskforce composition, i.e., CHCC's inclusion to address concerns with substance abuse, youth cannabis use, or CUC on issues relating to excessive utilities usage;
- c) Choice of an executive order or directive for the creation of an inter-agency taskforce group on cannabis.

3. Managing Director's Report

Managing Director (MD) reported that nine (9) homegrown registry licenses were issued which includes Rota and Tinian licensees, and that she has received to date a total of eleven (11) applications for commercial licenses in which she prepared an executive summary for the Commission's review on the application categories listed below:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| a) Four (4) producer class III | e) Two (2) retailers |
| b) One (1) producer class I | f) Two (2) lounges class I |
| c) One (1) wholesaler | |
| d) One (1) processor | |

CNMI Cannabis Commission
Regular Session Meeting Minutes
September 25, 2020

MD brought up an issue for consideration for the amendment of current statute relating to *license and application fees* being set-aside from the general fund *for the purpose of the Commission's operations, subject to legislative appropriation*, in that the fees generated from licenses and applications should not be subjected to appropriation but entirely committed towards the Commission's operational costs.

Chairwoman requested MD to compile a spreadsheet of application and license fees generated; MD acknowledged and enlightened the Commission that collections to date amounted to \$10,000 not including the homegrown registry fees (\$675.00).

MD continued with the legislature's proposed amendment of the Saipan zoning law as it relates to cannabis applicants and establishments, and her scheduled meeting with CUC for a better understanding of their methodology in estimating utility usage by kilowatt/gallons rather than by dollar amount as currently being reported to the Commission by applicants, in addition to her invitation to an introductory meeting with the DEA.

MD concluded her report with her research on *cannabis tracking systems* (CTS) in which she reached out to several state-side businesses. She reported that majority of the fourteen (14) stateside jurisdictions that have legalized cannabis use CTS called "*Metrc*" (*metrc.com*), which is considered the leading solution to cannabis tracking, e.g., seed to sale, RFID tags, track and trace, etc. MD will continue her research on CTSs and report to the Commission.

VIII. Adjournment

Chairwoman scheduled the Commission's next meeting for October 9, 2021 at 10:30 a.m., and motioned for meeting adjournment at 12:31 p.m., seconded by Treasurer; all commissioners voted in favor for adjournment, motion carried.