

Panel disputes state's medical marijuana law **WITH VIDEO**

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A panel of six and a lively audience debated the apparent confusion surrounding Michigan's medical marijuana law Monday in a special town hall meeting at CMNtv in Troy sponsored by The Oakland Press in the wake of recent federal raids in Novi and Walled Lake.

The panelists and the audience jumped right into the debate moderated by local attorney and television personality Charlie Langton.

Royal Oak City Commissioner Chuck Semchena said the wording of the act approved by voters in 2008 is vague and effectively leaves the state without a functioning medical marijuana law.

He also questioned the amount of marijuana that could be grown by the 12 plants allowed under the Michigan law.

"Even Cheeh and Chong couldn't smoke the amount of marijuana 12 plants produces in a year," he said.

A grower in the audience disagreed, saying each plant only produces a few ounces.

Also on the panel were state Sen. Mike Kowall, R-White Lake, attorneys Michael Komorn and Matthew Able, Oakland County Commissioner Mike Bosnic, R-Clawson, and J. Van Dyke, director of the American Medical Marijuana Association.

Kowall said one of the problems with the state's law is that it doesn't regulate where marijuana comes from or how it is supplied.

"People are importing marijuana into the state from Mexico," Kowall said. "We're not disputing the fact that the people of Michigan approved it."

Abel, who said marijuana should be legalized, questioned whether there's a conflict with federal law that classifies marijuana as an illegal schedule 1 drug.

"Section 28(e) of the controlled substances laws leaves it open for states to regulate," he said.

Komorn lauded doctors who write prescriptions to medical marijuana patients.

"I see it as courageous actually," Komorn said. "I'm glad that someone's willing to come forward and treat these patients."

Van Dyke said the goal of medical marijuana laws "is about keeping it out of kids' hands and off the streets."

Bosnic argued the law needs to be changed because it's vague.

"I think the law is open to a lot of interpretations," Bosnic said. "The law needs to be changed."