

Local filmmaker planning fall release of documentary on the dangers of teen marijuana use

By Carol Britton Meyer

Building on the success of her earlier work on the negative effects of vaping, a Hull filmmaker is planning to release a new documentary on the dangers of teen marijuana use.

Lori Tobin, who earlier created the film “Taking a Toke,” is wrapping up work on “Weeding the Truth,” expected to be released this fall.

As part of the film, three young people from age 19 to late 20s, portrayed as cartoon characters to respect their privacy, recount their real-life experiences with marijuana addiction, making a compelling case against its use.

The targeted audience for the 30-minute film – designed for classroom settings with accompanying educational modules – is educators, parents, students age 13 and older, and healthcare professionals. Once finished, the documentary will be available through the www.weedingthetruth.com website.

“There are a lot of kids in Hull and surrounding communities who do pot, and it’s a real problem, because some of them have been using since junior high school, and it harms their brains,” Tobin told The Hull Times. “Smoking marijuana can make them lazy – feeling as though they don’t want to do much – going from job to job and not having the mental capacity to plan ahead for the future.”

Impact on teen brain development

Through interviews with medical experts, the film provides essential information about marijuana’s impact on teen brain development and the effects of cannabis on adolescent mental health



SMOKE-SCREEN: Hull’s Lori Tobin is wrapping up work on her newest film, ‘Weeding the Truth,’ a documentary on the dangers of teen marijuana use. [Courtesy photo]

and academic performance. Law enforcement officers providing frontline perspectives on teen drug use and students and families sharing their compelling experiences and recovery stories are also part of the film’s important message.

The first version of the film was produced by Harbor Media Productions through a stipend, with Tobin producing the enhanced version with assistance from Boston-area college students with the artwork.

“The Harbor Media grant kick-started the project, and now I’m expanding upon it,” she said.

The targeted audience for the film is junior high and high school students, who Tobin said “need

to see the film in a classroom with others,” for questions, comments, and discussion afterward.

When asked what prompted her latest film, Tobin said that questions teens posed to her when showing her first film wondering whether smoking a joint or vaping “was better for their health – a question posed too many times” – was the push she needed.

“If kids are asking, they’re usually using,” she said. Parents aware of the problem also encouraged her to make the documentary.

‘It’s scary’

Another issue is that it is illegal for people under age 21 to buy marijuana, which means “a lot of kids are getting street pot, which is sometimes laced with fentanyl,” a deadly synthetic opioid that is up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine.

“It’s scary. Many drugs today are so strong that kids using them don’t stand a chance,” Tobin said. “One of the biggest calls to action is that while marijuana used to consist of 2 to 3% THC in the ‘60s and ‘70s, the percentage can now be more than 20% and higher. Even dispensary pot can be strong. Marijuana is a horrible, addictive drug.”

THC is the primary psychoactive compound found in the cannabis plant.

Add to that peer pressure and the fact that “some entire families smoke pot,” and the results can be devastating, Tobin said. “We need to educate kids, and reaching them at the right age will have the most impact,” she said.

For further information, visit www.weedingthetruth.com. **HT**

Light plant changes

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‘We’re here for as long as it takes’

At the beginning of this week’s discussion, Nesoff told the board and the citizens in the audience, “We’re here for as long as it takes. There’s no time limit.” True to his word, the discussion lasted for one-and-a-half hours.

Nesoff also said that he was “looking forward to a civil and respectful discussion,” although the comments made by a few light board and select board members became heated at times.

As part of the discussion, Light Board Chair Thomas Burns – after reading the wording of Article 37 – said the light board “would like the select board to support it,” referring to the select board’s ability to file a home-rule petition.

Light Board member Patrick Cannon questioned the amount of time that has been spent on this issue, which he said is “sidelining” the board “when we have far bigger fish to fry to be sure the lights stay on.”

Light board member Dan Ciccariello – noting that town meeting voters supported changing the light plant governance – said “it’s really difficult to accept the fact that the select board would throw up road blocks to accomplish that goal. We are here tonight to urge the select board to vote to adopt this article and proceed to the State House.”

Grey voted against taking that route because of a number of as-yet-unanswered questions, including how residents would benefit from such a change.

“We still have no idea about how such a change would affect our citizens,” he said. “We have to make decisions in the best interests of the entire town.”

In response, light board member Jacob Vaillancourt, who filed the Article 37 citizens’ petition, said the board “is legally obligated to look out for the ratepayers and to keep the lights on.”

Member Brian McCarthy said he initially voted against Article 37 because he was not fully informed at the time, so took his cue from the advisory board’s unanimous vote to not support it.

However, following the town meeting vote

and doing further research, he came to the conclusion that “the people voted, and the majority rules. I’ll end it there.”

While Nesoff voted in support of filing the home-rule petition, he said there are still issues that need to be addressed.

“I am disappointed that there was no attempt before town meeting to educate the people, but at this point, I think we should move forward [with the petition], and whatever happens in the Legislature happens, and the town will abide by that,” he said.

Select board member Jerry Taverna applauded the majority of the board for its decision.

“This is a big deal, following an open and honest debate tonight,” he said, especially since the advisory board did not support Article 37.

At the end of the discussion, Vaillancourt noted that “this is only a step in a long process that no one can predict. In the meantime, the light board has critical work to do, and we don’t want to lose the focus on that.”

*A replay of this week’s meeting will be available on demand on Hull Community Television’s website, www.hulltv.net. **HT***

New HRA member

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one wants to do what’s best for the town.”

Other candidates who interviewed for the position were Raymond Delmonico, C. Anne Murray, Valerio Romano, Sara Venteuolo (remotely), and Judeth Van Hamm. Chris Niland withdrew prior to the interviews, and Chair Irwin Nesoff read James Pitrolo’s letter of interest since he was unable to attend the meeting.

Visit the online version of this story at www.hulltimes.com for a link to the letters of interest and resumes submitted by all of the candidates for the vacancy.

After the interviews, select board member Jason McCann nominated Murray; Jerry Taverna, Richardson; and Nesoff, Romano, with Romano winning three of the combined boards’ votes, followed by Richardson winning five of the combined votes, which constituted a majority. A vote was not taken on Murray’s candidacy since Rich-

ardson had already won enough votes to be appointed.

In other business

John Struzziery, director of the Hull wastewater treatment facility, reported that a \$98,771 Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection grant awarded to the town was instrumental in improving the pumping capacity and efficiency of Hull’s sewer treatment plant – with an estimated energy savings of \$113,610 over 30 years. There will also be a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Quarterly progress updates to the state, a public meeting, website updates, and a final report were part of the process, which included installing a pump that works when under water, for greater resiliency. The state is currently reviewing the report, which once approved, will be posted on the town’s website. **HT**



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