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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TOWN COUNCIL VOTES TO ALLOW CANNABIS RETAIL STORES IN WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

Decision comes after a near split in public opinion

WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE – Whitchurch-Stouffville Council on Tuesday, voted to allow private retail cannabis stores in the municipality. The decision came after a over month of extensive public consultation which saw over 1,500 town residents voice their opinion and concerns.

“We have weighed the options heavily and coming to this decision was not easy,” said Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Iain Lovatt. “We were very impressed by the public participation, but because it was almost evenly split, it didn’t give us a clear mandate.”

The vote followed over a month of public consultation where the Town received comments through an online survey, telephone, email and three public meetings. Most of the comments submitted online, including through the survey, were almost evenly split while comments offered in the public meetings weighed towards opposition.

As part of the decision, Town Council will also encourage the Ontario Government to set parameters around the number of licenses granted based on the population of the municipality. They will also ask the Province to give consideration for a dialogue with municipalities with regard to the locations of the retail stores.

The Province announced that due to severe supply shortages, only municipalities with a population over 50,000 will be granted a licence. Whitchurch-Stouffville’s population is approximately 47,000. Municipalities under 50,000 will not be eligible to have a cannabis retail store until such time as the Province announces more details.

“Because the Province has excluded Whitchurch-Stouffville in the first round of eligibility, we can take this opportunity to examine the experiences of other towns who have opted in,” said

Mayor Lovatt. “This decision will not have an immediate impact on any potential retailers until the province chooses to offer more licenses.”

The Town will advise the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario of its opt-in status by the January 22, 2019 deadline.

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