

Alderman wants medical marijuana grow ops out of residential neighbourhoods

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Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart STUART
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There's nothing wrong with a little prescribed weed for your pain, says Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart, but not at the risk of the pain of others.

Colley-Urquhart will ask her city council colleagues Monday to demand Health Canada disclose the locations of medical marijuana grow operations in Calgary, calling it a mere stop-gap measure to her greater goal.

She wants them out of residential neighbourhoods.

"They really need to be moved into a commercial operation that are supervised and managed by the federal government and Health Canada," said Colley-Urquhart.

She said explosions and serious injuries can occur when such operations are not managed with caution.

On Oct. 1, 2011, a 42-year-old man was hurt in a blaze at a Windsor Park home where a licensed grow op was maintained and later died.

The notice of motion calls for Mayor Naheed Nenshi to write Health Canada requesting locations, as well as a meeting with federal Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq to discuss their safety concerns.

It also asks for Health Canada to consider adding a permit condition stating licensed growing operations must comply to municipal bylaws.

Colley-Urquhart called allowing the operations to exist in homes a relic of the former Liberal government, but noted she's not against medical marijuana — just where it's cultivated and handled. She is also a registered nurse who works casual shifts at a chronic pain centre where medical marijuana prescriptions are written.

"There is absolutely a justifiable reason for medical marijuana to be prescribed to people ... we just don't need to put our citizens at risk with these operations," she said.

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