

MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL CITIZEN'S FORUM
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YUMA, ARIZONA
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - YUMA CITY HALL
ONE CITY PLAZA, YUMA, ARIZONA
March 20, 2018
5:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Deputy Mayor Knight called the City Council Citizen's Forum to order at 5:30 p.m.

Councilmembers Present:	Shelton, Watts, Thomas, and Deputy Mayor Knight
Councilmembers Absent:	McClendon, Miller, and Mayor Nicholls
Staffmembers Present:	City Administrator, Gregory K. Wilkinson Various department heads or their representatives City Attorney, Richard W. Files City Clerk, Lynda Bushong

I. TOBACCO 21

Melissa Norred, a volunteer with the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, introduced Ridding Yuma's Youth of Tobacco (RYYOT), a youth group advocating for changing the legal age to purchase tobacco items from 18 years of age to 21 years of age.

Karina, Miguel, and Wyatt of RYOTT addressed City Council regarding the Tobacco 21 (T21) initiative which would limit accessibility to tobacco products including vaping items, helping to reduce young adult smokers. **Karina** stated that as of January 2018, five states and over 285 localities have adopted T21 laws including two towns in Arizona - Cottonwood and Douglas – and youth coalitions across Arizona are in the process of advocating T21 policies. **Miguel** pointed out that tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States, yet Americans continue to struggle to eliminate tobacco products from their lives. He urged City Council to be a leader in this fight and help shape the future of Yuma's youth and the community as a whole. **Wyatt** expressed a desire to see smoking end with his generation, create a healthier society, and eventually wipe out cancer one law at a time. Telling kids to just say no is not enough.

Watts asked how RYOTT assists with enforcement. **Miguel** explained that members of RYOTT participate in 'undercover buys', where minors – in cooperation with the Attorney General's Office and the Food and Drug Administration – enter stores and attempt to purchase tobacco products. If the clerk does not confirm the buyer's birthdate on their identification card and allows the purchase, law enforcement steps in. **Karina** explained that a law enforcement officer goes into the store after the purchase to talk to the clerk and their manager. The manager has the option of either paying a fine or requiring their employee to attend an educational session where they learn about tobacco and youth.

Thomas asked what responsibilities parents bear. **Norred** stated that while parents have a responsibility to teach their children about the dangers of tobacco, especially as they get older; kids sometimes do things that they are not supposed to do. Because most smokers start before the age of 21, raising the legal purchasing age would help to change that. **Thomas** opined that rather than government or society dictating what children can and cannot do, it should be the parent's

responsibility and he would like to see more parents involved. **Norred** noted that while she agrees, many children do not have that level of parental guidance.

Knight stated that children between the ages of 18 and 21 are very susceptible to peer pressure, much more so than those aged 21 and older. Getting cigarettes out of the hands of 18 to 20-year-olds would perhaps lead to fewer kids younger than 18 taking up the habit because of peer pressure.

Thomas stated that rather than passing an ordinance raising the tobacco purchase age to 21, perhaps these organizations could collaborate with the City Administrator to issue tobacco awareness public service announcements. **Norred** stated that those types of advertisements are already all over the media right now due in part to a lawsuit that is requiring tobacco companies to advertise tobacco's harmful effects, making now the perfect time to implement a T21 policy. Ordinances lead to state laws, which lead to federal laws, and over time a reduction in tobacco-related diseases will be achieved. Yuma should be leading this fight and not waiting for others to do it down the road.

II. ADJOURNMENT/EXECUTIVE SESSION

There being no further business, **Deputy Mayor Knight** adjourned the meeting at 5:53 p.m. No Executive Session was held.

Lynda L. Bushong, City Clerk

APPROVED:

Douglas J. Nicholls, Mayor