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Social host law amended to include cannabis

By Sora O'Doherty

Orinda was an early adopter of an amendment to the city's "social host" law to include underage consumption of cannabis, in addition to the existing prohibition on underage alcohol use, among the prohibited substances at loud or unruly parties. On May 14, the city council passed Ordinance 18-08, with the intention of prohibiting underage marijuana use at parties in Orinda. Jaime Rich, Director of Adapt Lamorinda, congratulated the council on its action, noting that although recreational marijuana is now legal in California it is still illegal for anyone under 21 to be in possession of cannabis or cannabis products. "If we recognize that the host of a gathering where underage drinking is found to be occurring should be held accountable and fined then it only makes sense that the same should apply for the host of a gathering where young people are using cannabis or cannabis products," she commented after the meeting. "This ordinance gives the Orinda Police Department and the city of Orinda one more tool that they can use to convey the message that it is not acceptable for Orinda youth to use cannabis."

As head of the agency charged with drug and alcohol education, Rich added, "The perception of harm for the use of cannabis is low amongst our youth so any measures that we can use to change this attitude we should use."

Contra Costa County is considering a similar measure, and Moraga has already amended its social host ordinance to include cannabis.

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