



City Council
Health & Human Services Committee

36 Court Street
Springfield, MA 01103

<http://www.springfieldcityhall.com>

Brian Santaniello (Chair)

~Final~

February 4, 2026

2:00 PM

City Hall - Room 200

Call To Order

2:00 PM Meeting called to order on February 4, 2026, in Hybrid Room 200, 36 Court Street, Springfield, MA 01103.

Roll Call

In Person

Brian Santaniello
Helen Caulton-Harris
Joe Vanwart
Allison Smith with Global Kratom Coalition
Stephen Buoniconti

Virtual

Zaida Govan
Dr. Michael White
Dr. Sherron Colgram
Dr. Ari Kriegsman
Judy Torres
Matthew Lowe
Melody Hope
Stephen Howard
Western Mass News

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Brian Santaniello	City Councilor At Large	Present	
Gerry Martin	City Councilor — Ward 7	Excused	
Maria Perez	City Councilor — Ward 1	Excused	

Malo Brown	City Councilor — Ward 4	Excused	
Zaida Govan	City Councilor — Ward 8	Virtual	
Kateri Walsh	City Councilor At Large	Excused	
Justin Hurst	City Councilor At Large	Excused	
Victor Davila	City Councilor — Ward 6	Excused	
Michael Fenton	City Councilor — Ward 2	Excused	
Jose Delgado	City Councilor At Large	Excused	
Lavar Click-Bruce	City Councilor — Ward 5	Excused	
Melvin Edwards	City Councilor — Ward 3	Absent	
Tracye Whitfield	City Councilor At Large	Excused	

Public Portion

1. Amending Ordinance Chapter 275 Article V - 2nd & Final Steps

Minutes:

Purpose: Review public health, regulatory, and community perspectives on natural kratom and synthetic 7-hydroxykratom (7-OH) products, following prior ordinance initiation.

Background:

- 7-OH is a synthetic derivative with high opioid potency (~13× morphine) and elevated overdose risk.
- Natural kratom is a plant-based product with lower potency, historically used for pain management and opioid withdrawal, though some users may experience dependency.
- The meeting focused on clarifying regulatory pathways, enforcement responsibilities, and public health considerations.

Participants & Perspectives:

- **Allison Smith:** Supports regulated adult access to natural kratom (<2% 7-OH); advocates banning synthetic 7-OH.
- **Dr. Kriegsman:** Notes 7-OH is opioid-like with rising overdoses; emphasizes harm

reduction.

- **Dr. Colgram:** Highlights limited data; recommends differentiation between products, education, and harm reduction.
- **Joe Vanwart:** Supports banning 7-OH; recommends testing, concentration thresholds, and clear labeling.
- **Dr. White:** Advocates a ban, adult-only sales, labeling, and warning signage.
- **Community Members:** Support youth protection measures while maintaining adult access to natural kratom.
- **Councilor Santaniello & Councilor Govan:** Express concerns regarding public safety, youth access, enforcement, and age restrictions.

Key Issues Discussed:

- **Potency & Risk:** 7-OH presents high overdose potential; natural kratom has lower risk.
- **Public Health:** Concerns over unrestricted sales, youth access, and limited consumer awareness.
- **Regulatory Challenges:** Local testing capacity is limited; need for manufacturer/retailer certification, age verification (21+), child-resistant packaging; state and federal regulatory progress is slow.

Proposed Measures:

- Ban 7-OH products exceeding 2% concentration.
- Regulate adult access to natural kratom with labeling, child-resistant packaging, and 21+ age verification.
- Require mandatory retailer/manufacturer testing and certification.
- Launch education and warning signage campaigns.
- Coordinate with state and federal agencies for enforcement support.

Key Conclusions:

- General consensus to ban synthetic 7-OH due to potency and associated health risks.
- Support exists for regulated adult access to natural kratom with appropriate safety measures.

- Enforcement challenges exist; local action is strengthened by state/federal coordination.
- Public health research on natural kratom is recommended to balance therapeutic access and safety.

Recommendations:

1. Implement local 7-OH ban and 21+ sales restrictions.
2. Enforce testing, certification, labeling, and packaging standards for natural kratom.
3. Conduct public education and harm reduction initiatives.
4. Advocate for accelerated state and federal regulation.
5. Monitor policy impacts and adjust based on data and community feedback

[MIN_SIGNATURES]