

Fashaw

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conducted or consulted with the incoming administration. He said it was disrespectful to put Fashaw in such a position with a new City Council looming.

Inderwies said Mullock was interfering with his administrative duties and warned him to stop.

Mayor Chuck Lear reminded council they had changed an ordinance to reflect Cape May's Faulkner Act-city manager form of government, regarding police and fire chief promotions.

"Those decisions that had been carved out previously really didn't belong to council," he said.

Police and fire chief selections were placed back into the hands of the city manager, Lear said.

Mullock complained the police chief position will not be available until Feb. 1. Inderwies said Marino is leaving his position in six weeks.

"This transition phase is needed to acclimate the chief to the new position under the guidance of Chief Marino," Inderwies said. "You can disagree and shake your head,



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE (file)

Lt. Dekon Fashaw will take over as chief of the Cape May Police Department effective Feb. 1.

but you don't have control over the administrative positions in the city — you're legislative."

Inderwies said under state law, he has the right to select the police chief and is not required to consult with council.

"It's not up for debate," he said, noting Mullock did not have an option.

"We'll see in a couple of weeks," Mullock replied.

Later in the week, Mullock told the Star and Wave he was extremely happy for Fashaw.

"I think he'll make an excellent chief," Mullock said. "My problem was we were just coming out of an hour and half closed session and it wasn't even brought up that

we were going to announce that right away, I thought there was going to be some discussion on this."

Mullock said his objection to Fashaw's appointment was about the process and nothing to do with him personally.

Inderwies said after completing interviews for the position and much thought and consideration, he selected Fashaw to be promoted to chief effective Feb. 1. The appointment will be provisional, pending a civil service testing procedure, he said.

"Mr. Fashaw, who is well qualified, well respected throughout the community with strong community ties, leadership skills," Inderwies said.

He said he has known Fashaw for more than 25 years and worked with him in numerous capacities. Inderwies said Fashaw can lead the police department into the future.

Mullock complained three promotions were made in the city's fire department at council's previous meeting. Promotions in the fire department were warranted due to a retirement at the end of the year, Inderwies said.

Legislators

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The bill notes New Jersey spend \$127 million annually to enforce marijuana laws and that Black residents are three times more likely to be arrested for possession than white residents even though their usage is about the same.

The bill adds consumption of marijuana to driving under the influence of alcohol statutes, meaning drivers cannot legally operate a motor vehicle while under the influence of marijuana and passengers in a vehicle cannot partake while in the vehicle.

The state is going to create a five-member Cannabis Regulatory Commission to oversee legal marijuana sales, with members paid \$125,000 (\$141,000 for the chairman). It may be many months before legal sales to adults 21 and up begin as the marketplace is set up.

Local opposition

Testa said he opposed the bill because the way it is set up, the taxes and fees will make the price so high it won't be a benefit to the state.

"The voters of this state overwhelmingly approved of this measure and the taxes being included in the marijuana bill that was passed yesterday (Dec. 17) were not contemplated in their vote at all," Testa said Friday. "I think it warrants a challenge to these new taxes as it was not contemplated by the referendum measure that was on our ballots this past November."

"Additionally, I think the entire point should have been with marijuana legalization to make it more affordable than the black market so the black market would be eradicated. With these taxes and fee structure, the black market is only going to grow, in my estimation."

He said the cost per ounce of marijuana "sounds awfully expensive to me and I think it is going to disincentivize people to purchase legal marijuana from a dispensary and they're going to turn to the street just like most marijuana users have been prior to this

legislation."

McClellan, of Ocean City, said in an interview the week before as the bill was being discussed that it did not have a provision to use revenues from marijuana sales to provide tax relief to New Jersey taxpayers nor did it have an educational component.

"I believe there should be some money going back to the taxpayers for some tax relief. If this is going to be a big thing with money available, then that money should go back to the taxpayers ... and we're not seeing any relief out of this," he said.

"I would like to see some education," he added. "You have underage drinking so you're going to have underage people smoking marijuana. So some money should be going back to educate those folks on that and there's not anything in there right now that's going to be doing that."

Testa echoed that concern.

"I certainly don't want this to turn into a product that becomes more attractive to people under the legal age. I remember there was a study when I was in college that Joe Camel (a cartoon character hawking Camel cigarettes) was more recognizable to first-graders than Mickey Mouse. I certainly don't want that to be something that becomes more and more attractive to children that are under the age of legal use."

"I see some of the cannabis products that are gummies and other things that look like they are candies. I want to make sure that children are in fact protected," Testa said.

He believes the bill that was approved is going to be problematic.

"Look, the people of New Jersey spoke. They spoke very loudly this past election," he said. "The people want this to be legal so any opposition to its implementation ... (but) I find the legislation as it currently stands is overly burdensome in its tax structure. I think what should have been an easy lift for our Legislature, we've overcomplicated things and instead of eradicating the black market we are reinforcing the black market."

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