**From:** Joan Hoedel
**To:** Grp. City Council and City Web Site
**Subject:** Decriminalize entheogenic plants
**Date:** Saturday, July 2, 2022 1:55:50 PM

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I am writing in support of the measure to decriminalize entheogenic plants. I have a background in nursing and spirituality and currently work as a soul-centered life coach in Missoula.

I have spent my lifetime supporting people in their healing journey, and am well aware of the impact of emotions on health. People in our community are struggling with feelings of depression, hopelessness and anxiety. You have statistics that support that statement. You also know that suicide rates in Montana remain among the highest in the nation, as they have for at least 10 years.

People are searching for meaning and hope. There are many ways to support them in this journey. Plant medicine is one way people can wake up to the reality that there is more to life than what we experience with our 5 senses, in the 3D world we live. One experience of feeling connected to an energy of Love, the Divine, the Universe, whatever you want to call it - changes people's lives.

I am anti substance use for the purpose of getting, drunk or high because that route causes far more pain for people, than dealing with problems in a healthy way. Substance abuse is a huge problem in our community. But the solution is to look at the root cause for abuse of substances, which we are currently not doing very well.

I advocate for the strongest penalties available to people who sell or distribute illegal drugs because it's a big problem and far too many people are dying. Entheogenic plants are not the same as fentanyl, meth, oxy, coke, heroin or any other drug I'm not aware of.

There is a reason people turn to drugs and become addicted, or die from accidental overdoses. Let's find those reasons!

I propose that people are longing for a feeling of belonging and a reason to hope that their life matters. Entheogenic plants can help us support people in that process.

While we work on state-wide legalization, at least decriminalize its use in Missoula County.

Sincerely,

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