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# Hyannis Leaders Propose Boycott of Stores Selling New Synthetic Drug 'Spice'

July 15, 2015

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HYANNIS – The Greater Hyannis Civic Association came together last night to talk about a new drug on the streets called Spice. It is a synthetic version of marijuana that is legally sold at convenience stores.

Barnstable Police Chief Paul MacDonald gave a presentation about the drug to the group in a session billed as a return to Voices of the Village, the effort in 2011 organized to address urban crime and other quality of life issues in Hyannis.



CCB MEDIA PHOTOS  
 Barnstable Police Chief Paul MacDonald shows drug paraphernalia to members of the Hyannis Civic Association.

Last night's meeting in the conference room of the Steamship Authority facility on School Street attracted about two dozen people, including town officials.

MacDonald said that the chemicals used in the drug Spice are constantly changing, so it is difficult for officials to ban the substance. It is made up of shredded plant material and chemical additives that produce a psychoactive effect similar to marijuana when smoked.

He said the drug is not sold in chain convenience stores like 7-Eleven but rather in "mom and pop"-type stores.

Barnstable Police Detective Brian Gulney passed around packets of the drug to show people in attendance what the packaging looks like.

MacDonald said the substance is the new drug of choice particularly among homeless youth because it is relatively inexpensive and can be purchased at local stores.

MacDonald said the substance can have serious health affects, including giving the user suicidal tendencies.

Police have gone into stores carrying the drug to request that they not sell it as a way of being good neighbors and working collaboratively with the community.

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Barnstable Town Councilor Jennifer Cullum said she wants to take it a step further and boycott stores carrying the drug.

Cullum said she heard about the drug from Barnstable police officers in the Community Impact Unit.

One of the officers came to her a couple of months ago and told her, Cullum said, "You know we have this issue that's as big as heroin and no one is addressing it. It's the population of homeless or indigent people from 18 to 25 years old and it's ripping us apart and we have no way to manage it."

Cullum had the idea of having members of the Barnstable Youth Commission approach store owners to ask them not to sell the drug and to give them a sticker if they agree not to sell the drug.

The sticker could be placed on the store to let people know that the store is a good neighbor in the community.

"This is something we need to stand up and say, you need to be a better neighbor. We can't have you in our community. We won't tolerate you in our community if you can't behave," she said. "We have a lot to protect here. I really look forward to the youth commission's contribution to this."



Packets of the drug known as Spice, which is sold in convenience stores.

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