

Time better spent making laws

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You've got to admire the courage - blind though it may be - of city politicians Mike Del Grande and Jim Karygiannis in their efforts to curb the explosion of marijuana grow houses in their corner of Toronto.

Ward 39 Councillor Del Grande (Scarborough-Agincourt) and Liberal MP Karygiannis (Scarborough-Agincourt) have been busy knocking on doors in their neighbourhoods in a bid to identify and shut down these criminal operations.

Their commitment to ridding the city of marijuana grow houses is laudable. Their tactics, however, require some scrutiny.

Toronto Police brass is understandably jittery about the prospect of politicians doing what is essentially the legwork of law enforcement personnel.

Along with the danger of potentially putting themselves in harm's way, the effort by Del Grande and Karygiannis leads to a slew of legal questions that could ultimately work against the effort.

In cases where grow-ops might be discovered, are the politicians trespassing? Are they condoning and demonstrating vigilantism? Do they have any legal authority in the capacity in which they are knocking on doors?

Better to have these questions dealt with now, rather than in a criminal proceeding that could potentially see marijuana growers freed because of questionably acquired intelligence.

It's curious, too, that Del Grande and Karygiannis, who both have the mandate and the legal authority to create laws that could more effectively combat this societal scourge, are instead assuming the roles of police officers.

Better that they exert their collective effort at city hall and on Parliament Hill to reform existing municipal and federal laws - or create new ones - to make it more difficult for grow-ops to become established in residential homes in the first place.

Better that they use their considerable skills to marshal like-minded city leaders to move more quickly and effectively in that direction.

Surely Del Grande and Karygiannis would be far more effective working the policymakers than the street to achieve the same goal: the eradication of marijuana grow operations.

We know their hearts are in the right place. But neither Del Grande nor Karygiannis will be much good to their constituents - or the cause - if they happen to knock on the wrong door, at the wrong time, during their campaign.

We support the ongoing effort to make Toronto's neighbourhoods safer and rid our communities of these operations. But leave the intelligence gathering and enforcement to those whose expertise and training is better suited to the task.