

MINUTES
ESPARTO CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
September 19, 2023
7:00 p.m.
Esparto Regional Library, Wintun Room
17065 Yolo Ave, Esparto, CA 95627

Attending: Pat Harrison, John Hulsman Jr, Randy Jacobs, Giacomo Moris, Sandie Reed

Absent: Susan Cooper

MEETING ADMINISTRATION

- 1) CALL TO ORDER at 7:04 by Chair J. Hulsman
- 2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA
 - a) **Motion** to approve the agenda by S. Reed, second by R. Jacobs. Vote: all in favor, none opposed.
- 3) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES
 - a) **Motion** by R. Jacobs to approve the minutes from July. Second by S. Reed.
 - b) Vote: all present at that meeting in favor, none opposed, two abstentions (G. Moris and P. Harrison).
- 4) CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
 - a) R. Jacobs – Chamber Mixer event coming up Friday 9/22/23 5-7pm at Lucy's café.
 - b) J. Hulsman – Mark Frescas called about the condition of Lamb Valley Slough from Fremont Street to the Elementary school. He wanted the vegetation removed from the slough. John described the purpose of the ECAC and suggested he call Angel Barajas. Looks like the California Conservation Corps is going to clean it up.

PUBLIC FORUM

- 5) PUBLIC COMMENTS
- 6) COUNTY UPDATE (None)
- 7) INFORMATIONAL ITEM (none)
- 8) ACTION ITEMS
 - a) **ZF2022-0078**: Recommendation on the Woodland Roots & Yolo Family Farms Cannabis Use Permit application.
 - i) Stephanie Cormier and Jeff Anderson introduced the application and presented packet of maps and aerial views of the operation, as well as locations of the licensed cannabis operations within the ECAC comment area.

- (1) The applicants are currently co-operating at the site with 1 acre each, requesting 2 acres each so 4 total.
 - (2) Greenhouse and warehouse structures exist to process and dry trim the product, plus other containers for storage, office building.
 - (3) As part of the permit application, they are also asking for licenses for distribution and processing; which would allow them to take product from other operations and distribute it.
 - (4) No new proposed structures other than additional fencing.
 - (5) Site served by existing well, some new water lines to be run. Currently 10 employees which may double and more are needed at busier times like spring and fall - labor contractors are used.
 - (6) Most of draft conditions are per the CLUO.
- ii) J. Hulsman – Regarding the conditions, some seem excessive like requiring the 100 ft buffer upon finding wood with square nails (Page 7), while others use examples not applicable to the project such as found in the condition addressing waste water processing (Page 4).
 - iii) G. Moris asked for clarification on the expectation for ECAC’s recommendation tonight. Should it be based on allowing the cannabis operation in general or approving the permit and expansion as it pertains to the CLUO? Stephanie and Jeff felt the latter. G. Moris explained the committee’s recommendation for indoor cultivation only during the draft CLUO process and the negative experience and complaints received from the community.
 - (1) G. Moris suggested that the committee could recommend not to allow the use permit based on community input, even if there is alignment with the CLUO as there is a sunset clause for the interim ordinance created by the Ag Commissioner’s office.
 - (2) Stephanie explained that was a licensing program, but had no land use provisions for public process. They had to seek a yearly license. When CLUO was adopted, this provided a public process for permitting.
 - (3) Regarding the interim ordinance, the transition period will expire end of March 2024, but there is an extension process.
 - (4) J. Hulsman – what if Board of Supervisors decided not to extend? The County and applicants felt this was unlikely.
 - iv) G. Moris understood that the State allowed only 1 acre each. Stephanie clarified that was County requirement and the state allowed licenses to stack so there was multiple acreage.
 - v) Michael Hicks (applicant) noted the sales of the product would only to be to retail – not direct to consumer.
 - vi) Marian (public) – What is CLUO? Stephanie explained the Cannabis Land Use Ordinance acronym and purpose.
 - vii) Pat (public) – The permit is asking for an expansion of acres, but in March 2024 they could be told to close down. Jeff – This project likely to go to the Planning Commission prior to that date.
 - viii) J. Hulsman – Regarding the draft conditions of approval – how much work can be done on it? Do the applicants get an opportunity to edit? The applicants indicated that they thought they would.
 - ix) Michael – County has been doing a great job looking at what community concerns were. That cleared out a lot of other businesses that didn’t want to comply – was 70+, now down to 38. Regarding complaints, they have dissipated. He grew up in this County.

- x) J. Hulsman – The biggest complaint was odor control. Section 53 of the conditions addresses odor and requires a seven to one dilution ratio.
- xi) G. Moris noted that the neighbor to the south, Claire, was not able to make it tonight. She would be opposed to the permit. Michael noted that the newest neighbor behind them has been supportive.
- xii) P. Harrison expressed concern about the use of electricity and the use of water with any kind of new operation. Michael – outdoor is much less power consuming. No new power is being put out there. David (property owner) – they have an existing solar array.
- xiii) G. Moris mentioned that other growers going to indoor (green houses as opposed to buildings) to have more control on trace chemicals. Michael – yes, some are going to hoop houses, we are in good location not to need to go indoor. On the coast they would be more likely. G. Moris noted the fans on the hoop houses can be heard about a mile away. Michael – we don't want to be over-restrictive and block other farming. G. Moris – yes, but Cannabis currently does not have the "right to farm" status.
- xiv) Pat (public) questioned the use of water. Mark explained it was much less than grapes and orchards.
 - (1) J. Hulsman – there is a groundwater management plan and it will be a concern for all when the draw becomes unsustainable.
 - (2) Leo (public) – understands it takes 6 gallons a day per plant for 160 days, 3000 plants. He is concerned about all these operations that want to double their acres and the growers are out of the area. This (was contradicted by the applicant and property owner who were both from Yolo County.
- xv) Leo - Why did Esparto end up with a concentration of this industry?
 - (1) J. Hulsman explained the smaller parcels in this area of the County and Capay Valley were the draw for Cannabis operations that don't need more land to make a profit. Antiquated subdivision maps show an even greater amount of parcel subdivision that did not come to be. People who own property have rights, if the law allows and they are not a nuisance they can use their property as they wish. Leo expressed concern about the crime that would accompany the larger grow. J. Hulsman noted that his place was broken into 3 times before Cannabis, but hasn't since. Crime was an issue out here long before Cannabis. The sheriff is not here at the meeting with concerns.
 - (2) Leo's objection is 7 grows in a 3 mile radius. Are there armed guards? Michael – no. But there are guards around the clock when there is product
 - (3) Jeff and Stephanie explained the overconcentration parameters in the CLUO only applies to new applicants.
 - (a) G. Moris – if the operations in the ECAC comment area were all new, would this concentration be allowed?
 - (b) Marian said she would be concerned as a parent of school age kids with that many operations around. Like alcohol – temptation is a concern. J. Hulsman reminded that they are not selling direct. Stephanie noted in the CLUO there are distance requirements from sensitive land uses like schools.
 - (c) Michael – education is key. We need to explain the effects of cannabis on youth like short term memory loss.
 - (i) Leo – how do you keep them from doing it if you are selling it?
 - (ii) David – raised 7 kids on the property, some were still at home when the cannabis growing was started.
- xvi) S. Reed – What kind of security precautions do you have? Michael: Fencing, lights, video, alarms, guards – especially when there is product. Remote FOB's/ panic

buttons. Luckily no issues yet, sometimes people have come in the gates to talk to them. Being next to the creek, sometimes people have come into the creek doing drugs. They helped the County with the ATV issues when it was happening, and have been active with the community. Michael has worked on the medical cannabis side and saw nurses and others benefitting from using the product instead of opiates or other reasons. Maybe the pharmaceutical industry will make it synthetic and take over. For now, they have more regulations than organic. At least their product is not laced with pesticides or Fentanyl as can potentially be found on the illegal market.

- xvii) R. Jacobs asked if they are producing for medical or recreational – Mark - They don't classify so they can go either way.
 - xviii) G. Moris mentioned his main concern is concentration; although he also does not like the aesthetics of a fence and security on the otherwise pastoral landscape. Michael – they did not have an option on the Fence. It is required by the County since the operation is visible from the road. A fence keeps children out.
 - xix) R. Jacobs agreed with looking ahead, especially at concentration levels around Road 23.
 - xx) S. Reed likes that it brings in more jobs.
 - xxi) **Motion** by G. Moris to recommend approval of the use permit based on compliance with the CLUO, but for the Planning Commission to consider not approving the use permit based on ECAC's previously expressed desire not to have outdoor cannabis operations in the area. No second, motion failed.
 - xxii) **Motion** by S. Reed to recommend approval of the use permit based on compliance with the CLUO. Second by R. Jacobs.
- (1) Vote: Four in favor (P. Harrison, J. Hulsman, R. Jacobs, S. Reed), one opposed (G. Moris). Motion passes 4-1.

9) DISCUSSION ITEMS (None)

10) FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- a) S. Reed to invite CHP representative.

11) ADJOURNMENT

- a) **Motion** by P. Harrison to adjourn, second by R. Jacobs.
- b) Vote: All in favor, none opposed.
- c) Meeting adjourned at 8:33 pm.

COMMUNITY FORUM

GLM
9/25/23

GLM
10/04/23