

MAY 18 2023

Planning & Building Services

May 16, 2023

Dear Planning Commissioners,

There are neighbors participating in the Cannabis Opt-Out zoning request who have lived adjacent to the proposed commercial cannabis site for 40 plus years. Those owners and adjacent neighbors who have lived peacefully alongside the vineyard and related activities for years or decades now find their rural peaceful life being threatened. Allowing a commercial cannabis site within this rural setting will drastically change the area and the rural atmosphere. It is true the land in question is zoned agricultural but a commercial cannabis grow cannot be compared to a vineyard. The current established and thriving vineyard utilizes the pond and Ag water a few times per year for frost protection and irrigation prior to harvest, while cannabis requires daily irrigation. The vineyard produces one crop per year whereas there can be multiple cannabis grows, resulting in near year-round irrigation.

Proponents of the proposed commercial cannabis site have told adjacent land owners their property values will decrease if the Opt-Out zoning is approved, when in fact, the opposite is true. Property values go down in value when commercial cannabis is grown in the adjacent area. This translates into many owners seeing their homes and property devalued and see fewer prospective buyers. Should so many owners lose value in their property to accommodate the commercial cannabis grower? Consideration should be given to the owners who have owned in this rural community for decades, raising families, contributing to the community, paying property taxes to Mendocino County.

The Rd H and Rd E parcels were purchased as an established and thriving vineyard. The current owner removed vines to put in a new road and 14 hoop houses and then proceeded to grow illegally. If the Opt-Out is approved, the owner will still have the producing vineyard as a source of income.

The Mendocino Cannabis Alliance stated that cannabis businesses have contributed millions of dollars to the general fund, whereas we have read in the Ukiah Daily Journal that tax revenue from cannabis grown in Mendocino County has fallen far below what was expected. This would indicate that commercial cannabis is not the revenue producing business it has been purported to be.

Javier Rau stated that ordinance 10A.17 encourages cannabis farms be cultivated on parcels zoned AG and particularly on the valley floors. It would appear the intent with commercial cannabis farming is to replace small residential parcels, vineyards and the small cannabis being grown for personal use with acres of hoop houses as seen in Covelo. Mr. Rau further suggests that traffic and water concerns stated in the Opt-Out application may be caused by unregulated farms in the area and not by any current or proposed commercial cannabis grows within the delineated district. This appears to be an attempted distraction from the issues of quality of life, property values and environmental concerns stated in the Opt-Out application.

There is a place for commercial cannabis and there is a place for rural residential land owners to raise their families, plant their vegetables, flower gardens and have small fruit orchards, along with a small legal cannabis grow. The two are not compatible and as during drought times, residential water is put before Ag water, rural residents should be put before commercial farms in a rural area.

Thank you,



Kathleen Gilley