



COUNTY OF LAKE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Courthouse-255 N. Forbes Street
Lakeport, California 95453
Planning Division · Building Division · Code Enforcement Division
707/263-2221 · FAX 707/263-2225

Mireya Turner
Interim Community Development Director

COUNTY OF LAKE
CANNABIS TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES
CONFERENCE ROOM B
Meeting Held Remotely through Zoom
August 15, 2022
1:00 PM

STAFF PRESENT

Mireya Turner, CDD Deputy Director
Andrew Amelung, Cannabis Program Manager
Jake Reinke, Information Systems Analyst II

TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT

Katherine Vanderwall
Will Weiss
Jan Coppinger
Jennifer Smith
Nara Dahlbacka

TASK FORCE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Robert Geary
Rebecca Harper

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Bart Levenson
Paul Bernacchio
Zarro Sabev
Angela Amoral

1. Call to Order
2. Introductions and Welcome
3. Review of Minutes
4. Establishing Ground Rules



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At 1:09pm Staff introduced the item and requested members to be mindful of each other and to focus on the task of providing recommendations to the Board of Supervisors to streamline the existing Cannabis Use Permit.

At 1:13pm A Task Force member requested a ground rule regarding online notifications on when the meetings will occur, and additional meeting details. The Cannabis Program manager clarified that the agendas are posted in the front of the courthouse. Staff plans to place the agenda up on the Community Development Department website, when the website overhaul is completed at the end of the year, and the website is available for editing. Plans are also in place to put the recorded meetings up on the County YouTube channel. Clarification was also provided that all meetings are public.

At 1:19pm Deputy Director Turner provided a procedural rule that would mirror the public input section of Board of Supervisor meetings, in that each input would occur within a certain time limit, and that the Task Force could not address nor act on public input. If warranted, comments could instead be scheduled for a future agenda.

At 1:21pm Staff brought up the question on whether issues would be decided by consensus or vote.

At 1:25pm Member of the public Bart Levenson noted that some Task Force members were not able to attend last week's meeting, and posed the question on how their absence would be handled in terms of voting? Also noted was that a role call was not done at the beginning of today's meeting.

At 1:29pm Deputy Director Turner recommended that if a Quorum is reached within a meeting, that voting would still occur. If a Task Force member is absent, that member would not get to vote. Additionally, bringing public comment to the entire Task Force during meetings, in lieu of reaching out to members individually, or via other meetings would be ideal.

5. Discussion of Vision

At 1:33pm The Cannabis Program Manager opened with a question of what the Task Force envisioned for Cannabis in Lake County.

At 1:33pm Task Force member Nara Dahlbacka offered that the Ordinance should normalize Cannabis, similar to how the Wine industry has been normalized in terms of tourism, accessibility, and uplifting the smaller and larger businesses that have relocated here. Lake County Cannabis regulation should also operate within the existing State framework.

At 1:34pm Task Force member Jan Coppinger offered that the new ordinance should keep everyone's interests in mind, while also allowing Commercial Cannabis to succeed.



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At 1:35pm Task Force member Jennifer Smith brought up that the Cannabis industry has been shown to be saturated with illegal activity to the general public. Farm tours and activities would help reintroduce Cannabis as a sustainable, normalized industry. Rezoning Cannabis projects so they are more aligned with the State, and a Programmatic EIR may be a more sustainable way to go in the future.

At 1:41pm Staff agreed that reviewing the current zoning for Cannabis projects would be helpful. When the Board of Supervisors initially set up the Cannabis Ordinance, Cannabis was zoned away from residential areas. Unintentionally, the areas where the projects are currently located are now running into water issues. Similarly, we would need to look at what potential issues the rezoning of Cannabis could cause.

At 1:46pm Task Force member Will Weiss brought up the need for the new ordinance to be extremely comprehensive and able to weather complicated questions.

At 1:47pm Task Force member Nara Dahlbacka argued that if a Programmatic EIR for Cannabis is created, this document could lessen the processing demands of Cannabis applications for both staff and applicants. Additionally, envisioning Cannabis as a sustainable crop that can help manage water use would be helpful to normalize Cannabis in Lake County. There are a number of sites around the County, with original agricultural uses (e.g. walnut farms), where instating Cannabis would be an improvement in water usage.

At 1:49pm Member of the public Bart Levenson asked how the new ordinance would reflect addressing issues of historical drought and fire evacuation routes when compared with the historical short staffing of Lake County departments? Would Lake County departments be able to carry out the requirements in the new ordinance?

At 1:50pm Staff reaffirmed that the Task Force is open for anyone to weigh in on these issues. During the next meeting the Lake County Tax Collector will be present.

At 1:51pm Member of the public Zarro Sabev predicted that Cannabis would eventually become an agricultural product, and thus keeping in mind tourism activities, similar to the Wine industry, would be ideal. Activities such as Bed and Breakfasts, onsite consumption, bud-tasting (like Wine Tasting), special events, membership shipment (mailing – eventually but not legal yet, similar to “box clubs” like wine). Eventually, a Lake County brand of Cannabis could be recognizable. Lake County growers are already producing their own unique strains.

At 1:53pm Staff brought up that keeping an awareness of active legislation at the State level would be helpful in envisioning what Cannabis could become in Lake County. With proper language, upcoming legislation could be predicted in the Ordinance.



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At 2:00pm Task Force member Jennifer Smith suggested (similar to other counties) that anyone on a Cannabis farm less than 90 days would not have to go through a background check. This would make harvest season easier on the growers and would allow tourists to come on the property for events or tastings.

At 2:02pm A Public commenter asked for an explanation of a Programmatic EIR

At 2:03pm The Cannabis Program Manager gave the following overview. Under the California Environmental Quality Act, each land use project must undergo an individual assessment for how it will impact the environment. If significant impacts are uncovered (e.g. within Wildfire, Noise, Water Use, or other categories), mitigation measures may be required to make those effects less than significant. If the impacts cannot be mitigated, then a project-level Environmental Impact report must be prepared that assess these impacts throughout the project area and cumulatively in the surrounding area. A Programmatic EIR for Cannabis would be a study on how this industry (Cannabis) would affect the County as a whole. Once this would be completed, peer-reviewed and accepted, the programmatic EIR could then be a helpful measure to assess how each project would fit into the identified impacts.

At 2:04pm Deputy Director Turner further clarified that for applicants and staff, this would mean less to do in the CEQA assessment process, as the wheel wouldn't have to be reinvented each time. There would be a framework within which each project would need to conform.

At 2:06pm Member of the public Zarro Sabev asked if a Programmatic EIR is currently in process with Lake County for Cannabis?

At 2:07pm Deputy Director Turner clarified that talks for a Programmatic EIR would start at the Board of Supervisors and that the work for this would most likely fall to an outside company.

At 2:08pm Member of the public Bart Levenson brought up a concern that the cumulative effects of Cannabis grows in an area would need to be addressed in the new ordinance for the health of County watersheds.

Ms. Levenson also asked how workers would be housed, keeping in mind the shortage of housing in Lake County. In addition, the market has had an extreme price drop, and as was evidenced at recent Board of Supervisor hearings, growers can't afford to pay their taxes. How will these issues be addressed in the new ordinance?

At 2:10pm Staff agreed that that these topics would be good for future meeting discussions. Geospatial analysis will be able to help answer these questions that are data-driven and not based on speculation.



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At 2:12pm Member of the public Paul Bernacchio commented on advertising. There aren't Cannabis products that are currently branded as "Lake County Made", so partnering with other business to help advertise Lake County Cannabis would be a beneficial relationship.

At 2:13pm Staff relayed that talks of a Lake County certification for environmental standards has been floating around.

At 2:14pm Task Force member Will Weiss brought up a Motion to accept the minutes from last meeting, which was seconded and accepted.

6. Public Comments

At 2:16pm A member of the public requested a section to be added to current permits on estimated water usage. Additionally, a question was raised on current staff's ability to review Hydrology reports.

At 2:24pm Staff clarified that applicants are required to provide this information in their Property Management Plans, and further expand upon water usage in their Hydrology Reports. Eventually hiring a Hydrogeologist on staff to peer review the Hydrology Reports would be helpful. As it stands, the Hydrology Report and Property Management Plan are sent as part of the Initial Study package to the CEQA State Clearinghouse for expert review. Experts in hydrogeology will have the chance to weigh in on the reports at this time.

7. Set Next Meeting Date

At 2:29pm Staff discussed the next meeting would be held in two weeks on Monday, August 29th at 1pm and would address public commentary from the Cannabis Workshops held on May 25th and 26th 2022.

8. Adjournment

At 2:30pm the meeting adjourned.