

for sale by owner

farm+garden

favorite

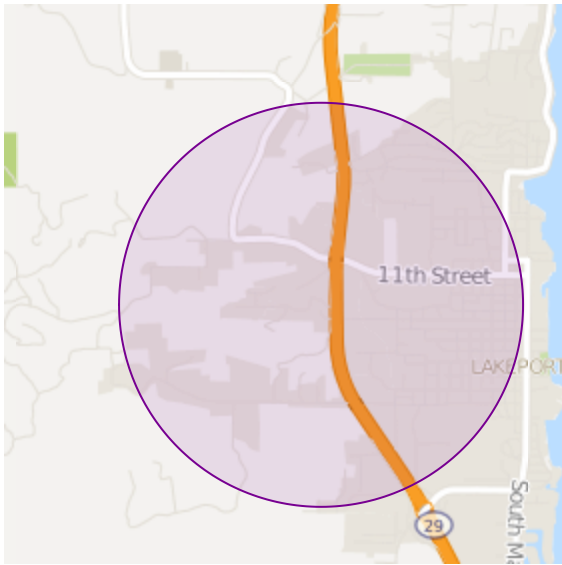
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Posted 2024-04-25 16:31 on: about a month ago

Contact Information:

25 Plus acres - \$1,300,000 (Lake County)



condition: good

25 acres for cultivation, 5 acres already in use for cultivation. 2 licenses, 1 for hemp and 1 for cannabis. Flat- all usable for more cultivation. 2 bedroom, 1 bath house. Fourth wheel in good condition. Four existing shops. 2 wells- 53 gal per minute, and 20 gal per minute. 2 meters- 1 for farm, 1 for house. Concrete pad poured for 9,600 sq ft- 22ft tall metal building on site. All plumbing installed for bathroom and shower.

Permit for 22,000sq ft for cannabis.

For rent or sale

Finance available

QR Code Link to This Post





Monday, June 3, 2024

Chairman Bruno Sabatier
Lake County Board of Supervisors
Via email

Dear Supervisor Sabatier,

We're writing to ask that the Board of Supervisors reconsider its deeply flawed, biased and unreasonable granting of the appeal to John Oliver and Leo Cortina of Higher Ground Farms on April 23, and not move forward with the findings of fact scheduled for your Tuesday meeting.

The record of findings you have provided as the basis of granting the appeal is based primarily on false information — including mischaracterizations by Supervisor Michael Green and outright falsehoods presented by planning staff. As such, at the very least, the record should be purged of those statements and resubmitted.

Among the most egregious aspects of the April 23 hearing was that the board ignored the record of significant public opposition to the project and the overwhelming amount of information we provided — hundreds of pages of evidence, in fact — and instead granted the appellant's appeal based on only one sentence, a claim that the project met all of the regulations, that he submitted in writing.

Planning staff then manufactured, during the hearing, information submitted to you as “material facts” that were, in fact, provably false. They have consistently attacked us as a way of helping to bolster Higher Ground Farms, which they are treating as a client, and that practice continued during the hearing.

Among the most outrageous claims put forward by the principal planner — as the planning director sat beside her and looked on, without taking any action to correct her — was that the Kelsey Creek Schoolhouse had been moved to its current location next to the property where the marijuana grow is planned several years ago. It was not. We have told them that repeatedly, both verbally and in writing, that such was not the case. The information we have shows the school has been there since 1882.

In short, your principal planner committed perjury, under oath, on the spot, as her boss said nothing.

Trying to claim staff didn't know or made a mistake — after we had told them, in person, and submitted documents about the building's history numerous times — doesn't work. That dog don't hunt — especially considering how the county promoted the principal planner's hire for the experience she supposedly has. Someone with her purported level of experience shouldn't be that negligent, biased and sloppy.

The defective nature of the hearing — which wasn't even noticed properly to begin with — only continued. Later in the hearing, when planning staff continued to make false statements, you did not let us respond to them, thus depriving us of our due process and right to address your staff's falsehoods.

Ahead of that hearing, we requested that staff and county officials declare any relationships with the applicants. That request was ignored.

In addition, no ex parte discussions were disclosed at the board meeting. We know there have been several. One of those included a phone call we received from Supervisor Green in January, days after the Planning Commission denied the project, telling us that the county had approved the project. At first we thought he was merely mistaken, then we realized that he was telling us what the board intended to do. This is more evidence of an unfair process.

That there was no disclosure of ex parte discussions and contacts is important, since the majority of the board appeared to have already made up their minds, as evidenced by Supervisor Green's comments.

If it's all a foregone conclusion, why go through this absurd pantomime that you actually are interested in public comment? This board clearly is not. Decisions are made and minds set well before you ever come into the room. The board has proved that time and again.

Most troubling of all — Community Development Director Mireya Turner and her staff consistently discounted our concerns and have made it abundantly clear that they mean to throw every imaginable obstacle in the way of our restoration and reuse of the historic schoolhouse by treating it as a modern building, triggering significant alterations to a historic building.

How good a project can Higher Ground Farms be if planning staff has to attack the neighbors and present wholesale fabrications of neighboring properties in an effort to bolster Higher Ground's case? What unspoken benefit exists in this dynamic?

After months of ignoring the concerns we raised a year ago, planning staff only met with us at the last minute before the Jan. 11 Planning Commission, at which time minor concessions were granted. Those concessions were then used against us by Supervisor Green and planning staff at the April 23 hearing to suggest we had been willing to support the project, when that was never the case. That's like saying a person with a gun to their head is showing support for the person who is holding the gun.

This entire situation has exhibited one more example of the politics of personal grudge, which appears to be the operational foundation for the county of Lake's government leaders of late.

Director Turner and her staff have shown clear bias throughout this process. Their actions have made clear that they are in fact lobbying for such projects, ignoring concerns, making false assurances about followup and, in the case of the hearing, making statements that they knew to be provably false in order to insert their bias into the board's decision making. And, apparently, it worked.

That this situation has culminated in a senior planning staffer lying under oath is enormously problematic and requires serious investigation by the county and law enforcement officials with the ability to hold the individual accountable. Otherwise, it makes a complete mockery of the entire public hearing process. Why administer the oath to anyone if staff can simply lie and get away with it? Is that oath merely to intimidate the public into telling the truth while the county holds itself exempt?

This entire process has, in our minds, shattered the last vestiges of whatever credibility the county planning staff has. They are overseeing a farce, and you're OK with it.

Supervisor Green also made several erroneous statements about our project in an attempt to insert numerous red herrings into the process. One of the most ridiculous is that the little schoolhouse, which has been there for 142 years, is a danger to the as-yet nonexistent marijuana grow. He has had a clear lobbying role for the appellant and we wonder why no disclosures or recusal on his part were required.

Furthermore, the fact that the appellant assured you of his plans to move forward with this project as proposed, and then two days after the hearing listed it on Craigslist for sale, should raise an enormous number of questions.

By the way, the fact that the property is listed on Craigslist with a Lakeport address is clearly and intentionally misleading, since the city of Lakeport doesn't allow such cannabis projects within its boundaries. It's the exact project, and the amount of money is the property's original purchase price plus the ridiculous \$900,000 the owner claimed he's put into the property. You wouldn't know it from looking at it.

The listing remains active:

<https://mendocino.craigslist.org/grd/d/lakeport-25-plus-acres/7740862863.html>.

If you read the ad, you'll notice that it says both hemp and marijuana can be grown there. That is the exact statement that Mr. Cortina made during the hearing and which you, Supervisor Sabatier, had to correct him on, yet there it is again.

A further note on Supervisor Green's involvement. During the phone call after the January Planning Commission meeting, he invited us to apply for cannabis mitigation funds, which seemed both puzzling and generous at the time.

After we did, we heard nothing until after the board's hearing on the appeal. In fact, it was on April 25 — the same day that the Higher Ground property went up for sale on Craigslist — that Supervisor Green texted us to open further conversations about the schoolhouse. We were reluctant to have these discussions because we believed they were an attempt at a negotiation. Because the hearing process was not yet final, we did not believe it was appropriate to participate.

More recently, on Memorial Day, Supervisor Green arrived unannounced at a business we own, curiously urging us not to hire an attorney over the situation where the inappropriate nature of the communications was made clear again. That suggests he realizes there is liability on the part of the county and isn't clear on ethical issues.

It was days after that when we received the \$20,000 check.

This entire process has lacked accountability, credibility and sanity. The behavior of planning staff and county leadership has been an enormous embarrassment throughout this process. You're incentivizing bad behavior by allowing people to lie under oath about projects, thus preventing the kind of transparency and accountability community members rely on when making decisions about their lives and property.

The only "facts" we've found is the mockery the county has made of the public hearing and planning process, and seeing staff get away with conspiring to override the public participation process with lies and manipulations.

The Board of Supervisors is dangerously out of step with the Lake County community. It needs to do better to serve our community, and that includes denying bad projects like Higher Ground Farms.

Sincerely,



John Jensen
President/Co-founder
Lucerne Area Revitalization Association



Elizabeth Larson
Secretary/Co-founder

Attachment:

Craigslist sales ad

Michelle Irace under oath video clip link

<https://www.lakeit.net/MichelleIraceunderoathApril23,%202024.mov>

CC: Lake County Grand Jury

California Attorney General's Office

Lake County District Attorney's Office