
**PLUMAS COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION
DRAFT**

Minutes of the Meeting of July 11, 2019

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Dr. Robert Abbott, Chair (District 1)
Moorea Hoffman Stout, Commissioner (District 2)
Jeff Greening, Commissioner (District 3)
Larry Williams, Commissioner (District 4)
John Olofson, Vice-Chair (District 5)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice- Chair John Olofson calls the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

III. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Jeff Greening, Larry Williams, John Olofson, Moorea Hoffman Stout

Commissioners Absent: Dr. Robert Abbott

Also in attendance (Supervisors and staff)

Rebecca Herrin, Assistant Planning Director

Tim Evans, Assistant Planner

Gretchen Stuhr, Deputy County Counsel III

IV. CONSENT ITEMS

A. Items to be continued or withdrawn from the agenda. None.

V. PLANNING COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS/COMMENTS:

Commissioner Moorea Stout reads a letter from a District 2 constituent. The constituent is concerned that the public hearing for the proposed commercial cannabis (and personal cultivation of cannabis) ordinance was scheduled at a time that kept working people from attending. It is also difficult for people to speak in favor of cannabis as they feel stigmatized. Speaking in a public forum may impact their personal and professional lives.

Vice-Chair John Olofson responds that the comments are duly noted.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

There are no public comments.

VII. **CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING ITEM: PROPOSED ORDINANCE AMENDING PLUMAS COUNTY CODE TITLE 9 (PLANNING AND ZONING) TO IMPLEMENT PROCEDURES TO PERMIT COMMERCIAL CANNABIS RETAILER/DISPENSARY AND DISTRIBUTOR AND TO ESTABLISH STANDARDS FOR PERSONAL CULTIVATION OF CANNABIS:** Public hearing and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors by adoption of resolution. This public hearing was continued from June 20, 2019.

Assistant Planning Director Rebecca Herrin gives the staff report and reviews the changes made to the ordinance as a result of the June 20, 2019 meeting.

Vice-Chair Olofson explains the public hearing procedures and opens the public hearing.

Kelly Williamson thanks the Commissioners. She recently moved back to the area. She states that she has watched the town suffer from loss of businesses, logging, resulting in reduced revenues. The area needs jobs. Williamson explains that she is a cannabis proponent because she believes in natural products, and not in pharmaceuticals. She feels that cannabis products will be the next big business and that there are appropriate locations to have these businesses located, on the outskirts of town, in the commercial and industrial areas. She states that proper security should alleviate the crime concerns. She feels that the businesses would provide a needed revenue stream.

Susan Christensen quotes Marshall McLuen "the medium is the message". Allowing retail outlets sends a message to youth and works to normalize a product that is a drug. She feels that commercial cannabis operations would not enhance the community.

Joseph Munoz states his opinion that the failure of Measure B is data to show that county residents do not want commercial cannabis operations.

Jim Schaber thanks the Commission for an opportunity to speak. He asks the Commission to not place unreasonable restrictions on outdoor personal grows. Schaber explains that he tolerates issues in his neighborhood such as smells and flies from livestock and feels he deserves the same courtesy without complaints about the number of his personal plants, lack of filtration systems, locks on greenhouses, etc. He feels that the citizens group has a personal agenda, but that the pot-growing community contains good people. Schaber comments that there are bigger problems with youth in our communities such as obesity, diabetes, social media that require monitoring, not issues such as whether six cannabis plants can be grown outside for personal use.

Taurin Wilson suggests that the language be changed from "six living plants" to "six mature plants". More seeds must be planted to result in six mature cannabis plants that produce. Perhaps twelve seedlings to result in six mature plants. He feels that the issue of allowing dispensaries should be left on the table. The bars and pubs in town do not negatively impact the community.

Tracy DuBord gives a heartfelt thank you to the Commission for listening to the majority.

Pete Hentschel speaks to the issue as a 50-year occasional user. The focus is on commercial right now, when perhaps it should be in the future. He cites Oregon as an example where cannabis was legalized and then there was no market. California is similar in that there are not enough existing permitted sales facilities to sell the product that is being produced; the State is

seeing 40% of the expected revenue. Hentschel feels that it is wise to move slowly; perhaps table the matter for two or three years. It also needs to be regulated and he feels we don't have the staff to do that.

Christi Goodman, of Lake Davis campground, and Plumas County Growers Association speaks to the value of hemp production vs. cannabis. She feels that there are natural limitations on cannabis production and sales. The elimination of cultivation and manufacturing from the ordinance eliminated all jobs and the ability for anyone to make a living.

Gordon Glain, of East Quincy, objects to the number of meetings held to discuss this issue when it is clear that the majority of the voters did not want anything to do with cannabis. He urges the Commission to make a decision.

Greg Kinne states that he attended a few meetings of the Cannabis Working Group and liked what the Working Group produced; he feels it was a sound ordinance. This meeting has produced a good spectrum of comments. He urges the Commission to advance the ordinance as it is written and thanks the Commissioners for their efforts.

Bill Stivers also thanks the Commissioners for their time and efforts. He adds that the correct way forward is no commercial activity as the vote against Measure B showed.

Vice-Chair Olofson closes the public hearing at 10:38 am.

Commissioner Jeff Greening points to the comments from Joe Hagwood and Sheriff Greg Hagwood regarding the problem; he feels that they have personal knowledge of the problem. There is product available and there is the ability for personal cultivation of cannabis of six plants. He states that half the state has banned dispensaries at the moment and enforcement is difficult. Also, there is an aging, declining population. He maintains his position that the proposed ordinance should not contain retail/dispensary or distributor.

Commissioner Larry Williams states that the big problem is the tacit approval by the public and the Board of Supervisors of black market sales.

Commissioner Moorea Stout shares Williams' concerns. Prohibition of alcohol led to more problems. However, she is not comfortable with allowing dispensaries.

Commissioner Greening adds that Chico, a college town and liberal, still does not allow dispensaries.

Commissioner Stout feels that it seems a shame that the work produced by the Cannabis Working Group was not considered by the Planning Commission and by the Board of Supervisors. Assistant Planning Director Rebecca Herrin provides a brief overview of the process to date, including the ordinance produced by the Cannabis Working Group, as well as other ordinances produced by citizens groups that never went to public hearings for review.

Vice-Chair Olofson explains that civic participation, or lack thereof, is a problem in the County. There is no perfect time or day to hold meetings. Evening meetings were held during the General Plan Update and attendance was better.

Olofson explains that the issue before the Commission today is dispensaries and recommendations on commercial cannabis operations. Hemp is not before the Commission today. He feels the testimony is similar to that received at the last meeting and he is impressed by the character of the community. It appears that a strong majority does not want dispensaries. Commissioner Williams states that he has one more comment: The ability for the County to allow dispensaries will die in the Planning Commission and he blames the state for that. Every agency in Sacramento is too restrictive for a county this size. Regulations, taxes, and levies will allow the black market to flourish.

Vice-Chair Olofson feels that the local government is not broken. He calls for a motion.

M/S/C: Stout/Williams to change the language in the draft ordinance from “six living plants” to “six mature plants”.

Deputy County Counsel Gretchen Stuhr advises that this is an enforcement issue and that there may be a problem with determination of the requirements; for example the number of seedlings involved, when the seedlings are thinned, time of thinning being close to harvest, sex of the plants, etc. She states that the existing language would be easier to enforce. She adds that, with multiple seedlings, complaints would be unlikely, versus multiple large immature plants.

Commissioner Stout explains that she was trying to advocate for the people in her district. She withdraws her motion.

M/S/C: Greening/Williams/4-0 to leave the language in the draft ordinance as “six living plants”.

VIII. PRESENTATION OF 2018 GENERAL PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Assistant Planning Director Herrin presents the report. Vice-Chair Olofson would like the Commission to spend time reviewing the General Plan in the future.

M/S/C: Williams/Greening/4-0 to forward the General Plan Annual Progress Report to the Board of Supervisors with recommendation for acceptance.

IX. WORKSHOP/DISCUSSION: INITIATION OF PLUMAS COUNTY GENERAL PLAN HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE

No comments are received.

X. ADJOURNMENT:

M/S/C: Williams/Greening/4-0 to adjourn the meeting. The meeting is adjourned at 11:45 am. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission will be held on July 18, 2019.



John Olofson, Vice-Chair
Plumas County Planning Commission



Rebecca Herrin, Assistant Planning Director