

04/11/16

Okanogan County Meeting

Now that the horse is out of the barn, the county representatives are scrambling to contain the mess. Regardless of your pro or con opinion to the legality of cannabis, the issue here tonight is how the county representatives thoughtless approach to non-regulation of cannabis growing operations has now impacted good peoples lives and dreams.

Enclosures (1-5) depict a number of but not all residential properties that have been here on North Pine Creek for a number of years. Each of these homes are valued at or near \$200-400K. Previous to this situation, none of these land owners were concerned with the management of agricultural crops relative to sight sound or smell. All purchased these home because of the ambiance of the surrounding area. Life was good.

Enclosed (6-10) are a number of various pictures depicting the unsightly, haphazardly structured grows with modular structures, RV's all of which now hinder and degrade the former rural appeal. Even some of the sites with well constructed fences and buildings evoke a commercial air reducing the sight lines and the feel of a rural environment. Regardless in all cases the smell or hostile lighting ruin any sense of country charm.

It seems the genesis of the present situation lies with the misrepresentation of our county commissioners. Per a December 2013 Chronicle article by Jennifer Marshal, County forgoes permit process for Marijuana, "commissioners say they don't want over regulation." With no regulation we have now allowed arbitrary placement of grow facilities in established residential neighborhoods. Unregulated annoying emissions(smells) are mandated in WAC 173.400.040(5), addressing extreme odor emissions (extreme to persons that don't have the same appreciation for the smell of cannabis). Radiated light as illustrated in enclosure 6 resembles the skyline of downtown Seattle. Additionally large volumes of haphazard employee parking extending out to the edge of the right away create potential road hazards.

The pro Cannabis people state they want to be good neighbors, but based on the input from the last meeting the attitude was, "if my grow operation offends thee, close your shades and shut your windows." And relative to good neighbors, according to tax records, the land owners and pro cannabis support persons mailing addresses are in Kirkland, Lake Stevens and Everett, there are no permanent residences on sight.

These people declare that the profitability success of cannabis was near \$100M last year with projections of \$150M this year. Yet our PUD that continues to ever increase our rates provided \$976K for the green energy infrastructure of these operations. Why?

One of our illustrious land saviors and benefactors Mr. Greg James wrote in his new periodical, "Marijuana Venture" December 2015, and I quote, "The local economy reflects the eclectic mix of the community, which is mostly made up of hippies going back to the land and cowboys that never left. Cattle ranching, fruit and home grown cannabis dominate the scene." What does that mean? We're not worthy of the consideration to be civil regarding entry to our neighborhoods? According to him it's all about the money. Now after all the bragging of the profitability and projections of the next NAPA Valley tourism rush. Mr. James who owns roughly 1,500-2,000 acres in the Pine Creek area, a good portion of which was acquired by public funds.

Why are we not seeing any construction for grow operations near Mr. James modest 5,600sqft cabin, W/guest house and a caretaker home. Given the projected rage of tourism and growth, one would think he would be creating the infrastructure to support that.

As an after thought for the lack of regulatory review, tell me this. Are these operations which have numerous RV on site permitted? Is their septic systems approved for the support of same? Are water rights granted for support of the operations once the irrigation has been shut down?

Maybe the non-regulation regarding this matter should now be in the fore front. Maybe the county needs to set zoning to support the grows and protect land owners in residential areas all of which the WSLCB regulatory guidance tried to provide. Spokane County used to provide, "Rules of the west". If an existing farm or agricultural crop, or unimproved roads offend you, "Don't Buy Land Here" The same applies to the grows, if your operation smells, radiates or creates unnecessary noise and distress, "Don't build it here.

Now come to think of it, do any of our state and county representatives have a grow near their homes and neighborhoods? Considering the fact that there are nearly 1200 additional applications for grows have been submitted, some one might want to address these issues before moving forward.

Thank you,
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