

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WATSONVILLE



November 2, 2021

6:04 PM

In accordance with City policy, all Planning Commission meetings are recorded on audio and video in their entirety and are available for review in the Community Development Department (CDD). These minutes are a brief summary of action taken.

1. ROLL CALL

Chair Jenni Veitch-Olson, Vice-Chair Veronica Dorantes-Pulido and Commissioners Ed Acosta (arrived at 6:06 p.m.), Gina Cole, Daniel Dodge, Anna Kammer, Lucy Rojas were present.

Staff members present were City Attorney Alan Smith, Community Development Director Suzi Merriam, Interim Assistant Police Chief Jorge Zamora, Principal Planner Justin Meek, Principal Planner Matt Orbach, Associate Planner Ivan Carmona, City Interpreter Carlos Landaverri, City Interpreter Angelica Jauregui, Administrative Analyst Maria Elena Ortiz, and Executive Assistant Deborah Muniz.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Veitch-Olson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. PRESENTATIONS & ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

A. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

B. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Dodge congratulated City Manager Matt Huffaker on his new job with the City of Santa Cruz.

Commissioner Kammer thanked City Planning staff for their work and effort they do on a daily basis.

Commissioner Cole reported on the outcome of the "Bike, Walk & Roll to School Day" held on October 21. Thirty-eight schools County-wide including 11 Watsonville schools and over 2,500 school children participated. She commended Ecology Action for organizing the event and thanked the schools for their participation.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

A. MOTION APPROVING MINUTES OF JUNE 1, 2021, JULY 13, 2021, AND SEPTEMBER 7, 2021 REGULAR MEETINGS

MOTION: It was moved by Commissioner Kammer, seconded by Commissioner Rojas, and carried by the following vote to approve the Consent Agenda:

AYES:	COMMISSIONERS:	Acosta, Cole, Dodge, Dorantes-Pulido, Kammer, Rojas, Veitch-Olson
NOES:	COMMISSIONERS:	None
ABSENT:	COMMISSIONERS:	None

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. SPECIAL USE PERMIT WITH ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (APPLICATION NO. 1829) TO ALLOW FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CANNABIS CULTIVATION AND PROCESSING FACILITY LOCATED AT 123 LEE ROAD SUITES C-G (APN: 018-391-03)

1) Staff Report

Staff report was given by Associate Planner Carmona.

2) Planning Commission Clarifying & Technical Questions

In answering Commissioner Dodge, Associate Planner Carmona confirmed the residency requirement is one of the nine criteria and the applicant only has to meet three. The Cannabis Equity Program was established in 2017 and the nine criteria were created.

In answering Commissioner Dodge, Associate Planner Carmona clarified that the same stockholders for DFFK currently operate Crème de Canna Collective, a cannabis manufacturing and distribution facility at another location within the City. Crème de Canna Collective currently does not possess a cannabis cultivation license; however, DFFK is applying for the cannabis cultivation license.

Director Merriam stated that during the cannabis interview process, staff pays close attention that the businesses do not own more than one license for manufacturing, distribution or cultivation.

In acknowledging Commissioner Dodge's concern regarding the Indian burial site located behind the project site and adjacent to the slough, Associate Planner Carmona stated he did research the project site and discovered an

agreement was made between the City and the Ohlone Indian tribe to not disturb the burial site.

City Attorney Smith stated the owner of the property is well aware of the burial site and was also included in the agreement.

In answering Commissioner Rojas, Associate Planner Carmona stated that three of the nine criteria can be met by either the cannabis owners, their employees or customers.

In answering Chair Veitch-Olson regarding the equity program benefits, Director Merriam replied presently the City can only offer the waiver of the permit fees.

3) Applicant Presentation

Co-owners Allan Flores, Mark Davis and Jacob Ferrar were present.

4) Planning Commission Clarifying & Technical Questions

In answering Commissioner Dodge regarding the right for workers to organize a union, Mr. Davis replied he agrees.

In answering Chair Veitch-Olson regarding the co-owners' business background, Mr. Flores, Mr. Davis and Mr. Ferrar each gave a brief summary of their business background.

In answering Chair Veitch-Olson regarding what type of community benefits would be provided, Mr. Davis stated working with advocacy groups that support child development such as the Police Activities League and Friends of Watsonville Parks and Community Services. Mr. Flores stated they are donating 1% to the community.

In answering Commissioner Rojas regarding what percentage of employees at Crème de Canna reside in Watsonville, will they give preference to Watsonville residents when hiring new employees and how do they recruit new employees, Mr. Flores replied half of the employees reside in Watsonville, they hire Watsonville residents first and employ standard recruiting sites.

In answering Commissioner Rojas, Mr. Flores stated the entire property has on-site security.

In answering Commissioner Rojas regarding feedback from the surrounding businesses, Mr. Flores stated the building is currently vacant; however, they are in good standing with their neighbors at their current business.

Commissioner Cole asked if the cultivation permit for 123 Lee Road is approved then what would be the total number of cultivation permits in the City

and what is the cap. Associate Planner Carmona replied the total would be 6 cultivation permits and the cap is 7.

Commissioner Rojas asked if there are any other cultivation applicants. Associate Planner Carmona replied there are no new proposed cultivation applicants until we reopen the cannabis cultivation process.

In answering Commissioner Dodge regarding the business' maximum production goals, Mr. Ferrar replied 5,000 square feet can produce 100 pounds per month.

Commissioner asked if this amount is normal in this industry. Mr. Ferrar replied yes.

Commissioner Rojas asked if the cultivation business provides revenue for the City. Director Merriam replied there is no revenue from the sales; however, the City receives tax revenue per square footage.

Commissioner Dorantes-Pulido suggested that some of the charitable contributions be provided to the native people.

Mr. Davis stated they are very open to working with any advocacy group that the City prefers.

5) Public Hearing

Chair Veitch-Olson opened the public hearing.

Hearing no further comment, Chair Veitch-Olson closed the public hearing.

6) Appropriate Motion (s)

MAIN MOTION: It was moved by Commissioner Dodge, seconded by Kammer, to approve the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 17-21 (PC):

RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING A SPECIAL USE PERMIT WITH ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (APPLICATION NO. 1829) TO ALLOW ESTABLISHMENT OF CANNABIS CULTIVATION FACILITY WITH PROPOSED TENANT IMPROVEMENTS LOCATED AT 123 LEE ROAD SUITE C-G, WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA (APN: 018-391-03)

7) Deliberation

Commissioner Dodge thanked the applicant for bringing their business to Watsonville.

Chair Veitch-Olson thanked the applicants for doing business in Watsonville.

8) Chair calls for a Vote on Motion (s)

AYES: COMMISSIONERS: Acosta, Cole, Dodge, Dorantes-Pulido,
Kammer, Rojas, Veitch-Olson

NOES: COMMISSIONERS: None

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS: None

B. SPECIAL USE PERMIT WITH ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (APPLICATION NO. 1825) TO ALLOW FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CANNABIS RETAIL STORE WITH DELIVERY AND PROPOSED TENANT IMPROVEMENTS LOCATED AT 1324 WEST BEACH STREET (APN: 018-304-05)

1) Staff Report

The staff report was given by Associate Planner Ivan Carmona.

2) Planning Commission Clarifying & Technical Questions

Associate Planner Carmona answered questions from Commissioner Dodge regarding the floodplain zone, parking, and video surveillance.

In answering Commissioner Rojas, Associate Planner Carmona stated there were only two equity applicants being approved by the Planning Commission and a third one for a license for distribution and processing is being approved by the Zoning Administrator and not the Planning Commission.

In answering Commissioner Cole regarding fees for a retail license, Associate Planner Carmona stated during the pre-application process the applicant had to submit a non-refundable check for \$3,600 and then pay \$4,000 prior to the interview process. Once selected and to continue the process for a Special Use Permit the applicant must pay \$3,600.

3) Applicant Presentation

Applicant Jonathan Kolodinski thanked the Planning staff for their support and assistance. Mr. Kolodinski stated he and his business partners have been involved in the cannabis development within the City of Watsonville for several years prior to the establishment of any of the ordinances. He gave a brief summary of his business background.

4) Planning Commission Clarifying & Technical Questions

Mr. Kolodinski answered questions from Chair Veitch-Olson regarding the delivery aspect of the operation.

In answering Commissioner Dodge regarding the right for workers to organize a union, Mr. Kolodinski stated he and his business partners support that right.

Commissioner Dodge asked Assistant Chief Jorge Zamora how does the Police Department feel about how these cannabis businesses fit into the community.

Assistant Chief Zamora stated his personal experience with the cannabis businesses has been very positive. They are very accommodating and are willing to listen. It is very important that any business owner should be responsible and consider the future of the Watsonville as opposed to benefitting just themselves.

5) Public Hearing

Chair Veitch-Olson opened the public hearing.

Hearing no further comment, Chair Veitch-Olson closed the public hearing.

6) Appropriate Motion(s)

MAIN MOTION: It was moved by Commissioner Rojas, seconded by Dodge, to approve the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 18-21 (PC):

RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING A SPECIAL USE PERMIT WITH ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (APPLICATION NO. 1825) TO ALLOW ESTABLISHMENT OF CANNABIS RETAILER AND DELIVERY FACILITY WITH PROPOSED TENANT IMPROVEMENTS LOCATED AT 1324 WEST BEACH STREET, WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA (APN 018-304-05)

7) Deliberation

None

8) Chair Calls for a Vote on Motion(s)

AYES:	COMMISSIONERS:	Acosta, Cole, Dodge, Dorantes-Pulido, Kammer, Rojas, Veitch-Olson
NOES:	COMMISSIONERS:	None
ABSENT:	COMMISSIONERS:	None

Chair Veitch-Olson thanked the applicants for doing business in Watsonville.

6. REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Community Development Director Suzi Merriam gave her report.

In answering Commissioner Cole, Director Merriam replied the City currently does not have the appropriate technology to run a hybrid meeting; however, the I.T. Department is working on this issue.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Veitch-Olson adjourned the meeting at 7:33 PM. The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 7, 2021, at 6:00 PM.

Suzi Merriam, Secretary
Planning Commission

Jenni Veitch-Olson, Chair
Planning Commission