Subject: UPC17-0069, 1478 Valley For Freestone Rd

Dear Sonoma Planning and Supervisors,

Please deny the cannabis application UPC17-0069, 1478 Valley Ford Freestone Rd.

This operation violates the Penalty Relief Resolution #17-0319: they have cultivated more cannabis than the 1 acre shown on their site map and allowed under the ordinance, extending the cultivation area into the area for the proposed septic field. It also violates the Cannabis Ordinance setbacks, being only ~30 ft from the neighboring parcel. The site map shows a 100 ft setback from a much smaller cultivation area than is actually planted. By violating these requirements, the stated terms of the PRP resolution (item #10b) requires it to be taken out of the PRP program, and subject to fines and penalties. They should be fined the maximum daily fine from planting in 2019 to the present (Google Earth data).

They provided false information on their PRP application, which showed 3 outdoor cultivation areas totaling 1 acre. Yet they have increased the number of rows, length of each row and boundaries of cultivation areas by almost 50%. The stated terms of the PRP program require that providing “false or misleading information in the permitting process will result in rejection of the application”. They certified under penalty of perjury that the information on their application was correct.
They are violating 26-88-250(f) Health and Safety of adjacent residents by creating noise, odors, traffic and unsafe conditions including changing locks on the sole access gate without providing the new combination, and letting their guard dogs terrorize the residents on their own property.

They also violate the state SRA fire safe regulations- the access road is only ~10 ft wide, as is their driveway is also ~10 ft wide- for commercial operations, driveways also need to be the full 20 ft road width

This operation is violating Health and Safety of the residents on the adjacent parcel. Every resident's rights - even if only one home- need to be protected.

Very Sincerely,

Forest A. Houtz

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Hoping she also sent this to any of you

From: Deborah Eppstein <deppstein@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 27, 2021 5:15 PM
To: Scott Orr <Scott.Orr@sonoma-county.org>
Subject: objection and major problems with UPC17-0069, 1478 Valley Ford Freestone Rd

EXTERNAL

Dear Scott,

I am opposed to granting the use permit for UPC 17-0069, 1478 Valley Ford Freestone Rd for many reasons. Furthermore this application needs to be rejected as per the county’s own statements for providing false and misleading information on cultivation area and increasing cultivation area over what is allowed.

I look forward to your reply, and to receiving the road report so I can review it prior to the August 31 public hearing.

Thank you,
Debby
Deborah Eppstein
801-556-5004

Summary.
1) The applicant provided false information on their application as to cultivation size and area. His site diagram shows 39,999 sf outdoor + 3900 sf outdoor hoop houses = 43,788 sf, plus another 500 sf of cultivation and processing- thus even his site map shows more than 1 acre. Google Earth shows a much more extensive outdoor cultivation area starting in 2019, totaling ~63,000 sf with both cultivation areas A1 and A3 being significantly expanded. Area A3 now expands all the way to within 30 ft of the neighboring parcel thus also violating the minimum setback, in the area shown on the site map as proposed septic leech lines. Lying on the PRP application requires that the application be discarded. The applicant signed under penalty of perjury that the information was true and correct. The List of Required Application Materials ends with the statement: APPLICANTS PROVIDING FALSE OR MISLEADING INFORMATION IN THE PERMITTING PROCESS WILL RESULT IN REJECTION OF THE APPLICATION AND/OR NULLIFICATION OR REVOCATION OF ANY ISSUED PERMIT. Thus this egregious false information (and also illegal increase in cultivation area and violation for setbacks) requires that this application be rejected.

2) This operation violates § 26-88-250(f) Health and Safety by repeatedly jeopardizing health and safety of the adjacent residents (eg, vicious guard dogs terrorizing residents on their own property; strong cannabis odors jeopardizing health of residents which was not properly analyzed for the current cannabis ordinance; locking residents out of the shared access road by changing gate locks; late night noise)

3) This operation violates the SRA Fire safe regulations. There was no access road report in the published information, but on Google Earth it measures 10 ft wide, not the required 20 ft wide. Also the driveway for a commercial operation is required to be a 20 ft wide road, and on map is 10 ft wide. Thus access violates
sate law in the Title 14 SRA fire safe regulations, § 1273.01(a) and § 1271, definitions of road and driveway.

**Please provide a copy of the road report.**

4) Water usage was only listed as 3.38 acre ft per growing season, but the applicant did not account for more than one growing season by use of hoop houses and indoor cultivation. What do the well monitors show for water usage? There are many cannabis cultivation operations in the vicinity; CFDA has asked for cumulative impacts on water and odor county wide. No analysis was done to ensure that there are no cumulative impacts on other wells in this aquifer and no approvals should be granted until such analysis is complete.

5) This operation is not consistent with either the General Plan or the Petaluma Dairy Belt Area Plan as it is not agriculture. An agricultural product only occurs after harvest from cannabis cultivation. The cultivation of cannabis violates these plans.

**Other Details:** In looking at the SMND, it states (p2-3) that the parcel is bordered by undeveloped pasture lands on each side. Yet the prior photo (Figure 2) shows it adjacent to a residential property. This statement is also false and misleading, in addition to the false information provided on cultivation rea discussed above.

From the MND, p2-3: “The polygon-shaped parcel, located on the east side of Freestone Valley Ford Road, is surrounded by undeveloped pasture lands with a General Plan Land Use designation of Land Extensive Agriculture (LEA) on the south, north and east and west. The two western properties have received cannabis permits.”
Page 38 and 45: states water usage is 3.38 acre-ft per growing season. How many growing seasons are planned? What is the total annual water usage?

Page 49-50: Cannabis is not agriculture yet the county is classifying it as such as an ‘agricultural product’- yet the agricultural product is the processed product after harvest, not the cultivation. This is in conflict with both the General Plan and the Petaluma Dairy Belt Area Plan, which state:

"Per the General Plan, the Land Extensive Agriculture (LEA) designation’s purpose is to “enhance and protect lands best suited for permanent agricultural use and capable of relatively low production per acre of land; and to implement the provisions of the Land Extensive Agriculture land use category of the General Plan and the policies of the Agricultural Resources Element.”

"The site is located in the Petaluma Dairy Belt Area Plan. “The Petaluma Dairy Belt area is located in south and southwestern Sonoma County along the Marin/Sonoma County boundary, from the Petaluma River on the east to the boundary of the Local Coastal Plan near the towns of Bodega and Valley Ford on the west.” The goals of the Dairy Belt Area Plan include: the preservation and enhancement and protection of agricultural resources, the preservation of the areas’ scenic beauty, the accommodation of the variety of rural lifestyles and the encouragement and development of an adequate transportation network to facilitate movement of agricultural products to the marketplace."
This project is located in the SRA, subject to the SRA Fire-Safe Regulations. No road report was provided, yet on Google Earth one can measure that both the private shared access road and the applicants driveway are ~10 ft wide. The SRA regulations require that both be 20 ft wide (10 ft wide driveways are only for residential; all commercial must be accessed by 20 ft wide roads, not driveways, see summary above for section numbers.)

Contrary to what is stated, the project has significant adverse effects on humans in preventing them to utilize their property for their enjoyment due to locking the gate and changing the code without notification on the shared access road, letting attack dogs terrorize the residents, and strong odor from the outdoor cultivation and processing activities. Furthermore, the minimum setbacks of 100 ft to property line (which is also not even met as discussed above, as it is only 30 ft) and 300 ft to home do not mitigate the strong odor that pervades the adjacent property. This operation does not maintain the requirements of preventing public nuisance to neighboring residents as per the cannabis ordinance § 26-88-250(f) Health and Safety.

Also per the CDFA letter, they want to see cumulative impacts in Sonoma County, including water and objectionable odors. Since there are so many other outdoor grows near by, this is important to be analyzed especially cumulative impacts on water including during prolonged drought, before any approvals. This should be done as part of the EIR, and no new approvals should occur until this is properly analyzed.

From CDFA letter:

GC 5: Evaluation of Cumulative Impacts
It is important for CEQA analysis to consider the cumulative impacts of cannabis cultivation in Sonoma County. Of particular importance are topics for which the impacts of individual projects may be less than significant, but where individual projects may make a considerable contribution to a significant cumulative impact. These topics include, but are not limited to:

- cumulative impacts from groundwater diversions on the health of the underlying aquifer, including impacts on other users and impacts on stream-related resources connected to the aquifer;
- cumulative impacts related to transportation; and
- cumulative impacts related to air quality and objectionable odors.

The IS/MND would be improved by acknowledging and analyzing the potential for cumulative impacts resulting from the Proposed Project coupled with other cannabis cultivation projects being processed by the County, and any other reasonably foreseeable projects in Sonoma County that could contribute to cumulative impacts similar to those of the Proposed Project.
Dear Sonoma Planning and Supervisors,

Please deny the cannabis application UPC17-0069, 1478 Valley Ford Freestone Rd.

This operation violates the Penalty Relief Resolution #17-0319: they have cultivated more cannabis than the 1 acre shown on their site map and allowed under the ordinance, extending the cultivation area into the area for the proposed septic field. It also violates the Cannabis Ordinance setbacks, being only ~30 ft from the neighboring parcel. The site map shows a 100 ft setback from a much smaller cultivation area than is actually planted. By violating these requirements, the stated terms of the PRP resolution (item #10b) requires it to be taken out of the PRP program, and subject to fines and penalties. They should be fined the maximum daily fine from planting in 2019 to the present (Google Earth data).

They provided false information on their PRP application, which showed 3 outdoor cultivation areas totaling 1 acre. Yet they have increased the number of rows, length of each row and boundaries of cultivation areas by almost 50%. The stated terms of the PRP program require that providing ‘false or misleading information in the permitting process will result in rejection of the application”. They certified under penalty of perjury that the information on their application was correct.

They are violating 26-88-250(f) Health and Safety of adjacent residents by creating noise, odors, traffic and unsafe conditions including changing locks on the sole access gate without providing the new combination, and letting their guard dogs terrorize the residents on their own property.

They also violate the state SRA fire safe regulations- the access road is only ~10 ft wide, as is their driveway is also ~10 ft wide- for commercial operations, driveways also need to be the full 20 ft road width

This operation is violating Health and Safety of the residents on the adjacent parcel. Every resident's rights - even if only one home- need to be protected.
Very Sincerely

Hiedie S. Conner

Catherine Peirano

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Dear Board of Supervisors and PRMD:

Please deny UPC17-0069, an application for a cannabis conditional use permit.

As detailed in the submission by Dr. Deborah Eppstein, the grow violates the terms of the Penalty Relief Program (PRP) application and the cannabis ordinance.

1) The applicants are cultivating more than 1 acre by extending the cultivation footprint into the area for the proposed septic field. The grow also violates the cannabis ordinance setbacks, being only about 30 feet from the neighboring parcel. The site map shows a 100 foot setback from a much smaller cultivation area than is actually planted. By violating these requirements, the stated terms of the PRP resolution (#10b) requires it to be removed from the PRP program, and subject to fines and penalties. The grower should be fined the maximum daily fine from planting in 2019 to the present (Google Earth data).

2) The applicants provided false information on their PRP application, which showed 3 outdoor cultivation areas totaling 1 acre. Yet they have increased the number of rows, length of each row and boundaries of cultivation areas by almost 50%. The stated terms of the PRP program require that providing “false
or misleading information in the permitting process will result in rejection of
the application.” They certified under penalty of perjury that the information on
their application was correct.

Sonoma County should not reward bad actors with a cannabis conditional use
permit.

Craig S. Harrison

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EXTERNAL

Dear Sonoma Planning and Supervisors,

Please deny the cannabis application UPC17-0069, 1478 Valley Ford Freestone Rd.

This operation violates the Penalty Relief Resolution #17-0319: they have cultivated more cannabis than the 1 acre shown on their site map and allowed under the ordinance, extending the cultivation area into the area for the proposed septic field. It also violates the Cannabis Ordinance setbacks, being only ~30 ft from the neighboring parcel. The site map shows a 100 ft setback from a much smaller cultivation area than is actually planted. By violating these requirements, the stated terms of the PRP resolution (item #10b) requires it to be taken out of the PRP program, and subject to fines and penalties. They should be fined the maximum daily fine from planting in 2019 to the present (Google Earth data).

They provided false information on their PRP application, which showed 3 outdoor cultivation areas totaling 1 acre. Yet they have increased the number of rows, length of each row and boundaries of cultivation areas by almost 50%. The stated terms of the PRP program require that providing ‘false or misleading information in the permitting process will result in rejection of the application”. They certified under penalty of perjury that the information on their application was correct.

They are violating 26-88-250(f) Health and Safety of adjacent residents by creating noise, odors, traffic and unsafe conditions including changing locks on the sole access gate without providing the new combination, and letting their guard dogs terrorize the residents on their own property.

They also violate the state SRA fire safe regulations- the access road is only ~10 ft wide, as is their driveway is also ~10 ft wide- for commercial operations, driveways also need to be the full 20 ft road width

This operation is violating Health and Safety of the residents on the adjacent parcel. Every resident's rights - even if only one home- need to be protected.

James Bracco

THIS EMAIL ORIGINATED OUTSIDE OF THE SONOMA COUNTY EMAIL SYSTEM. Warning: If you don’t know this email sender or the email is unexpected, do not click any web links, attachments, and never give out your user ID or password.
Dear County Supervisors,

I request that you please deny the application UPC17-0069, 1478 Valley Ford Freestone Rd for multiple reasons.

1) It violates the Penalty Relief Resolution #17-0319: they have cultivated more cannabis than the 1 acre shown on their site map and allowed under the ordinance, extending the cultivation area into the area for the proposed septic field (see attachments, compare site diagram with July 2019 photo showing actual cultivation area). It also violates the Cannabis Ordinance setbacks, being only ~30 ft from the neighboring parcel (see July 2019 photo). The site map shows a 100 ft setback from a much smaller cultivation area than is actually planted. By violating these requirements, the stated terms of the PRP resolution (item #10b) require it to be taken out of the PRP program, and subject to fines and penalties. They should be fined the maximum daily fine from date of planting in 2019 to the present (Google Earth data), ranging from $10,000 to $50,000 per day.

2) Applicants provided false information on their PRP application, which showed 3 outdoor cultivation areas totaling 1 acre. Yet they have increased the number of rows, length of each row and boundaries of cultivation areas by almost 50%, to ~65,000 sf. The Google Earth photo showing mature plants (upper right, Sept 2018) confirms very little space between the rows, and the site map does not have identifiable boundaries between the rows. The state (CDFW) requirements for measurement of canopy area require that all spaces between the clearly identifiable boundaries be included (see below*). The stated terms of the PRP program require that providing “false or misleading information in the permitting process will result in rejection of the application”. The applicants certified under penalty of perjury that the information on their application was correct, yet they expanded cultivation area by 50% including over where a future septic system was to be installed.

3) They are violating the cannabis ordinance § 26-88-250(f) Health and Safety for adjacent residents by
creating noise, odors, traffic and unsafe conditions, including changing locks on the sole access gate without providing the new combination, essentially locking the residents in or out of their property, and letting their guard dogs terrorize the residents on their own property. These activities have been violating rights of the neighbors for several years, are inexcusable, and should be vigorously rejected by Sonoma County.

Odor is pervasive and overpowering for the residents for many months; multiple residents in the county have confirmed that the minimum setback of 100 ft to property line and 300 ft to a residence is completely inadequate to prevent strong odor, and thus the overriding conditions of the Health and safety clause concerning not causing nuisance due to odor must prevail. Prior to having results from our own EIR, we need to look at both internal experience where residents have reported strong odor at well over 1000 ft, as well as the Yolo EIR where a minimum of 1000 ft was recommended. Even 1000 ft is not possible for this location; based on the ongoing situation that the setbacks are not preventing odor control, this application needs to be denied.

4) This application violates the Title 14 state fire safe regulations, which require that all access roads (including driveways for any commercial operation) be 20 ft wide. There was no fire road report provided with the evaluation materials, but measurements on Google Earth show ~10 ft width for the shared private access road as well as the driveway.

5) This operation is not consistent with either the General Plan (LIA’s designated purpose is to "enhance and protect lands best suited for permanent agricultural use and capable of relatively low production per acre of land; and to implement the provisions of the Land Extensive Agriculture land use category of the General Plan and the policies of the Agricultural Resources Element") or the Petaluma Dairy Belt Area Plan (goals include "preservation and enhancement and protection of agricultural resources, the preservation of the areas’ scenic beauty, the accommodation of the variety of rural lifestyles"). Cannabis is cultivation is not agriculture under state law; this was confirmed in the Planning Commission meetings in March-April. It is only the product of cannabis cultivation that is classified as an agricultural product, which can only occur after harvest. The cultivation of cannabis is not agriculture and violates these plans. Furthermore, the huge disruption of health and safety of the adjacent residents also violates both the GP and the Area Plan. Contrary to what is in the staff report, the project has significant adverse effects on people in preventing the neighbors from utilizing their property for their enjoyment and safety as discussed above.

6) This site is in an area already with over concentration of cannabis cultivation, including two other permits on this same small road and many more in the dairy belt. Per the state’s (CDFA) letter, they want to see cumulative impacts in Sonoma County, including water and objectionable odors. We are in a severe drought; no new permits should be approved prior to a full analysis of county water availability relative to present and future needs countywide (residential, agriculture, cannabis, commercial, industrial). This will be analyzed as part of the EIR, and no new approvals should occur until this is properly determined.

*CDFW requirements for measuring canopy (underline added):
(1) Canopy shall be calculated in square feet and measured using clearly identifiable boundaries of all areas that will contain mature plants at any point in time, including all of the space(s) within the boundaries;
(2) Canopy may be noncontiguous but each unique area included in the total canopy calculation shall be separated by an identifiable boundary that includes, but is not limited to, interior walls, shelves, greenhouse walls, hoop house walls, garden benches, hedgerows, fencing, garden beds, or garden plots; and
(3) If mature plants are being cultivated using a shelving system, the surface area of each level shall be included in the total canopy calculation.

Thank you for your careful evaluation.

Best regards,
Deborah Eppstein
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Outdoor cultivation area A3 contains 15 rows with 23 plants. Every row will grow to a maximum of about 6' x 90' and 1 row of 17 plants that will grow to a maximum of about 6' x 66' creating a combined total cultivation area of 8,496.
From: Diane <donovan@sonic.net>
Sent: Sunday, August 29, 2021 12:15 PM
To: Richard.Parrott@cdfa.ca.gov; Tabatha.Chavez@cdfa.ca.gov; David Rabbitt <David.Rabbitt@sonoma-county.org>; Furlong@sonoma-county.org; Andrew Smith <Andrew.Smith@sonoma-county.org>; Scott Orr <Scott.Orr@sonoma-county.org>; Tennis Wick <Tennis.Wick@sonoma-county.org>; Cannabis <Cannabis@sonoma-county.org>
Subject: Comments regarding UPC17-0069, 1478 Valley Ford Freestone Road, APN026-080-009

EXTERNAL

Let my opposition to this permit proposal go on record.

This is yet another example of an egregious situation in which a proposed grow directly impacts those who live alongside it, and should not be permitted for several reasons:

1. This proposal is within the Petaluma Dairy Belt Area Plan. Isn't this already already protected by resolutions going back to 1985, which clearly outline what is permissible in a designated Dairy Belt Area? Cultivation of land designated as grazing area holds specific impact on water usage, wells, and scenic beauty. At the least, an environmental evaluation for this project should be required, and it should adhere to the EIR which Sonoma County is still in the process of developing. Permits for non-grazing uses should be denied until all these reports and their resultant guidelines are established.

2. Hasn't Sonoma County has been declared a severe drought emergency area? If so, why are we permitting any type of additional water usage, no matter what the crop? We need to be extending and preserving what is already there; not adding new water demands to an already-dangerous equation. Many of our rural wells have run dry. So why are we permitting expanded growth that uses even more dwindling water resources?

3. How the heck does one enforce County regulations and address violations in remote rural areas like this, where a resident lives directly
alongside a grow? What process is in place for timely and quick enforcement? Many of us rural residents live 20 minutes or more from any police services. It has been stated that growers will do their own policing, but that their methods will be secret. This seems a classic case of a fox in the henhouse. Should we residents then take up arms in a Wild West-type scenario, if we’re supposed to do our own policing and protect ourselves from our neighbors and their activities which draw criminal interest? This should be studied and addressed properly. Neighbors should be aware of processes and safeguards in place to protect them, not left in the dark to their own defense devices.

The interest of the criminal elements in obtaining cash and product on-site must not be ignored and downplayed by Sonoma County Supervisors. The lack of taking this issue seriously and not providing safeguards is one reason why residential neighbors and neighborhoods are activated and are demanding more distance and safeguards from cannabis operations. Where’s the safe distance in this proposal? It's quite simply not there.

The fact that high, screened fencing, night lights, and security plans that are not available to the public, etc. are required by the County, all show that the County is well aware of the crime potential--and yet chooses not to mitigate this most damaging aspect of a cannabis operation adjacent to residential neighbors and neighborhoods... this proposal is a prime example of inappropriate use too close to and impacting a neighbor.

4. Just as drought seems to be ignored, lately, in the approval process; so are fire concerns. Access to this site is on substandard roads and the access easement is substandard for concurrent fire equipment and automobile traffic. There are fire risks from human activity and additional risk from oil-containing cannabis plants. In addition, adding intense power usage increases fire risk. There is a gate on this property that may impede the access of emergency vehicles. This alone would seem to raise a red flag about inappropriate location.

5. Is it ok to throw this one neighbor under the bus because "it's only one person"? ALL lives should matter, in Sonoma County. (Or, do they? If not, what is the numerical divide at which residential concerns can be ignored for the sake of commercial opportunity? We 400 Bloomfield residents have just received a slap in the face, with no less than 7 new permits for an operation proposed right next to our town and on the fencelines of numerous
neighbors, impacting us all. So, is the number of people whose lives will be heavily impacted negligable? Is there a magic figure for allowing such interests?) This cannabis operation is a big impact on the residential neighbor due to the extent of cannabis operations directly adjacent to his residential use and the increased use of the common access road.

Numerous neighborhood groups have already made prodigious comments that are relevant to this proposal. It is simply not possible for the BOS to support their mandate of ensuring the “Health, Safety and Welfare of residents" be protected with the approval of this application and others which reside directly adjacent to residential properties.

We request this application to denied or continued until the Environmental Impact Report now underway is completed, and all the environmental impacts can be properly mitigated and a comprehensive cannabis ordinance is adopted, setting standards and requirements for the Health, Safety and Welfare of Sonoma County residents.

Sincerely,

Diane Donovan
Resident, Taxpayer, and Voter since 1988
Bloomfield, CA

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Warning: If you don’t know this email sender or the email is unexpected, do not click any web links, attachments, and never give out your user ID or password.
Dear Board of Supervisors:

I am opposed to granting the use permit for UPC 17-0069, 1478 Valley Ford Freestone Rd., for the following reasons — please deny this application.

The applicant has provided false and misleading information on the cultivation area, and is increasing the cultivation area over what is allowed. If this behavior is successful, this will be the new way forward, for other applicants.

Processing of this application is a piecemeal process that does not include the larger issues that are currently under study in the EIR, and is not consistent with CEQA.

This cannabis operation has a huge impact on the residential neighbor whose house is less than 500 feet away. They share the road/driveway, share the water table, share the air, share the peace of the countryside, and share the fire evacuation road.

The proposed cannabis applicants have no legal obligation to obtain the parcel owners' agreement for transport of product or cash on their shared driveway. They have no legal obligation to manage water use in a reasonable way. They have no legal obligation to manage odor. They have no moral obligation to provide a safe place to live for those around them.

This is your job. What happens to this resident? They will be forced to sell their property to be able to live a peaceful life. And this becomes the way forward, too, for Sonoma County's residents who live adjacent to grows.

Finally, we are in a significant drought whose impact must be included in every choice we make, from this point forward.
I ask that all cannabis permits put one hold until we understand our water situation, to be able to determine if we have enough water to support a non-food product; especially when neighbors who depend on wells for their water reside right alongside the grows.

Please consider this resident's experience, and determine if this is how we want our future to be in Sonoma County's rural areas.

Thanks,

Valorie Dallas
Bloomfield, CA

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Thank you Cecily!

On Fri, Aug 27, 2021 at 11:50 AM Cannabis <Cannabis@sonoma-county.org> wrote:

FYI. This has already been sent to the BOS.

The County Administrator Office’s mission is to build a sustainable and equitable future for our community by making collaborative, transparent, and informed policy recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.
To: bos@sonoma-county.org; cannabis@sonoma-county.org; distric2@sonoma-county.org; district3@sonoma-county.org; district4@sonoma-county.org; district5@sonoma-county.org; susan.gorin@sonoma-county.org

From: Veva Edelson
CCO Bloomfield member

Board of Supervisors Agenda, VII. Regular Afternoon Schedule

# 32, UPC17-0069, Freestone Ranch LLC Cannabis Cultivation and Processing at 1478 Valley Ford Freestone Road, Bodega

2021-0723

Comments

1. This proposal is within the Petaluma Dairy Belt Area Plan, adopted on December 17, 1985, modified on March 9, 1993 (and, more recently, on September 23, 2008). Cannabis was not one of the considerations when the Dairy Plan was adopted and modified. The subject environmental review and application should be denied until there is a comprehensive review of the Petaluma Dairy Belt Area Plan and how cannabis relates (or not) with the provisions of the Plan.

2. Currently, the Dairy Belt area is grazing land, and is not cultivated. Cultivation would change the character of this rural part of Sonoma County, use additional water or compete with dairy pursuits and residents for precious water. In addition, the scenic beauty of these grazing lands would be impacted with hoop houses and attendant operations.

These types of substantial changes will be studied as part of the EIR now
3. There is an overconcentration and proliferation of cannabis operations in the Dairy Belt. The Neve Brothers currently have thirteen hoop houses of cannabis to the east of Bloomfield; there is a cannabis operation on Gericke Road, south of Bloomfield; proposed cannabis operations in the Liberty Valley and Pepper Lane areas; two operations on Western Avenue/Spring Hill Road east of Bloomfield; and probably others we are not aware of now, or that could be submitted subsequent to the proposed application. This includes a major property adjacent to the Bloomfield community, where a ministerial permit was withdrawn due to the size and scale of the operation proposed (a conditional use permit will have to be submitted, here).

Ministerial permitting is proliferating to get projects approved prior to the Environmental Impact Report and proposed cannabis ordinance, which is not expected to be in place until 2024 or later. A moratorium is necessary to determine how and where cannabis will be sited in Sonoma County, rather than the rush that is now occurring without forethought and planning. In addition, there is no overall information on cumulative water use, additional traffic, use of resources, aesthetic impacts, air quality, energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, public service impact, utilities, and other impacts that have been unstudied.

4. Sonoma County has been declared a severe drought emergency area, and as such, a moratorium should be considered for any proposed cannabis operations due to the fact cannabis is not a necessary food product that sustains human life, and is, instead, a product and a recreational drug.

5. The processing of this application is a piecemeal process that does not include the larger issues that are currently under study in the EIR, and is not consistent with CEQA. There are no supporting facts based on research or scientific data for adoption of the Negative Declaration of
Environmental Impacts...only staff opinions and assumptions.

6. Lack of enforcement of County regulations and conditions of approval are a recurring theme with these existing cannabis operations. We request that the enforcement history of the total cannabis operation on the subject property and adjoining parcels used for cannabis operations be included in a written staff report. The Board of Supervisors and the public need to have this information, to evaluate the past and current history of any enforcement problems with the overall project and activities on the site.

7. The finding that odors generated would not be significant was based on the Negative Declaration prepared for the existing Ordinance. It has been shown, through the denial of the SMND for the proposed and denied Chapter 38, that odor issues need more thorough study. There are no definitive studies supporting the finding that 470 feet from a neighbor's residence will provide adequate distance for the mitigation of odor from the cannabis operation. The application should be denied until this information is studied and mitigated in the EIR currently being prepared.

8. Fire safety is a significant concern in Sonoma County, as history has shown. Access to this site is on substandard roads, and the private shared access road is substandard for concurrent fire equipment and automobile traffic. There is fire risks from human activity, and additional risk from oil-containing cannabis plants. In addition, adding the intense power usage required for cannabis operations increases fire risk. The existing homeowner must pass the cannabis operation to exit their property and if a fire occurs on the cannabis site, he may not be able to pass to safety and/or receive fire services if the road is impacted by fire. There is a gate on this property that may impede the access of emergency vehicles.

9. The County must require that proposed cannabis applicants obtain all parcel owners' agreement on shared private roads in regard to access, maintenance, and any other shared road-related issues of concern. The agreement should also include any issues relative to
installation of a gate across the shared private road that affects or impedes the access of other parcel owners.

10. The County has allowed this grower to continue operations under the PRP, which is a major disservice and impact to the adjoining property owner and an unfettered gift to the grower. Now the applicant wants to further increase the operations on site, with additional impacts. Existing property owners who have invested in their property and built homes must have some recourse to protect their interests and investments when the County allows an incompatible neighboring use. It is a function of County government to provide for land use planning so that such extreme incompatibilities do not occur. It is an abject failure of land use planning when a homeowner’s only recourse is to sell their property (if it is even possible to be sold under the current conditions).

11. The finding there is no increased need for Sonoma County Sheriff’s protection is a glib statement, with no facts to back it up. Does the Sheriff’s Department review and comment on these applications? Is there a study or information on staffing for the Sheriffs Department, and is it is adequate?

Cannabis is a known for crime potential, and the location of the proposed cannabis grow is in a remote area and vulnerable, as is the adjacent residential property owner. The crimes reported in the Press Democrat have shown that criminals from outside the area have broken down doors and held residents hostage in houses adjacent to cannabis grows-neighbors who have nothing to do with the cannabis operation.

The illegal history of cannabis and the interest of the criminal elements in obtaining cash and product on-site must not be ignored and downplayed by the Sonoma County Supervisors. The lack of taking this issue seriously and not providing safeguards is one reason why residential neighbors and neighborhoods have been activated and are demanding more distance and safeguards from cannabis operations. The fact that high, screened
fencing; night lights; security plans that are not open to the public; etc. are required by the County, all demonstrate that the County well knows the criminal potential...and yet does nothing to mitigate this most damaging aspect of a cannabis operation adjacent to residential neighbors and neighborhoods.

Residential neighbors and neighborhoods do not trust the County to properly manage the influx of cannabis operations and provide adequate safety considerations. This section of the environmental document must contain dependable information on how safety will be provided to residents, and how quickly a police officer could potentially reach the area. Our experience in the vicinity of this rural area has been a response time of over 30 minutes...or, never.

Based on the lack of supporting facts and the determination of no increased need for the Sonoma County Sheriff’s protection, it is not possible to support the finding that the “Health, Safety and Welfare of residents" is being protected by the approval of this application.

12. The finding that the proposal does not affect a substantial number of people is specious. Why is it OK to impact the one adjoining residential neighbor? All mitigation possible must be considered and imposed on the proposed operation to protect residential neighbors; whether one or many. The cannabis operation is, especially, a major impact on the residential neighbor due to the extent of cannabis operations directly adjacent to their residential use, and the increased use of the common access road.

13. We incorporate, by reference, all the comments made during the Small Group Sessions for neighborhood groups. All the neighborhood groups made prodigious comments that are relevant to this proposal. There is a consistent voice of neighborhood concerns and issues that need to be addressed through the process of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and the technical studies that will be prepared during this process.
We request that this application be denied until the Environmental Impact Report now underway is completed, all the environmental impacts can be properly mitigated, and a comprehensive cannabis ordinance is adopted that sets proper standards and requirements for the Health, Safety and Welfare of Sonoma County residents (26-88-250 (f)).

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Cecilia Jaroslawsky
Senior Planner
MIG, Inc.
800 Hearst Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94710
510 845 7549 | www.migcom.com
Hi Cecily,

With Leo enjoying some time off, I am forwarding this to you with the hope it lands in the right place. I have spoken with the other neighbor and it really sounds as if these people have destroyed the lives of those around them.

Thanks for looking into this one,

Elise

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Rachel Zierdt <rzierdt@gmail.com>
Date: August 26, 2021 at 7:53:18 PM PDT
To: Cannabis <Cannabis@sonoma-county.org>, district2 <district2@sonoma-county.org>, district3 <district3@sonoma-county.org>, district4 <district4@sonoma-county.org>, district5 <district5@sonoma-county.org>, Susan Gorin <Susan.Gorin@sonoma-county.org>
Subject: Deny this permit - distribute to PC as well

EXTERNAL

UPC17-0069, 1478 Valley Ford Freestone Road,
APN026-080-009

It is come to the attention of the neighborhood coalition that this permit is up again for renewal. This is ridiculous. They have been growing in the PRP for five years. It’s time to stop this nonsense. These permit seekers have been bullies. They have been bad neighbors. They have vicious dogs. They share a driveway which they’ve altered and Narrowed without permission. The poor neighbors can’t even sell their home because nobody wants to buy it. Yes Mr. Gore they want to move but can’t.
Return sanity to the permitting process and eliminate PRP’s. I honestly don’t see what the county is afraid of. The program was not supposed to last for eternity but be a bridge to compliance.

Rachel Zierdt, A concern county resident.
Hi Joanna;

Per our conversation this morning, I’m reaching out to you regarding your concerns about application UPC17-0069. Please feel free to send me any questions and/or comments and I’m happy to schedule another time to speak to address them.

Thank you,
--
Cecilia Jaroslawsky
Senior Planner
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Hi Cecilia,

I have concerns about noise from fans blowing through hoops covered with plastic.

Will there be fans used?
Will there be plastic covering the rows even if it's not installed permanently?

I also have concerns about water.
How much more water will be used?
Will the neighbor be digging another well? Digging the current well deeper?

Thank you!
--
Joanna Rosenfeld
707-876-3288

Hi Joanna;

Thank you for your email; I will review your questions/concerns and hope to get back to you this week.

Good Morning Joanna;

https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0?ik=baae90437f&view=pt&search=all&permthid=thread-a%3Ar4660375312881231727&simpl=msg-a%3Ar618520220… 1/3
see my responses (in red) to your questions below:

Will there be fans used? Fans are not used within the hoop-houses; the fully enclosed processing room will have carbon filters installed onto its ventilation system.
Will there be plastic covering the rows even if it's not installed permanently? Hoop-houses will be covered in a pliable material.

I also have concerns about water. This project is in a Class 2 groundwater area and outside any priority basin, therefore the Natural Resources Geologist at Permit Sonoma determined that a groundwater study was not required, and standard groundwater monitoring conditions would apply. The project has 13, on-site water tanks that hold up to 28,000 gallons (or 0.08 acre-feet). The cultivation and processing area would use 1,102,000 gallons (3.38 acre-feet) during each growing cycle. The project is unlikely to cause a decline in groundwater elevations or deplete groundwater resources over time and domestic water uses from the existing wells would be negligible.

How much more water will be used? See above. Let me know if you need additional information on this.
Will the neighbor be digging another well? Digging the current well deeper? The site contains an existing septic system for the residences only and three water wells. Recommended conditions of approval require well monitoring on a monthly basis to verify performance. In the event that average water use over a 3-year period exceeds the estimated water use of the approved Water Conservation Plan by more than 10%, Permit Sonoma will review the project to identify additional measures to reduce groundwater use.

I hope I was able to address your questions. Please note, a Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared and will be reviewed by the county. Please let me know if you would like a copy upon its' release to the public for comments and don't hesitate to contact me if you have additional comments and/or questions.

Thank you.
Thank you for the update. When it's ready, is the Mitigated Negative Declaration a document that I can access electronically?

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Joanna Rosenfeld
Bookkeeping
707-876-3288

It should be Joanna, but I'm happy to send it to you if it's not. Please don't hesitate to email me a reminder in 2 - 4 weeks.

Thanks.
Ms. Jaroslawsky,

Many thanks for sending this information. I am still confused. I have examined quite a few cannabis applications and this one does not appear to be complete. There is no MND report or findings (still in Draft form apparently?), no hydrology report, no traffic report, no odor report, no geological/biological report. How could this application be sent out for referral if the examining bodies have nothing to examine? HAS it been sent out for referrals? All I see is a noise study and waste management plan. It is very odd that this application was given “original jurisdiction” status for a hearing to be scheduled.

Also, it appears this application was never properly and legally noticed back in 2017? In addition according to Zillow this property did not change hands until September of 2017 and the grower is not eligible for PRP status. I realize that Zillow can be inaccurate.

Have you visited the site?

Please advise.
Nancy Richardson
Santa Rosa
Hi Nancy:

Below, please see my responses to your questions and/or concerns in red:

Please send me all the information you have on the application for one acre of cannabis grow at APN 026-080-009 in Sonoma County. **Please see the attached project description, site plan, noise analysis and waste management plan.**

The applicant, Al Eaddy, already has an application in the permitting process pipeline (UPC17-0069). I believe the “17” stands for 2017. UPC17-0069 is complete and has received “original jurisdiction” status meaning it will bypass the Board of Zoning Adjustments hearing and proceed directly to a hearing in front of the Board of Supervisors. A hearing has not yet been scheduled. That is correct; the project is currently under review; a draft staff report and draft Mitigated Negative Declaration (per California Environmental Quality Act) is in process. A second neighborhood notification (1,000 feet from the subject property) will be sent out prior to a public hearing.

Are you familiar with the Sonoma County’s Penalty Relief Program (PRP)? Mr. Eaddy is participating in the PRP. Under the terms of his PRP agreement with the County of Sonoma he can continue to cultivate the same square footage that he was growing on July 6, 2017 but can make no changes to the size of the cultivation nor can he construct new buildings, install electricity etc. **This site is currently participating in the PRP and will not be allowed to exceed the maximum allowable cannabis cultivation of one acre; the project includes the construction of a code-complying ADA restroom, as required by County code and the Use Permit as well as any modifications to the existing project under PRP must be approved by the BOS at a public hearing.** Please note, the project description lists cultivation larger than permitted and the applicant has since reduced that to a maximum of one acre of cultivation; cannabis processing and propagation does not constitute cannabis cultivation and is therefore not included in the square footage of cultivation.

Why did you issue a new announcement of this application dated on June 26, 2020? This seems to be an old application.

This application was applied for in 2017 and I could not locate the original neighborhood notification and felt it was best to send another, just in case this was missed in 2017.

Please let me know if I can be of any additional assistance or you have additional questions and/or concerns.

Thank you.

On Thu, Jul 9, 2020 at 6:18 PM Nancy and Brantly Richardson <nrchrdsn@sonic.net> wrote:

**Sorry, typo: highlighted below. June 26, 2020**
Ms. Jaroslawsky,

Please send me all the information you have on the application for one acre of cannabis grow at APN 026-080-009 in Sonoma County. The applicant, Al Eaddy, already has an application in the permitting process pipeline (UPC17-0069). I believe the “17” stands for 2017. UPC17-0069 is complete and has received “original jurisdiction” status meaning it will bypass the Board of Zoning Adjustments hearing and proceed directly to a hearing in front of the Board of Supervisors. A hearing has not yet been scheduled.

Are you familiar with the Sonoma County’s Penalty Relief Program (PRP)? Mr. Eaddy is participating in the PRP. Under the terms of his PRP agreement with the County of Sonoma he can continue to cultivate the same square footage that he was growing on July 6, 2017 but can make no changes to the size of the cultivation nor can he construct new buildings, install electricity etc.

Why did you issue a new announcement of this application dated on June 26, 2010? This seems to be an old application.

Nancy Richardson
Santa Rosa

--

Cecilia Jaroslawsky
Senior Planner

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510 845 7549 | www.migcom.com

4 attachments

- **UPC17-0069 Site Plan 05.28.2020.pdf**
  265K

- **UPC17-0069 Project Description 05.28.2020.pdf**
  1041K
Hi Nancy;

Attached, please find the referral packet routed to Sonoma County departments for their comments. Please note, this information has been updated in May of 2020 (sent to you earlier); please let me know if you'd like additional information and don't hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

Regarding your subsequent questions:

the MND is currently under review, therefore, findings have not been finalized;
the project was referred out to Sonoma County departments in October 2019;
County responses have been submitted (let me know if you'd like a copy of these);
I am awaiting one follow-up response from the county regarding the review of the recently submitted noise study and waste management plan.
based upon submitted information, the PRP is valid.

Thank you.

[Quoted text hidden]