



# The VOICE

Your independent news source

Greater Shasta County, CA

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### Did you know...

- There were 6 **new** single family home permits issued in the City of Redding in October 2021, for a total of **116** in 2021. There was 1 Carr Fire single family rebuild permit issued in October 2021, for a total of **24** in 2021. That is 43 fewer total single family home permits issued than the same period last year. There were 2 permits issued for new commercial buildings in October 2021, for a total of **24** in 2021. That is 3 fewer than for the same period in 2020.
- The City of Redding is planning a series of in-person and online surveys and workshops in early 2022 to learn what features residents would like to see at **South City Park**, located next to the Redding Public Library and Tiger Field. Local Architect Les Melburg presented a vision and wish-list of the Colt 45's baseball team during the November 16th Council meeting. It includes a new little league field, a large high-tech scoreboard, a center field bandstand, a shady outdoor family reading zone, new restrooms, upgraded tennis and pickleball courts, a playground and summertime splash park. Information about other public engagement will be out soon.

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## County Regulates “Wasting Groundwater” in Cultivation of Cannabis

On November 2nd, the Shasta County Board of Supervisors approved an Ordinance to prohibit the extraction and discharge of groundwater for use in the cultivation of cannabis, under Chapter 18.09 of the Shasta County Code. This is an important step in the process of increasing the level of illegal cannabis activity enforcement in the unincorporated areas of Shasta County.

Specifically, under Chapter 18.09.020, the following activities are prohibited: “(1) Engaging in the act of wasting or unreasonably using groundwater by extracting and discharging groundwater for use in cultivating cannabis in violation of the Shasta County Code; (2) permitting the existence of any public nuisances, as defined in this new ordinance, to exist on property in one’s ownership or possession and control; and (3) knowingly using groundwater extracted in violation of this new ordinance.”

Also, specifically under Chapter 18.09.30, the enforceability of Chapter 18.09 would be facilitated by the following provisions: “(1) Any person or entity violating any provision of this Chapter shall be guilty of a misdemeanor; (2) violations of this Chapter are unlawful and shall constitute a public nuisance and may be enforced and abated by the Director of Environmental Health in accordance with Chapter 8.28 (Nuisances) of the Shasta County Code and by other means available by law; and (3) any well used to extract groundwater in violation of this Chapter shall also be considered to be operating in violation of Chapter 8.56 (Water Wells) of the Shasta County Code and may be abated, disabled or otherwise destroyed by the Director of Environmental Health in accordance with the procedures in Chapter 8.56 and by any other means available by law.”

It should be noted that on August 24, 2021, the Board of Supervisors enacted an urgency ordinance establishing administrative penalties of up to **\$10,000** per day per violation associated with illegal cannabis cultivation and up to **\$20,000** per day per violation for repeat violations, which are significantly greater than the penalties which could be imposed previously. With this new ordinance, the use of groundwater for illegal cannabis cultivation would be an **independent violation** for which penalties of up to \$10,000 per day (and \$20,000 per day for repeat violations) could be imposed. It is not unusual for illegal cannabis cultivation operations to have as many as 5-10 separate violations, each of which would be subject to this level of penalties.

Sheriff Michael Johnson is also coordinating with outside agencies (e.g., Department of Fish and Wildlife, Regional Water Quality Control Board, CAL FIRE) where applicable in order to enforce state regulations which are being violated and to maximize the level of law enforcement personnel currently involved in the program. Here are some of the Sheriff’s current statistics demonstrating just how much has been done in the last 30 days (October 2021) to finally address illegal cannabis activities under his leadership, using what he called “reliable intel” and verified information:

13,406 eradicated plants on 946 parcels with processed marijuana; 7 illegal firearms; 4 arrests; over 100 locations identified to “hit” in heavily populated areas; identified dangerous cartels with weapons; environmental damage; illegal water use.

Sheriff Johnson stated that his strategy is to “100 percent” solve the problems.

## *Decision Delayed By Council for Properties in and Around Redding Civic Auditorium*

At its September 21, 2021 meeting, Redding City Council received a presentation regarding an unsolicited proposal from a group of investors consisting of the McConnell Foundation, K-2 Development Company, Turtle Bay Exploration Park, and Populous (an American architecture and design firm with developments around the globe), desiring to develop the land in and around the Civic Auditorium. After the presentation and hearing public comments, the Council directed City Manager Barry Tippin to develop a **series of workshops** to better inform the Council and the public regarding the subject properties and the requirements to pursue any options associated with disposition or master planning the land. Four workshops occurred, on October 13th, October 27th, November 10th, and November 18th. Here are the **highlights** of what we learned from each workshop, as well as the end result of those workshops:

- 1) To declare City-owned property as “surplus,” and thus available for sale, findings must be made declaring the property is no longer necessary for public use. Council members opined that this would likely be highly problematic.
- 2) A “Master Plan” is not a regulatory document, but rather a “planning tool” to cover a localized area within a city to help guide future development. Such a document does not regulate land uses, building forms etc., and is most successful when it represents a “vision that brings together the concerns and ideas of different interest groups.” It appears, at least at this point in time, that this is what the investor group is suggesting before they would proceed. It was abundantly **unclear** to the majority of local citizens participating in the workshops why any of the subject City-owned properties would need to be considered for private purchase.
- 3) Between 1937 and 1966, the City of Redding purchased from the Benton and Kutras families a variety of parcels totaling about 212 acres, generally located north of Highway 44, to the east of the Redding Memorial Park Cemetery, and south of the Sacramento River. Over the years the variety of parcels have been either combined, split, reorganized and/or sold. Currently, there are six City-owned properties: the Rodeo Grounds, Civic Auditorium, Turtle Bay Boat Ramp, Turtle Bay Exploration Park, former Visitors Center, and open spaces.

Prior to the final workshop, on November 15th, a joint letter was sent to the Redding City Council from the Redding Rodeo Association, Asphalt Cowboys, Advance Redding, and Turtle Bay Exploration Park/Sheraton Hotel to express their “**full-fledged support** to the proposed master planning and development effort set forth by Populous, The McConnell Foundation, and K2 Development Company, Inc.” The letter goes on to say that they desire to **improve the infrastructure and facilities that support the rodeo, the Civic Auditorium, and the surrounding area**. “We will endeavor to solve parking challenges, ingress and egress hurdles, and collaborate to create community gathering spaces that all can enjoy.” There was an outlined timetable (starting with December 1, 2021) attached to the letter, which notably assumed the subject properties would be declared surplus, that the City would accept a non-binding letter of intent directing City staff to negotiate an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement, entering into that agreement, and entering into a Purchase and Sale Agreement by “Q3 2022.” This outline also estimated 2027 as the timeframe for property transfers.

- 4) At the final workshop on November 18th, staff presented several options for the Redding City Council to choose from with regard to the subject properties, including: **1) Take no action; 2) Continue developing information on the properties and create plans for next steps; 3) Formulate a Request for Proposals to develop a Master Plan; 4) Research alternatives which would allow development to the area without the requirement to declare the property “surplus”; 5) Begin the process to surplus properties; 6) Provide other direction to staff.** Additionally, City Manager Barry Tippin confirmed that only the rodeo grounds and civic auditorium acreage were on the table (**areas in blue** in the picture to the right)—**all open space and riverfront properties are off the table** (for now).



After hearing all the testimony from the concerned general public during all 4 workshops, Redding City Councilors voted 3-2 (Dacquisto and Resner dissenting) to take more time and gather more information, and to **set another Public Hearing on December 21st for further discussion**. Specifically, they asked staff to proceed with option #2, #4, and #5 above—that is, continuing developing information on the properties, researching alternatives which would allow development to the area without the requirement to declare the property “surplus,” and beginning the process to surplus the properties just in case they do choose to declare the property surplus to avoid delaying that process. Also, after hearing from the local indigenous tribes who strongly requested a seat at the table in any future negotiations, Councilor Winter “suggested” that their request would be granted. **Stay tuned!**

## *Palo Cedro Specific Plan To Be Prepared*

On November 16th, the Shasta County Board of Supervisors approved an agreement with Opticos Design, Inc. to prepare a Palo Cedro Town Center Specific Plan, with a budget for this project not to exceed **\$597,277**, through the completion and delivery of the final Plan, or October 27, 2023, whichever occurs first.

In July of 2019, the Supervisors adopted a Resolution amending the Shasta County Zoning Plan to establish a design review district for downtown Palo Cedro. This was the result of a **grass roots effort** from Palo Cedro residents with strong feelings about their community, after defeating what they called “an alarming plan” in 2018 by the County Planning Division, who was proposing zoning changes that would have allowed Section 8 multi-unit housing in the Palo Cedro area. Then, after adoption of the Palo Cedro Resolution, the Supervisors approved the submittal of applications for Senate Bill (SB2) and Local Early Action Planning Grant Program (LEAP) funding for the preparation of a community plan or specific plan in an existing rural community center that has urban services, such as Palo Cedro.

Since the adoption of the Resolution, County staff has worked with the Greater Palo Cedro Area Chamber of Commerce after approaching them with the potential to develop a **specific plan** rather than a design review criteria. The Chamber agreed to move forward with the preparation of a specific plan. Together with County staff, the Chamber developed the “Envision Palo Cedro Initiative” into the request for proposal for planning services to prepare the Palo Cedro Town Center Specific Plan, which resulted in the Opticos Design, Inc. (consultant) agreement.

The Planning Division and the consultant will work together with the Chamber, public, stakeholders, Planning Commission and Supervisors to prepare a specific plan that meets the criteria of the two grants as well as the community’s vision.

## *REU News—Proposed Electric Rate Increases and Electric Vehicle Charging Fees Implemented*

A Public Hearing has been scheduled for **December 7, 2021**, to be held in the Redding City Council Chambers during a regularly scheduled Council meeting beginning at 6:00 p.m., to consider an increase in Redding Electric Utility (REU) rates for all classes of customers, effective with the January 2022 and January 2023 billing cycles.

REU last increased rates in 2016 by 1.5 percent, which was fully offset by the elimination of surcharges in 2017. Therefore, the electric rates within the City of Redding are the same as they were in 2014. Unfortunately, federal and state regulations, aging infrastructure, and inflation are driving a need by REU for rate increases.

The proposed annual rate increases will be a 2 percent per year increase for REU. This will be achieved by **increasing the fixed rate by \$5 per month** for residential customers to \$20 in 2022, and **another \$5 per month** to \$25 in 2023. The **usage rate**, however, will be **reduced** from \$.1528 per/kWh to \$.1508 per/kWh in 2022, and to \$.1488 per/kWh in 2023. The effect of these increases on each residential customer’s electric bill will depend on how much electricity is used each month. Those residential customers living in multi-family housing will see a smaller increase, if a new multi-family rate is approved (servicing dense electric load costs less). A proposed increase in the Residential Energy Discount (public benefits program) for all residential and residential multi-family customers could mitigate most of the increase for income-qualified individuals. On average, residential customers will see an increase of about \$3.00 per month starting in 2022, and an additional \$3 per month in 2023. Commercial rates are more complicated, but will also increase.

Prior to the public hearing, REU will hold **three public workshops** to answer questions and concerns from residential and commercial customers:

1) **November 30, 2021:** 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m., Redding City Hall, Community Room; 2) **December 1, 2021:** 10:00 a.m.—12:00 noon, Redding City Hall, Community Room; 3) **December 2, 2021:** 2:00 p.m.—4:00 p.m., ZOOM online.

A flyer was sent to all 44,000 REU customers between November 17th and November 19th to provide further information and instructions for participating in these workshops.

In other REU news, on November 16th, Redding City Council approved **electric vehicle charging and parking fees** for the soon to be Redding owned four charging stations at the Sundial Bridge. The energy rates will be set at **\$0.20/kWh**. The parking fees will be set at **\$0.005 per minute**, and **\$0.10 per minute for parking while not charging**. The cost to charge an electric vehicle is dependent on the vehicle’s battery. A Tesla Model S, for example, would take about 2 hours to fully charge, with a cost of about \$26 that would provide about 300 miles of range.

For comparison purposes, Vittles Restaurant in Anderson has charging stations and charges \$0.40 kWh; Electrify America near the Safeway in Anderson charges \$0.31/kWh; ChargePoint at Target charges \$0.45 kWh (after waiving a former parking fee for the first hour.)

## *Updated News and Notes*

Shasta VOICES is continuing to monitor and follow many issues of interest to our supporters and the community. As part of our efforts to keep you updated and informed, here is a brief update of some of these issues.

**Moty Recall Election To Be Held February 1, 2022**—On November 2nd, with the County Clerk/Registrar of Voters having examined every signature submitted on the recall petition for Supervisor Leonard Moty and finding that 4,476 were valid, provided a Certificate of Sufficiency to the Shasta County Board of Supervisors. California Elections Code requires the Board to now call for a recall election, which must be held not less than 88 days, nor more than 125 days, after this issuance. Therefore, the Board voted to call for the election at the earliest possible date, which is **February 1, 2022**. This will be a special election that was not included in the 2021/2022 County budget. It is estimated that this special election will cost the General Fund \$400,000.

Signature gathering for those who wish to replace Moty began November 3rd. Four candidates filed and were qualified with the County Clerk's office between November 12th and November 17th: **Tim Garman** (School Board member), **Tony Ruel Hayward Sr.** (Business Owner), **Tarick Mahmoud** (Quality Assurance Pharmacist), and **Dale Ball** (Construction Superintendent). The recall election will follow the same process as the attempted recall of Governor Gavin Newsom. Voters will have two questions. First, they will be asked if Moty should be recalled, and then they will be asked to choose a replacement from the four listed qualified candidates.

**Chimenti Announces He Will Not Seek Re-Election**—At the November 2nd Board of Supervisors meeting, Chair Joe Chimenti announced that he will not run for a second term as District 1 Supervisor next June. He said he will be endorsing a candidate for his seat, but declined to name the candidate. At the same meeting, before Chimenti made his announcement, another resident from District 1, Kevin Crye, announced during public comment that he will be running in the next election for Chimenti's seat. Crye, a 41-year resident of Redding, is a business owner based in Redding who works with youth and runs the local Ninja Coalition located in the Mount Shasta Mall. Chimenti said Crye is not the candidate he will be endorsing.

**Sheriff Johnson Will Run In 2022 Election**—Appointed Shasta County Sheriff Michael Johnson has announced that he will run to keep his current post as Sheriff in the upcoming 2022 election, saying accountability to County residents will be at the forefront of his campaign. Former Shasta County sheriff's Sgt. John Greene also said he will run for the County Sheriff's position in 2022.

**Lack of Interest for Industrial Hemp Pilot Program**—On November 16th, the Shasta County Board of Supervisors heard a presentation from Director of Resource Management Paul Hellman and Ag Commissioner Rick Gurrola regarding the establishment of an Industrial Hemp Pilot Program. On July 22, 2021, the Board conducted a special meeting to receive public comment on illegal cannabis cultivation, and they directed staff to place the discussion of an industrial hemp pilot program on a future agenda. Director Hellman and Commissioner Gurrola reached out to those who seemed interested in the program in the past, but did not receive contacts by any individuals interested in pursuing the outdoor cultivation of industrial hemp.

Industrial hemp production is far greater than current market demand and its cultivation registration continues to decrease statewide. Additionally, illegal cannabis cultivation activities continue, and counties are reporting cannabis grows being discovered under the guise of licensed industrial hemp. Based upon the lack of any expressed interest in outdoor cultivation of industrial hemp in Shasta County, and ongoing illegal cannabis cultivation activities, staff did not perceive there to be any demand or need for establishing an industrial hemp pilot program at this point in time. The Supervisors unanimously agreed, **voting no** to the pilot program.

### *Questions?*

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