



The VOICE

Your independent news source

Greater Shasta County, CA

Volume XIII, Issue 11

www.shastavoices.com

July 2019

Did you know...

- There were **13** single family home permits issued in the City of Redding in June 2019, for a total of **53** so far in 2019, and **17** Carr Fire single family rebuild permits issued in June 2019, for a total of **72** so far in 2019. There were **3** permits issued for commercial buildings in June 2019, for a total of **11** so far in 2019.
- **Five people** have emerged as candidates for the open seat in California's 1st Assembly District, the seat that Brian Dahle held before winning a special election for District 1 Senate in early June. Those people are: **Megan Dahle** (R), **Patrick Jones** (R), former Mayor of Redding, **Joseph Turner** (R), former Lassen County GOP Chairman, **Elizabeth Betancourt** (D) from Happy Valley, and **Lane Rickard** (R), from Redding, former Assistant to Senator Ted Gaines. The primary election will be held on **August 27th**. The top two vote-getters, if no candidate receives 50% of the vote, will advance to a Special General Election on November 5th.

Inside this issue:

Shasta VOICES Research Project Addresses Casino Controversy	1
Planning Commission Recommends Approval of Costco Project	2
Competing Sales Tax Measures in City and County Both Moving Forward	3
Updated News and Notes	4
Join Shasta VOICES	4

Shasta VOICES Research Project Addresses Proposed Redding Rancheria Casino Project Controversy

The Redding Rancheria Indian Tribe is in the process of seeking approval to move its existing casino to a bigger site on agriculturally-zoned property adjacent to I-5, located in the unincorporated area of Shasta County, through a fee-to-trust with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

On April 5, 2019, a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was issued for the proposed project (as required) by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) as the lead agency for the Redding Rancheria's application requesting that the United States acquire 232 acres of land in trust in Shasta County, California, for the construction and operation of a casino resort. This was the first time for most of the Shasta County Community members to receive detailed information about the project. One public hearing to receive comments on the DEIS was held on May 20, 2019. There was also a 45-day comment period available for written comments on the DEIS, which was extended an additional two weeks due to the overwhelming number of responses, that ended on June 17, 2019.

The environmental impact process for proposed Indian tribe developments is very different from the process for all other proposed developments, which are held **accountable** to provide mitigation measures for identified impacts if their projects are to be approved. If those projects are approved, there is outside government oversight to ensure that the conditions of project approval are, in fact, implemented. The DEIS does not address any such procedure for Indian tribe developments. This has clearly caused an overwhelming amount of controversy and concern in the community at large.

The BIA's own regulations, however, **do require** them to consider and analyze community impacts from fee-to-trust applications, and they do have to answer all of the comments received about the DEIS. We don't know when that will occur.

Based on all the controversy, and the requests of our own members, Shasta VOICES has conducted an independent research project that is designed to include as much of the information that is out there regarding this proposed project as possible, all in **one easy-to-read and relatively short document**. It includes background information, key facts about the process, the controversies and concerns about those facts, and whether or not those concerns are well founded. The document is entitled "The Double Dip," and is available for access on our website: <http://www.shastavoices.com/studies.html>.

At the July 16th Redding City Council meeting, Shasta VOICES informed the Council members and City management during the public comment period that we would be releasing "The Double Dip" research paper and forwarding them a copy, and asked them to consider the community's input through an "action" agenda item at a future Council meeting. They did agree to schedule a **public workshop** meeting to discuss the controversial proposal by the Redding Rancheria.

As of this writing, there has not been a date scheduled for the City's workshop. As soon as that date and time has been established, we will send out the pertinent information via an **email alert**.

Planning Commission Recommends Approval of Costco Project

On July 23, 2019, the City of Redding Planning Commission conducted its **third public hearing** for the River Crossing Marketplace Specific Plan, by Costco Wholesale. This hearing was to recommend approval for the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR), General Plan Amendment, and rezoning application. The Costco project is to develop 25 acres of property located at the northwest quadrant of the South Bonnyview Road/Interstate 5 interchange, with a 152,000-square foot discount warehouse and fuel center with up to 30 fueling stations, and about 62,000 square feet of complementary retail and service uses.

The first Draft EIR was released for public comment on April 16, 2018, for a 45-day comment period which was extended to 60-days. The Commission conducted the **first** public hearing on the subject to accept public comments on the document at its May 22, 2018, meeting, prior to close of the comment period on June 14, 2018.

At its meeting of November 27, 2018, the Commission held a **second** public hearing to receive comments on the adequacy of the Final EIR for the River Crossing Marketplace Specific Plan and related applications, and to make a recommendation for approval to the City Council. However, prior to opening the public hearing, staff advised the Commission that two appendices identified in the main body of the Draft EIR involving the **Health Risk Assessment** and **Traffic Impact Analysis Report** (TIAR) were either **not included or were incomplete**. Based on this oversight, the Commission held the public hearing to receive public comments on the FEIR, but took no action on the document or the project and instead directed staff to “re-circulate” the relevant portions of the Draft EIR for a 60-day public comment period. That process is now complete, and the third public hearing moved forward on July 23rd.

Areas that have been identified as having potentially significant impacts in the FEIR include *Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Energy, Hazardous Materials, Noise, Transportation and Traffic, and Tribal Cultural Resources*.

Numerous public comments were received throughout the process about aesthetics, habitat modification, consistency with the City’s Tree Management Ordinance, and storm water quality. These concerns were **also** included as potentially significant impacts requiring mitigation in the FEIR as well.

Thirteen people spoke during the third public hearing. At least 8 of those belong to the Bechelli Bonnyview Coalition, who oppose the project. They expressed primarily traffic concerns, and tried to make the case that a better location for Costco would be at Oasis Road in north Redding. John Dunlap, a local retired engineer who seemed to speak on behalf of the Coalition, suggested that the City of Redding and Costco just need to re-start talks with that developer and get it done.

But Mike Dobrota, who represents Costco, explained why the former attempt to build the new Costco project at Oasis Road failed. He said Costco was a willing buyer, however, the seller never performed. “It wasn’t something that we couldn’t make an agreement with the city, or the city didn’t want to do a deal with Costco on Oasis. It had nothing to do with that. It was all about the developer not being able to perform” he said.

Dobrota also said the South Bonnyview-Bechelli site was the preferred location **before** he started working in Redding, and Costco went to the property owner, but at that time, the owner would not sell. “Since we couldn’t get the **number one site, which is the one here on Bechelli**, we went up to Oasis and worked that for years, until that developer couldn’t perform, then walked away,” he said. Costco abandoned plans to build on Oasis in 2016.

“After Rich Development went into contract to buy the Bonnyview-Bechelli site, the company came to Costco, willing to sell the big-box warehouse a portion of the property so it could build there,” Dobrota said. “So we’re back to where we started.”

The public hearing ended after 3 hours of testimony and discussion. The Planning Commissioners **voted unanimously** to adopt a resolution **recommending that City Council certify the FEIR**, and adopt a resolution recommending that City Council **approve and adopt the River Crossing Marketplace Specific Plan, General Plan Amendment Application and Rezoning Application**. The approval included two requests for Council consideration: 1) require the project to complete sidewalks on the south side of Loma Vista Road, and 2) include an additional 10 foot of freeway buffer setback on the east side of the Costco building. These improvements would be in addition the very long list of already agreed upon conditions of approval.

A final public hearing and decision by the Redding City Council to consider the Commission’s recommendations for certification and approval of the project is currently scheduled to occur during the next City Council meeting on **Tuesday, August 6, 2019, beginning at 6:00 p.m.**

Competing Sales Tax Measures in City and County Both Moving Forward

On June 4th, Shasta County Supervisor Joe Chimenti asked his fellow Supervisors to once again consider talks about a County-wide sales tax ballot measure. He had put that discussion on hold in March, 2019, after receiving a request from City of Redding Mayor Julie Winter, who had said that there was already a community group working to put a **one percent general sales tax increase** measure in the city of **Redding** on the ballot in 2019.

But after 3 months passed with few details or any show of progress with Redding's potential general tax, Mr. Chimenti moved forward with discussions for a **one percent specific Countywide sales tax increase measure** for the 2020 primary election ballot. He believes that this additional "quality of life tax" would benefit the cities of Redding, Shasta Lake, and Anderson, and would cover the entire Justice System.

On July 16th, Mr. Chimenti conducted a presentation during the regular County Supervisors Meeting stating that as a united community, we will create a safe, thriving Shasta County, based on a strong, empowered Criminal Justice System focused on improving our quality of life. His presentation included key objectives, and an **ongoing funding plan**, which is a **one percent Countywide Specific Transaction and Use Tax (sales tax)**. By law, these funds could only be used in the investment areas specifically designated in the ballot measure to mitigate criminal behavior. These **funds will be used exclusively** for renovating, maintaining, operating (including programs) and building new jail space and new personnel in the Criminal Justice System. These **funds cannot be used** for any existing expenses, unfunded liabilities, supplanting of existing budgets, or any other purpose.

The key objectives include:

1. **Enforce a high level of accountability for criminal behavior**—build more jail space (target 500 beds) and increase jail personnel; send more convicted criminals to facilities in other cooperating counties to increase bed space; increase case managers in the probation department to ensure supervision; increase staff of the District Attorney's and Public Defender's office to expedite justice; aggressively pursue all State and Federal grants.
2. **Increase the safety of citizens**—provide full staffing 24/7 sheriff coverage in rural Shasta County; increase local police presence to discourage new criminal activity; better protect our officers by providing adequate back up; hire CSO's to free sworn officers for proactive policing; decrease police response times for crimes in progress.
3. **Address the social causes**—offer three options: *Get Help, Get Home, Get Out*; partner closely with the Health & Human Services Agency to assist those with mental health and addiction issues; provide medical assisted treatment and mental health services for inmates (incarceration provides an opportunity and motivation for rehabilitation); hold to a high level of accountability those with addiction and mental health issues who refuse treatment and engage in criminal activity.

A **one percent Countywide** sales tax would raise about **\$26 million dollars per year**. If such a measure were to pass, agreements would be reached and codified for some formula (likely a percentage) to determine how much the County, each of the cities of Redding, Anderson and Shasta Lake, and the Criminal Justice System would receive. The Criminal Justice System would consist of the District Attorney's office, Public Defender's office, and the Probation Department.

A **specific sales tax** requires voters to **approve by a two-thirds margin**, and the revenues raised must be used for specifically identified purposes only. Mr. Chimenti said that a specific tax would guarantee that the revenues raised go to where the ballot measure states it will go, rather than into the general fund, and he believes this is what the voters prefer. A general sales tax requires a simple majority of 50 percent plus one, but the revenues raised can be used in any way that the receiving jurisdiction (city or county) chooses, since that money is put into the general fund.

Fast forward to July 22, 2019: A public notice was posted by the **proponents** of a 1% general sales tax in the City of Redding stating: "Notice is hereby given by the **proponents** of their intention to circulate a petition within the City of Redding for the purpose of qualifying for the ballot an initiative measure that would **raise the transaction and use tax by 1% within the City of Redding.**" It goes on to say, "This kind of tax is often called a sales tax. If approved the tax imposed will remain in effect until repealed by the voters. This Measure proposes a **general tax** which requires **simple majority voter approval**. Although the measure requires that proceeds of the tax imposed by this Measure be placed in a designated fund specific to this tax, the proceeds of the tax imposed by this Measure would be available for any governmental purpose." There are **three proponents** for this measure: Joshua Johnson, Tim Marinello, and Larry Odell. A spokesperson for the group is Chad McCulley.

In order for a Countywide specific sales tax measure to officially be placed on the primary election ballot in March, 2020, it would only need to be approved by a 2/3 majority of the County Supervisors. In order for a City of Redding general sales tax measure to be officially placed on either a special election or regular election ballot, the proponents would first need to collect over 5,000 signatures from registered voters in Redding on the circulated petition.

This would be the third attempt to get local voters to pass a sales tax hike, although the first two attempts were only in the City of Redding — and each time, the proposed increase gets larger. In 2014, voters were asked to approve a **quarter-cent specific tax** increase requiring a 2/3 majority vote, (which failed by a 56% to 44% vote) and in 2016, a **half-cent general tax** increase requiring a simple majority vote (which failed by a 62% to 38% vote).

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.

Dignity Health Proposed Wellness Center DEIR Now Available—The City of Redding selected SHN Consulting in March of 2018 for the preparation of an environmental impact report (EIR) on the 129,600 square-foot, \$50 million Dignity Health North State Pavilion Wellness Center project, to be located on 10.55 acres at the southwest corner of Cypress and Hartnell Avenues. SHN was chosen from proposals solicited by the City through the a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. The City is the lead agency for the project review and approval.

The project was scheduled for a public hearing and approval of the use permit before the Planning Commission on August 22, 2017, however, comments were received at the very last minute of the review period of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration in the form of a 14-page letter from a law firm representing “Redding Residents for Responsible Development,” including IBEW Local 340, Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 228, and Sheet Metal Workers Local 104. Based on those comments, the project was continued indefinitely to allow staff and the applicant time to review the comments. To address the comments received, Dignity Health decided to begin the EIR process.

On July 1, 2019, the Notice of Availability of the Draft Environment Impact Report (DEIR) for the Dignity Health North State Pavilion Wellness Enter Project was issued. Copies of the DEIR for the project are available for public review beginning July 2, 2019. The comment period ends at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 27, 2019. The DEIR may be reviewed at the public counter at the City of Redding Development Services Department, Planning Division. A review copy has been provided to the Shasta County Library. The DEIR my also be viewed and/or downloaded on the City’s web page: [https://www.cityofredding.org/departments/development-services/planning/projects/Dignity Health North State Pavilion](https://www.cityofredding.org/departments/development-services/planning/projects/Dignity%20Health%20North%20State%20Pavilion). One public hearing during the 45-day DEIR review period will be held during the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting on Tuesday, August 13, 2019 at 4:00 p.m., in the City Council Chambers at 777 Cypress Avenue. Those who wish to have their verbatim comments on the DEIR considered must submit them in writing to the attention of Lily Toy, Planning Manager, City of Redding Development Services, Planning Division, 777 Cypress Avenue, Redding, CA, 96001, or by email: ltoy@cityofredding.org.

Round Table Discussion Held on Redding’s Sign Ordinance—Redding’s sign ordinance and regulations relating to the size, location, display period, and aesthetics of banners is currently being reviewed by Development Services staff. As part of this review, the Redding Chamber of Commerce and the appropriate City staff members held a round table discussion on July 17th, gathering input from our local stakeholders (those businesses who rely on signs for marketing and directional purposes), before making any “updated” recommendations for consideration by the Planning Commission, and eventually City Council. There were about 30 people who participated in this discussion. All felt it is important to strike a balance between having a clean, professional looking place without penalizing businesses trying to attract customers. One well-received suggestion was to allow a changeable, permanent structure that would accommodate changeable information, because temporary signs don’t have to be banners. This could eliminate banner code violations and allow businesses more than the current “two times a year” restriction, as well as address the current size and location restrictions for banners. Another suggestion was to allow addendums to the current Sign Ordinance, rather than changing the entire Ordinance. Other suggestions were made to (1) offer an extension clause for charitable causes and new businesses, (2) offer flexibility for businesses located behind other businesses and (3) offer a better way of regulating sizing that is scaled to the building. The City’s Director of Development Services, Larry Vaupel, told the group that he can create something new for consideration to address the size of a building and time frames, as well as update some of the other verbiage in the Ordinance. Those changes will come before the Planning Commission for a public hearing in the near future.

Join Shasta VOICES today.

We depend on membership and other contributions.

If you are viewing this issue of “*THE VOICE*” on our website, click on the ***membership tab*** for information and to download a membership application or contributor form. Or, you can obtain more information by going to our website, www.shastavoices.com, or calling (530) 222-5251.

Mary B. Machado, Executive Director