



# The VOICE

Your independent news source

Greater Shasta County, CA

Volume XIV, Issue III

www.shastavoices.com

August 2020

**Did you know...**

- There were **5 new** single family home permits issued in the City of Redding in July 2020, for a total of **109** so far in 2020, and **1** Carr Fire single family rebuild permit issued in July 2020, for a total of **22** so far in 2020. There were **4** permits issued for new commercial buildings in July 2020, for a total of **23** so far in 2020.
- The Redding Chamber of Commerce created "**The Greater Redding Area Restaurant Coalition**" that will ask the State to ease COVID-19 restrictions in Shasta County and allow indoor dining. Restaurants are currently able to seat customers outside (which is not necessarily a good option with over 100 degree heat), do take-out orders and offer delivery services. Shasta County Health Officer Dr. Karen Ramstrom has said that the State is moving toward making exceptions for counties that have not been as hard hit by the pandemic, and our local cases are not being driven by restaurants, so moving outdoors doesn't appear to be an important public health strategy. Stay tuned!

## "Open Up The County" Citizens Plead For 4 Hours

The Shasta County Board of Supervisors held their first **evening** Board of Supervisors meeting in years on August 11, 2020 at **6:00 p.m.** at the unrelenting requests of their constituents over the past several weeks. It was a 6 hour meeting, and the turnout was historical, given the challenging circumstances caused by COVID-19.

Due to the COVID pandemic, members of the public who wish to make in-person public comment are permitted into the Board Chambers **one at a time** to make a comment and **then must exit**. Speakers must wait outside of the Board Chambers until they are called upon, with no less than six feet of distance between themselves and others at all times. Face coverings are required inside of the Shasta County Administration Center and Board Chambers, except when exempted by state order. There is **no seating available to the public** in the Board Chambers.

During the **first four hours** of the meeting, at least 60 local Shasta County residents, some with their children who also spoke saying they want to go to in-person school, gave the Supervisors an earful as one after another pleaded with them to defy Governor Newsom and **re-open all of Shasta County immediately**, particularly in-person schools, dine-in restaurants, and small businesses. Hundreds of others were outside in the 100 degree heat, hoping for an immediate response to their pleas by the Supervisors.

After the public comments, the Supervisors discussed at length what they should do, fearing that we are closer than ever to **civil unrest** in the County. Accurate information about multiple COVID issues does not appear to be making its way to the general public. More press releases with correct information, including through social media, have been pledged. Additionally, the Supervisors plan to immediately send a much more compelling letter than in the past to the Governor, outlining how we have done everything he has asked of us, kept our numbers low, contained the virus in Shasta County, and that we expect to be **rewarded** for our good behavior in Shasta County, not punished with his one-size-fits-all approach.

Supervisor Baugh went a step further, informing the other Supervisors that he will be sending his own letter to the Governor, regardless of what the full Board's letter says, stating (in part) that **"you have destroyed our economy...Stop It! Enough is enough. Give us back our lives, our freedoms..."** These comments closely summarize and echo what was said at the podium by so many for four hours earlier in the meeting.

In the meantime, August 12th was the first day of school for most districts in Shasta County. According to Judy Flores, Superintendent of the Shasta County Office of Education (SCOE) who addressed the school opening concerns long after the crowds had gone home after 11:00 p.m., it is not the role of the Supervisors or SCOE to make decisions about schools. They serve as a support structure, offering information and letting **each district** make informed decisions as they reopen: 10 districts are offering face-to-face starts, 8 districts are opening with a hybrid (face-to-face and distance learning) start, 7 districts are opening with distance learning, and 4 charter schools are offering face-to-face starts.

At the August 18th and August 25th Supervisors meetings, the civil unrest continued during the public comments. This unrest looks to continue until Shasta County reopens.

**Inside this issue:**

Open Up The County—Citizens Plead For 4 Hours	1
Fountain Wind Project DEIR Released	2
County To Refund Overpaid Impact Fees Dating Back to May 6, 2008	2
Veterans Village Housing Project Moves Forward	3
Updated News and Notes	4
Join Shasta VOICES	4

## ***Fountain Wind Project DEIR Released***

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the proposed Fountain Wind Project has been completed by Shasta County, the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and released for a 45-day public review period from **August 3, 2020 through September 18, 2020**. The proposed Project site would have a maximum footprint of up to 713 acres located within approximately 29,500 acres of actively managed timber property owned by Shasta Cascade Timberlands, and is located about one mile west of the existing Hatchet Ridge Wind Project, 6 miles west of Burney.

The DEIR discusses potential environmental impacts in many areas of concern including: aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, communications interference, cultural and tribal resources, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise and vibrations, and wildfire. The full document and other project related documents and technical studies may be reviewed online by clicking [www.co.shasta.ca.us/index/drm/planning/eir/fountain-wind-project](http://www.co.shasta.ca.us/index/drm/planning/eir/fountain-wind-project). A hard copy of the document is available for inspection by appointment at the Shasta County Department of Resource Management, Planning Division, 1855 Placer Street, Suite 103, Redding, CA during regular business hours. For an appointment, contact Lio Salazar, Senior Planner, by telephone at (530) 225-5532, or email at [jsalazar@co.shasta.ca.us](mailto:jsalazar@co.shasta.ca.us). Hard copies are also available for review by appointment at the Anderson, Redding, and Burney branches of the Shasta Public Libraries, Cottonwood Community Library, and Hill Country Community Clinic (Round Mountain) during regular business hours.

The proposed Fountain Wind Project has the potential to provide electricity for more than 100,000 homes, while using up to 72 wind turbine generators (28 less than originally proposed in the March 2019 Public Scoping Report). This Project will provide many benefits to Shasta County, including approximately \$50 million in property and sales tax revenue during the first 30 years of operations, up to 200 jobs during peak construction, and up to 12 full-time jobs during Project operations. Additionally, ConnectGen (the project developer) would be providing more than \$1 million in community giving to address local community needs. The Project would also generate funding to improve local roads and other infrastructure in the Project area, while further enhancing fire safety and best practice fire prevention measures utilized by the site's landowner.

## ***County To Refund Overpaid Impact Fees Dating Back to May 6, 2008***

On August 25, 2020, the Shasta County Supervisors voted unanimously to approve an **ordinance amendment** for Ordinance 665 of Shasta County, which was the original adoption of the Public Facilities Impact Fees for all new development within the unincorporated areas of Shasta County, and took effect on May 6, 2008.

The amendment establishes a traffic impact fee exclusively applicable to **mini-storage development** retroactive to May 6, 2008. "Mini-storage" is defined as a building in which a number of storage units or vaults are rented for the storage of goods; each unit is physically separated from other units, and access is usually provided through an overhead door or other common access point.

The amendment to the impact fee ordinance will **retroactively adjust the traffic impact fee rate** for mini-storage facilities. The existing ordinance contains only three different nonresidential land use types: commercial, office, and industrial. Impact fee rates are lowest for the industrial land use type, which is how mini-storage development has been classified since the ordinance was adopted in 2008. Since the level of traffic generated by mini-storage development is significantly lower than typical industrial developments, **the traffic impact fees charged for mini-storage development has been significantly greater than is warranted.**

The amendment adds mini-storage as a fourth nonresidential land use type and would establish a traffic impact fee rate that is approximately **17%** of the industrial rate, or **\$206 vs. \$1,170 per 1,000 sq. ft.** for the 2007 base year, which has increased incrementally since 2008. That's a significant difference of \$964 per 1,000 sq. ft. The proposed amendment would be retroactive to 2008; therefore, **the County will issue partial refunds** (including interest) to those who overpaid traffic impact fees for mini-storage development from May 6, 2008 through August 25, 2020. There will be about **\$190,000** plus interest refunded. Resource Management Director Paul Hellman prepared this amendment in response to complaints from developers (and Shasta VOICES). We are grateful to Mr. Hellman for his efforts, and to the Supervisors for their approval.

**A new impact fee program** study is currently underway. The new program **will replace the existing program**. This is the first time the County has revisited their fees since 2008. Clearly, as evidenced by the newly amended Ordinance 665 and subsequent refunds, this review is long overdue.

The first draft study of the proposed new impact fee program provided by the consultant is now being studied by a stakeholder group including Shasta VOICES, representatives from our local Economic Development Corporation, the Shasta Builders Exchange and some local developers. They are participating in meetings with the consultants to provide what we believe is invaluable input in crafting a **balanced approach** to impact fee programs that will provide enough incentive for development to actually occur while being mindful of infrastructure improvements that may need to be included in a fee program. Stay tuned!

## *Veterans Village Housing Project Moves Forward*

It has been over 12 years since the City of Shasta Lake purchased property in the City to create a low-income senior housing project. Many things have changed since the original concept—some historical context is in order:

Late in **2008**, the former Shasta Lake Redevelopment Agency (RDA) purchased the property located at Meade Street and Locust Avenue for the purpose of constructing a low-income senior housing project. North Valley Catholic Social Services (NVCSS) was selected for the project, and \$2 million was budgeted from the RDA. Unfortunately, redevelopment agencies were subsequently dissolved by the State, whose Department of Finance rejected a request from Shasta Lake to keep the \$2 million. The agreement with NVCSS then lapsed. However, the preliminary plans were already drawn through the NVCSS contract by local architectural firm NMR Architects & Engineers for a 31 unit affordable senior housing project. These plans are complete and are in the City's possession.

The property was transferred to the Shasta Lake Housing Authority on **May 21, 2015**. The City of Shasta Lake approved an exclusive right to negotiate agreement with **The Veterans Housing Development Corporation (VDHC)**, a subsidiary of Veterans Resource Centers of America, to develop the **Veterans Village Housing Project**. VDHC was seeking sites within Shasta County to construct a permanent supportive housing project of about 30 units for low-income eligible veterans.



Two years ago, right about the time when it looked like VDHC would finally be able to begin construction, the devastating Carr and Camp Fires occurred. Due to those disasters, the cost of materials for construction of the Veterans Village increased by 25 percent, making it necessary for the VDHC to go back and secure more funding. Additionally, it was very difficult to find contractors to do the necessary construction.

It's been a very long haul, but the VDHC has now successfully **secured Prop 41 funding**, which is the California Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention Program approved by voters in 2014, to develop a 30-unit permanent supportive housing facility for very low-income veterans in the City of Shasta Lake at the City-owned parcel located at the corner of Meade Street and Locust Avenue. **Other funding** for the project comes from the City of Shasta Lake, Shasta County, Cornerstone Bank, The Home Depot Foundation, the American Red Cross, and the US Department of Agriculture. **Rent supports** will be provided for tenants from the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program and the Shasta County Housing Authority. And, it is possible once again to secure contractors for the project construction.

The project will provide 30 one-bedroom apartments, community space, counseling rooms, a computer room, laundry facilities, and exercise facilities for currently homeless veterans in the community. There will also be offices for services including behavioral health treatment, employment training and job placement, and transportation services. Supportive services will be provided by the Veterans Administration (VA) and by the Veterans Resource Center (VRC), a four-decade old veteran service agency, which will provide 24/7 onsite management. The location of this project is within walking distance of shopping and restaurants, with nearby access to some of the best fishing, hiking and bike trails in Northern California.

As of this writing, the target date for finalizing construction funding is mid-September 2020. Brad Long, the Executive Director of VDHC, is leading this project locally, and is hoping for an official ground-breaking ceremony around the beginning of October 2020.

To learn more about the services provided by the VDHC, you can go to their website: [nationsfinest.org](http://nationsfinest.org).

During the Shasta County Supervisors Meeting on July 21st, Supervisor Steve Morgan, who represents District 4 which includes the City of Shasta Lake, said "The Shasta Lake Veteran Villages will help ensure disabled Veterans receive the housing and supportive services they deserve. We owe a special thanks to the City of Shasta Lake for being such a strong partner. I could not be more supportive of the Veteran Villages and the collective effort it has taken to make this project come to life. My personal thanks to Brad Long, the Executive Director of the Veterans Housing Development Corporation, for coordinating this community project."

## *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.

**Costco Project Opposition Group Fails to Gather Necessary Signatures** - On July 20th, the Bonnyview Bechelli Coalition, opponents of the River Crossing Marketplace/Costco Project to be located at the northeast corner of South Bonnyview Road and Bechelli Lane, turned in a petition to the Redding City Clerk, who determined that there were 5,613 unverified signatures (371 over the minimum number needed), as an attempt to overturn the project's approval via a local ballot referendum on the General Election ballot in November.

The City Clerk then delivered the petitions to the County Clerk and Registrar of Voters to determine how many of those signatures were valid registered voters in the City of Redding. On July 27th, the County Clerk determined that **only 2,198 of the signatures were valid**, based on a random sample, and a certificate of insufficiency was issued by the City Clerk. That left the opponents with 21 days (through August 17th) to review, determine which signatures were disqualified, and challenge the determination. The opponents officially decided **not** to review signatures or challenge the determination; therefore, the referendum will not be placed on the ballot.

**2019-2020 Taxes Mostly Steady in Redding**—Sales tax, property taxes, and business taxes held steady with negligible increases over the prior year through the end of fiscal year 2019-2020 in Redding despite COVID-19 challenges. Cannabis tax increased from \$81,048 to \$796,972. Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) was down \$1,484,763 (22%) from the prior fiscal year. It is expected that some of the decrease is due to deferred TOT payments from the coronavirus pandemic, and lack of business due to COVID-19, all while compared to the previous year, which was impacted positively by the Carr and Camp Fires.

**Qualified Candidates for General Election**—For the general election to be held on November 3, 2020, the following candidates have qualified to appear on the ballot for open elected positions:

- **City of Redding**—Two 4-year term City Council seats: Julie Winter (incumbent), Adam McElvain (incumbent), Mark Mezzano, Jack Leroy Munns II, David Robbins, Monique Welin. City Treasurer: Allyn Feci Clark (incumbent).
- **City of Anderson**—Three 4-year term City Council seats: Melissa Hunt (incumbent), Stan Neutz (incumbent), Susie Baugh (incumbent). One City Council vacated seat ending December 2, 2022: Michael Gallagher (appointed incumbent). Because only one person was nominated for each of these open seats, at the City of Anderson City Council meeting on August 18th, **all four persons were appointed** to the offices for which they were nominated, in accordance with Section 10229 of the California Elections Code.
- **City of Shasta Lake**—Three 4-year term City Council seats: Jerome Farr (incumbent), Jim "O.G." Mark, Greg Watkins, Janice Darlene Powell (Mayor—incumbent).
- **Shasta County**— Board of Supervisors, District 4 (runoff): Steve Morgan (incumbent), Patrick Jones.
- **School District Board Members:** 38 Districts—see "County Clerk's Candidates Guide to Running for Public Office" for full list (Shasta County Elections website)
- **Special District Board Members:** 20 Special Districts—see "County Clerk's Candidates Guide to Running For Public Office" for full list (Shasta County Elections website)

***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