



The VOICE

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Greater Shasta County, CA

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Did you know...

- There were **128** single family home permits issued in the City of Redding in 2016. That is a decrease of **62** permits, or **33%** less than were issued in 2015. There were **21** permits issued for commercial buildings in 2016, 4 less and 16 percent below those issued for commercial buildings for 2015.
- PenAir is reducing the number of flights out of the Redding Airport to Portland, Oregon starting on February 1, 2017, when there will be only **one flight** out of Redding, a direct flight to Portland, that leaves at 3:05 pm.
- The City of Redding has extended a **moratorium** through **December 1, 2017** on **non-medical marijuana** to temporarily prohibit the outdoor cultivation, indoor cultivation in excess of 6 plants, manufacture of marijuana products, processing, storage, delivery to destination points, and retail sales of non-medical marijuana products in all areas of the City. **A Community Workshop will be held on February 13th, 2:00 pm, at City Council Chambers, 777 Cypress Avenue** to receive input from the public and have more in-depth discussion on the subject.

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“Developing Our Economy Forum” Provided A Productive First Step

Shasta VOICES, together with the Shasta Builders Exchange and the Redding Chamber of Commerce, sponsored the first in what we hope will be a **series of forums** entitled “Developing Our Economy” on January 18th with panelists from the City of Redding. The next forum (date as yet to be established) will feature panelists from Shasta County.

The **first** forum spotlighted staff from the City of Redding’s Development Services Department including Larry Vaupel (Director of Development Services), Paul Hellman (Planning Manager), and Jim Wright (Building Official).

A series of pointed questions from the three sponsors of the event were posed to the panelists, followed by questions from the audience of about 180 people submitted on index cards, and read by our moderator, Joe Chimenti (Executive Director for the Shasta Builders Exchange).

It may take up two pages in this newsletter, but we feel the information gained during this event provides an important **first step** in the process of improving our local economy, creating **more dialog**, implementing real **improvements**, and generating investment in our community and much-needed revenue to improve our public services. Yes, this was simply the first step—we will not stop here, as we are trying to effect positive change for our community. You will see follow-up articles throughout 2017 on the next steps!

So, here are most of the questions, **panelists answers**, and information that will help us eliminate the obstacles to development and investment in the City moving forward:

- Q:** What should be done to **streamline** the permitting process and lower barriers of entry for new businesses to **reduce costs and delays**?
- A:** **Client focus**—City is shifting focus to the client relationship and community building, now accepting that client success is also their success. A continuous improvement process has been implemented, and will be measured by clients—the goal is that you now leave the permit center happier than when you came in. Costs and delays can be reduced with **better communication up-front** about what to expect (quite a departure and welcome improvement from years past).
- Q:** Do you support **self-certification of engineering plans**, allowing for the City to simply double-check already qualified engineer certified plans?
- A:** It’s not quite that simple. Code requires that all docs be reviewed by the building department. The City can, however, work toward **approval with less analysis** as follows: provide engineering peer reviews, not redesigns; same day turnarounds on permits; expedited approvals for solar permits; virtual re-inspections with an emailed picture; encourage **pre-lease meetings on site**, as zoning is not the only issue to consider; free fee estimates up front before building, purchasing or leasing anything. One of the best ways to avoid plan review delays is to hire a qualified, licensed design professional up front and let them submit your plans, which results in 50% fewer plan reviews.
- Q:** Please provide an overview of **development impact fees**.
- A:** Why impact fees? California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) says if you are going to have an impact, you have to **mitigate** it. Are there **other ways besides fees** to mitigate?

“Developing Our Economy Forum” continued from page 1

Yes, there are multiple ways, and impact fees are the chosen policy implemented in Redding. Can we **reduce the fees**? Yes, there are many ways to reduce it. **One way** would be to change the existing policy of forcing “growth” to pay 100% of traffic improvements for everyone (new and existing) to forcing only 50% to be paid by growth and obtain 50% grant funding for the remainder. City policy is to look at the current impact fee program at least **every five years**, because things change and can affect the amount of the established fees, such as a reduction in the projected growth (which would **reduce** the amount of fees being charged). Mary Machado has participated for many years in the process of reviewing the City’s impact fee program, and this year that review process will again take place. Options will be on the table during this review, as always. Our population growth has dropped again from the last projection—the fees needs to be recalculated accordingly.

Q: Are there ways the City can still plan for and fund future infrastructure needs, yet not have a fee structure that stifles current growth opportunities?

A: Yes. The City, for instance, can **change their impact fee policy for commercial tenants**. For example, when an existing business moves to a different location in town, they are not creating **new** traffic, but **moving** traffic around. They already paid their traffic impact fees for their business...there really is no new impact, and traffic fees could be eliminated to their new location. The sewer fee is now calculated on the size of the meter, a change implemented in the last impact fee update, which greatly reduced the amount of the fee. As mentioned in the prior question (and answer), such options are on the table during the upcoming review later this year.

Q: From an economic perspective, what is the brand vision for **Stillwater Business Park**?

A: The Park was established a long time ago—it was a community vision. We need to move on—we’ve got it, it is an asset that will pay dividends one day. Leads are given to the City all the time from the State. We have large acreage, shovel ready, with all environmental clearances (which took 10 years) and this is **very rare** anywhere. Lots 1-5 are designed for **Corporate Headquarters**, and lots 6-16 for **manufacturing**. There are covenants, restrictions and design standards in this Planned Development area (picture shows sample tilt up pre-cast concrete building). People who build in the Park want their investment protected and assurance that what builds next to them is just as good.



Q: How is the **Downtown Redding Specific Plan** update different from the other plans?

A: Unlike General Plans, Specific Plans are focused on a small area. The last Downtown plan was 16 years ago. In the current context, those development standards have a negative effect. **Are some of the uses allowed now not appropriate?** It’s time for an **action plan**, not just a policy plan. The City wants to make sure there are not obstacles down the road for unique investments, and wants to build in as much **flexibility** as possible. It’s too difficult to amend the current Plan for a current worthy project. There is limited area in Downtown, as most of it is already built out. Tear-downs and remodels or in-fill is all that’s left. There is an **online community survey** coming next month looking for input from the whole community, not just the same people already involved in Downtown. The City wants to hear from residents on the East side of town as to why they don’t go Downtown, among other issues.

Q: Why does Redding have a **bad reputation** as a place to do business? Why are we considered **anti-business** and **anti-development**? Why is the City opposed to **development agreements** with large commercial developments?

A: It hasn’t always been easy here, but **don’t let the past dictate the future**. Give us a chance and let us prove ourselves to you as we move forward together. If you come across something in the code not practical or logical, maybe it needs to be changed. Approach us with your suggestions. There **is a provision in the code** for development agreements—we aren’t sure why they haven’t been allowed in the past, but we think it’s great to formally say, “I’ll do this, you do that.” It creates that certainty that you ask about.

Q: How can the City simplify **code enforcement**? **A:** Using **technology** to make life easier, with **online permitting**, zoning check tools, and getting **feedback from the building community** as to what would make their life easier.

Q: Would the City consider an **impact fee “holiday”** for privately constructed entry level apartments?

A: Incentives for certain types of housing are around, and are approved at the Council level. But **we would consider** bringing such an item to the Council if it makes sense for the community (contact Larry Vaupel directly).

Q: How do the aforementioned ideas and plans **attract investment and new wealth** to the Redding area?

A: Redding would be positioned as the path of least resistance for development as we compete with other cities. Success breeds success, in the case of Stillwater. Our new plans in process should provide **more flexibility** than our current plans. Developers talk to one another, and **we are now focusing on having a good reputation**.

Q: How can we effectively **work together** (businesses, citizens, government) to promote and support sustainable economic development?

A: Be **champions for our community**—we need fewer critics. Yes, we have issues—every place has issues, but let’s handle them internally. The face we project to potential investors should be positive. There are a lot of scary things online seen by those doing research on Redding. Encourage those who have complaints (at least with regard to building and development) to contact us to solve them instead of spreading them elsewhere.

Utility Rates Increase January 1, 2017 City Gets Backlash for Poor Communication

The City of Redding is implementing not only increases in their residential water, wastewater (sewer), and solid waste (trash pickup) rates effective January 1, 2017, but **also some changes** that were made to the way both the water and solid waste rate are calculated. Unfortunately, they did not do a very good job of communicating such changes to their customers, and are experiencing tremendous backlash from those customers who feel they didn't receive a proper explanation of those changes.

So, we will do our best here to provide a proper explanation and clarification of those changes, which we did in our September newsletter, but feel that it bears repeating and additional information. Below are charts showing current and future rates and changes. Please note that **Fiscal Year (FY) 2017/18 actually starts July 2, 2017 (therefore the second rate increase this year), and FY 2018/19 starts July 2, 2018.**

- The **elimination of tiered rates** for water consumption. This could **reduce** the overall water bill for customers, but could **increase** the overall water bill for those who never use more than 11 ccf's per month by about **\$3.18** (in FY 2016/17).

Water Rate Schedule	Current Rates	Recommended		
		FY 2016/17	FY 2017/18	FY 2018/19
<i>Projected Increase in Rate Revenue per Financial Plan:</i>		5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Fixed Service Charge				
Monthly Fixed Service Charge - Standard Meters:				
5/8 inch	\$18.14	\$19.20	\$20.16	\$21.17
3/4 inch	\$24.52	\$25.43	\$26.70	\$28.04
1 inch	\$37.28	\$37.88	\$39.78	\$41.77
1.5 inch	\$69.19	\$69.01	\$72.46	\$76.09
2 inch	\$107.48	\$106.37	\$111.69	\$117.27
3 inch	\$209.59	\$205.99	\$216.29	\$227.10
4 inch	\$324.46	\$318.06	\$333.96	\$350.66
6 inch	\$643.54	\$629.37	\$660.84	\$693.88
8 inch	\$1,026.44	\$1,002.94	\$1,053.09	\$1,105.75
Commodity Charges for All Water Consumed				
Single Family Tier One	\$0.55	--	--	--
Single Family Tier Two	\$1.47	--	--	--
Single Family Tier Three	\$1.81	--	--	--
Uniform Rate	\$1.140	\$1.293	\$1.357	\$1.425

- A 4 percent per year increase in the wastewater (sewer) rates, which adds **\$1.95** per month to the bill (FY 2016/17).

SEWER RATE SCHEDULE	Current Rates	Proposed Rates		
		FY 2016/17	FY 2017/18	FY 2018/19
<i>Annual Rate increases as shown in Financial Plan:</i>		4.00%	4.00%	4.00%
Monthly Service Charges:				
Single Family Dwelling (\$/residence)	\$ 48.77	\$50.72	\$ 52.75	\$ 54.86
Multi Family Dwelling (\$/unit)	\$ 36.09	\$37.53	\$ 39.03	\$ 40.60
Standard Commercial billed monthly (\$/ccf)	\$ 5.01	\$5.21	\$ 5.42	\$ 5.64
Standard Commercial calculated annually (\$/# HE)*	\$ 48.77	\$50.72	\$ 52.75	\$ 54.86
Commercial Food Preparation billed monthly (\$/ccf)	\$ 10.03	\$10.43	\$ 10.85	\$ 11.28
Commercial Food Preparation calculated annually (\$/# HE)	\$ 97.54	\$101.44	\$ 105.50	\$ 109.72

* Includes Industrial, Other and Unknown customers.

- A 2 percent per year increase to residential solid waste rates, which adds **92 cents** per month to the bill in FY 2016/17—but adding the availability of a new **smaller 45 gallon solid waste can** would provide a **savings of \$2.55 per month** (current FY). **However, there is now an added charge of \$4.00 per month for a second green waste can.**

Solid Waste Schedule				
	45 gallon grey can one blue can one green can	64 gallon grey can one blue can one green can	96 gallon grey can one blue can one green can	Add 2nd green can
Monthly Service Charges FY 2016/2017	\$ 21.49	\$ 22.46	\$ 24.04	\$ 4.00
Monthly Service Charges FY 2017/2018	\$ 21.92	\$ 22.91	\$ 24.52	\$ 4.00
Monthly Service Charges	\$ 22.36	\$ 23.37	\$ 25.01	\$ 4.00
<i>Current Rates</i>	N/A	\$ 21.54	\$ 23.12	N/A

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.

New Mayors in Anderson and Shasta Lake for 2017—City Council members in Anderson voted January 3rd to have Council member Baron Browning serve as Mayor for 2017, and for Council member Norma Connick to serve as Vice-Mayor. In Shasta Lake, Council members voted to have Council member Richard Kern serve as Mayor for 2017, and Council member Larry Farr serve as Vice-Mayor.

New Chairman of the Board of Supervisors for 2017—At its January 10th Supervisors meeting, the Shasta County Board of Supervisors voted to have Supervisor David Kehoe serve as Chairman of the Board for 2017, and Supervisor Les Baugh serve as Vice-Chairman of the Board for 2017.

Unreasonable Public Pension Benefits Can Be Reduced—In 2011, Gov. Jerry Brown signed a bill closing a series of pension-boosting loopholes in California. Pensions are intended to provide retirement stability for time ***actually worked***. One of the reforms Brown signed into law did away with a practice known as “airtime purchases,” in which public workers in California were able to boost their pensions by purchasing an additional five years of service time without having to actually work for those years (often referred to as a form of “spiking”).

Unions didn’t share Brown’s opinion that pensions should reflect “time actually worked,” and sued the state in an effort to maintain the sweet pension perk. They pointed to a longstanding set of court precedents — collectively known as the “California Rule” — that prohibit state and local governments from reducing pension promises to current workers. Last month the Third Division of the First District Court of Appeals unanimously agreed that the state was within its authority to end airtime purchases. “While plaintiffs may believe they have been disadvantaged by these amendments, the law is quite clear that they are entitled only to a ***‘reasonable’*** pension, ***not one providing fixed or definite benefits immune from modification or elimination by the governing body,***” the appeals court ruled.

The ruling comes on the heels of an August ruling from the same court that tossed out a union-backed challenge to pension changes imposed on public workers in Marin County. The county decided to stop allowing workers to cash-in unused vacation days, sick days and other benefits in exchange for a larger pension payout — also a form of “spiking.” In that case, the court ruled that pension benefits can be reduced if they are determined to be “unreasonable.”

These cases demonstrate that there can be modifications made to existing public pension plans. Cash-strapped cities and counties will likely continue to look for ways to reduce pension costs as pension costs put pressure on their ability to provide public services.

Henderson Open Space Restroom to Be Installed—The City of Redding received a state housing grant for public access improvements at the Henderson Open Space Area in October 2015. One of the anticipated improvements is a small precast concrete vault restroom adjacent to the proposed parking lot.

On January 17th, Redding City Council approved the purchase and installation of the restroom from CXT, Inc. in Washington. The cost will be \$43,139.81, which will be paid for entirely from the grant. The restroom should be installed prior to June 30, 2017. Future maintenance of the restroom will be the responsibility of the City, and funds for maintenance will come from the general fund.

Join Shasta VOICES today.

We depend on membership and other contributions.

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Mary B. Machado, Executive Director