
Marijuana dispensary

1 message

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Council Members:

The Council, in entering into a Development Agreement with Embarc for a marijuana dispensary, will reckon its profits in dollars and losses in lives.

These profits will depend on pushing \$6-10M+ (from the dispensary's business plan) of marijuana products annually into our small Amador County, community, including much of it with high potency THC. Since legalization, these high potency products have been demonstrated in numerous studies to be harmful, particularly to persons under age 25.

The City will partner with a company that has publicly declared it is their goal to transform non-users who are unfamiliar with or fearful of marijuana into users, in other words, create more drug users.

Pulling its 8% cut from the Embarc dispensary's gross income under a special agreement, the City will effectively become a drug dealer/investor. More sales will mean more money for the City. More sales will mean more drug use by the community, more getting "Stoned to the Bone", to use an Embarc expression and sales pitch. More drug use in the community will mean more of the problems that attend drug use, primarily at the expense of the County.

Consider:

- While plowing ahead to open a dispensary for that 8% cut, even though a ban is in place, the City Manager at the same time reports, ". . . the City is well-positioned to address critical infrastructure needs while maintaining healthy reserves. Comparing this year's budget to last year, we largely accomplished our goals of creating a sustainable budget." Thus, the City does not need to turn to drug dealing in order to balance its budget.
- City staff maintains this 8% cut is not a tax. Were it a tax there would have to be a vote by the electorate, as with Prop P, which staff wishes to avoid. Why? Embarc will be paying a much larger portion of their income to the City than other local businesses, but they could raise their prices given they would have no competition in the County. Or would they—the black market, which has not gone away with legalization?
- Neither you nor City staff have publicly responded to the many concerns and questions that have been raised about the dispensary during the past few months by citizens and county officials. Instead citizens were told to attend Embarc's "town halls" to get answers to their questions. Do you think Embarc can be fair and unbiased while speaking about their wares as "wellness" products? Are they capable of educating our youth about the dangers of their products while at the same time cultivating them as future customers? Are they able to explain to us what a Development Agreement for a dispensary will mean for the City?
- At the first Council meeting where the dispensary was discussed, Council Member Riordan moved that, ". . . at the end of the day, whatever information to be provided should come to the Council and **not** the Planning Commission." The motion carried. But this did not happen. Instead, hundreds of pages of documents regarding the logistics of running the dispensary have been prepared by staff and sent to the Planning Commission recommending that the dispensary be approved. Input from County agencies were included among the documents, but apparently ignored.

- The dispensary is set to be located a half mile walk from Independence High School and the soon-to-be constructed Danco apartments for homeless persons and the severely mentally ill. It does not appear that any consideration has been given to these facts. 18 year-old students at the high school with medical marijuana cards will be able to purchase any of the dispensary products, and more of them, than persons aged 21 or older lacking such cards. It is also unlikely a coincident that the dispensary site is to be located on the busy route to the local casino and to Kirkwood Ski Resort.
- With only 17 parking slots at the dispensary site, located in a high traffic area, how will it be possible to accommodate the large numbers of customers Embarc anticipates? The property, previously a bank, has been vacant for several years.
- City staff early on maintained that if the project moved ahead, it would be a one-year pilot project which the City could cancel at any time. Instead the City is preparing to enter into a 5-year agreement with exit by the City possible only for cause.

Is it any surprise that this project feels railroaded in to many of us who have opposed to it? Having lived in both San Francisco and Portland OR and having had a close connection to Arcata CA, it greatly saddened me to watch their demise as drug culture took hold there. I do not want this to happen to this special place in which we live.

Once again I urge you to vote against the establishment of the dispensary.

Sincerely,
Barbara Comnes