

Ramirez, Angelica

# Public Comment

#6

**From:** RUSSELL RUIZ <ruizsblaw@cox.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 20, 2022 12:42 PM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Cc:** Williams, Das; Hart, Gregg; Hartmann, Joan; ED VW; peter dugre; coastal view; Concerned Carpentierians  
**Subject:** Board of Supervisors Meeting May 24, 2022, Agenda Items #6 & 7



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Honorable Members of the Board:

I intend this Comment to pertain to both Items #6 Everbloom and #7 Via Real. My focus here will be on #6 Everbloom but my general Comments pertain to both.

By way of brief personal introduction for the three of you who do not know me, I am a lifelong, 8th generation South Coast Local. I am retired after a professional career where I called myself a Water & Land Use attorney. I was General Counsel for the Goleta Water District for over 20 years and the Summerland Water District until it merged with Montecito. I represented private Mutual Water Companies from Carpinteria to the Hollister Ranch. I served on the Santa Barbara Water Commission for almost 10 years. Throughout my career I worked on local land use Projects. My father and grandfather were successful South Cost building contractors. Particularly pertinent to Everbloom, I am a Carpinteria resident. In the aerial photo of the Project site in the Staff Presentation you can see our Home. Our daughter is a freshman at the High School. She has been a student in Carpinteria schools since she started at Canalino. I was the Parent representative on Site Council at Canalino and Middle Schools. I served on the School District Parent Advisory Committee, among several others. This year I have participated in the Parents for Carpinteria High School group at all our meetings. I have been an active volunteer at School events at the High School over the past several years including the Russell Cup track meet just last month, outdoors at the stadium. I drop our daughter off at school every morning. I am very familiar with the Carpinteria odor issue and can provide first hand witness testimony on the subject.

I have not actively participated in the most recent County hearings on Carpinteria Cannabis farms as I know the war is over and the good guys have won. I was asked to participate in this hearing and so here it is, I will be concise. I closely followed the County Cannabis process out of personal interest with my professional background, it has certainly been one of the most significant land use issues of our lifetimes here. I have read the entire PEIR and followed every County hearing on Carpinteria Cannabis matters. Of course being a Carpinteria resident was also a reason for my interest. I have a long background in local Ag and I have always been a supporter of our local farmers. My father was friends with many of the Goleta area farmers of his generation. When I was Counsel for Goleta Water District I knew every one of our Ag customers who I worked with just about every year when the Ag Water Rate discussions were engaged. I am a strong advocate for local farming. I know that maintaining the viability of local farming in the Carpinteria Valley is the most significant issue regarding preservation of our longterm quality of Life here.

Both of these Appeals focus on odor issues. We live literally a stone throw away from Everbloom. Several years ago we did smell Cannabis odor but that was completely rectified well over 3 years ago when the initial odor scrubbers were installed. Today and for at least several years now we smell absolutely nothing. As stated above, I drop our daughter off at the High School every morning. We smell nothing there. I volunteer for the annual Russell Cup track meet which is a major event for Carpinteria. Schools from all over the State participate. We had thousands of participants and spectators in a packed stadium at the last meet in April. No one mentioned Cannabis odor because there was none.

For those of you who may not have followed Carpinteria Cannabis permitting over the last several years at the Planning Commission, 1st District Planning Commissioner Cooney has been the most rigorous and strict County decisionmaker since the issue first developed. Up until relatively recently he was a champion of the Concerned Carpinterians perspective. He voted against several Carpinteria Projects. He has stated several times on the record that he has grandchildren in our Schools and he is determined that they not be negatively impacted by Carpinteria Cannabis farming. Commissioner Cooney is now satisfied. He voted with a unanimous Commission on both of these Projects and again, he is our most rigorous County decisionmaker on Carpinteria Cannabis matters. His son is the Athletic Director at the High School and is on campus just about every day of the year. No one knows the environment at the High School better. The Cooney family is satisfied.

I know Supervisor Williams has said something along the lines of "They do not know how or when to say, Thank you" referring to Concerned Carpinterians. They have for years now vehemently opposed every Cannabis farming Project in the Carpinteria Valley purporting to object to odor but I have followed closely and I certainly detect a sense of "Refer Madness" in their advocacy. Yes, 4 years ago there were several areas in Carpinteria where Cannabis odor was unacceptable. That has been rectified and that is why every Carpinteria Cannabis matter at the County over the past year has been approved unanimously. "They do not know how or when to say, Thank you." I expect that same result here.

Not that in context it is particularly important but the only named Appellant on Everbloom, Ms. Singer, lives miles away from the Project site, on Toro Canyon and at her age she certainly is not a parent of a current student at the High School.

Specific to Item #7, Via Real, Cannabis odor impacting steelhead trout? In my role as Goleta and Summerland Water District Counsel, I had to learn more than I ever would have cared to about Steelhead trout. I was on the local Water District Steering Committee for Steelhead trout formed in 1993 when steelhead were first listed as endangered, which has significantly impacted our Santa Ynez River water supplies. The claim that Cannabis odor could impact steelhead trout shows how far out of any norm these people are willing to go in their desperate attempt to try to come up with some credible argument. Again they have failed.

In consideration of the location of this Cannabis farm on Via Real, right next to the freeway, I will re-use a line that I successfully used on a neighboring Project that was unanimously approved by your Board when Supervisor Adams was still on the Board. As stated I have about 30 years professional experience before local land use decisionmakers. On that particular Project, which like this one is right next to the freeway, I used the term "infinitesimal" to describe the odor impacts from a Cannabis farm in that freeway impacted environment. Only someone in my former profession would appreciate this, I was greatly complimented when Supervisor Adams quoted my Comment using the term "infinitesimal" in making his closing Comments before voting with a unanimous Board to reject that Appeal brought by these same people. We all know that odor and air quality right next to the freeway are major concerns and no-one in that environment is going to smell or be impacted by a Cannabis farm.

Again in context it is not that important but the only named Appellant on via Real, Ms. Stassinis lives over 2 miles away from the Project site. She has been identified as a special ed teacher but I do not see her name on the High School Staff roster so I do not know which campus she works at.

In summary, neither of these Appeals raise any credible issues. I concur with Staff on each and every Issue addressed. The war is over in Carpinteria and it is time to move on. Carpinteria Valley Ag is a major employer in our area. If these people really cared about our students and their families they would join with me and most other Carpinteria residents and be grateful for those jobs. I hope you can help our Community convey to these people that it is time for them to find a productive avenue for their time and efforts and move on. Our Carpinteria Valley Cannabis farmers are here to stay, Thank You God!

Respectfully submitted,

Russell Ruiz

Carpinteria resident and Carpinteria High School Parent