

Ramirez, Angelica

Public Comment

From: Renee ONeill <chasingstar2701@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, July 5, 2021 12:02 PM
To: Villalobos, David; Larry Ferini; Michael Cooney; John Parke; Dan Blough; Laura Bridley; sbcob; Nelson, Bob; Hartmann, Joan; Hart, Gregg; Lavagnino, Steve; Williams, Das
Cc: SBCRC; Concerned Carpinterians; Marc Chytilo; Lil Clary; Leigh Johnson; Susan Ashbrook; Dave Clary; Steve Junak; Linda Tunnell; Kathy Donovan; Nancy Emerson; Anna Carrillo; Dianne Pence
Subject: Additional Public Comment
Attachments: Letter to PC re Sun Valley Ranch, LLC 7-07-2021.docx; PC Additional Comment, 7-7-21 and BOS 7-13-21.docx

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Dear Commissioners and Supervisors,

Attached, please find the letter I had submitted to the PC on July 2, re Sun Valley Ranch, LLC. I reattached that letter for your convenience.

Upon reading the BOS Suarez Cannabis Cultivation project that is coming before the Board on July 13, I found it necessary to include additional comment re the vast differences in proposed structures, water usage, etc., for these two, similar-sized projects.

Please submit my additional comments to the PC re Sun Valley hearing on July 7 and include same document in public comment re Suarez hearing, July 13th.

I do not have email addresses for some of the appellants and therefore, am copying these letters to all concerned. (Teams, feel free to share).

Thank You,

Renée O'Neill

July 2, 2021

To: The Santa Barbara County Planning Commissioners
Re: Appeal of Sun Valley Ranch, LLC

Honorable Chair Ferini and Commissioners,

Please deny the size of this project. This is another massive project that is inappropriate, invasive, incompatible and adds to the level of concentration of cannabis sites already operating in this region. The following are my specific concerns:

1. How many provisional licenses have been issued to Sun Valley Ranch, LLC?

2. Re three harvests per year: This descriptive statement is arbitrary and deceptive since growers' plant crops in continuous cycles. They may claim the harvests will only occur three times per year but you would have to monitor this, during their proposed harvest times. In addition, the skunk stench will pervade the area, regardless of the level of maturity of plants. Take time to smell the baby pot plants or baby tomato plants, for that matter. They have a distinctive odor, regardless of their size.

3. Re shipping containers: The number and description of proposed shipping containers (seven, 320 square-foot...) is misleading. 'Steel Conex Container' described in Attachment D, shows a diagram of a 40-feet long, 8-feet wide and 8.5-feet tall container. This may be 320 sq. ft. of floor space but each container holds 2,720 cubic feet of storage. Why on earth would this or any other project require a total of 19,040 cubic feet of storage for equipment and fertilizer? This is highly suspicious and should raise a huge Red Flag (emphasis added). Remember how Herbal Angels used their shipping containers? Let's not repeat these kinds of 'mistakes.'

Santa Barbara County Planning and Development Department has a responsibility to justify the necessity for these multiple, massive storage containers. Require growers to provide a detailed list of what they intend to store in each, individual container and the amount of square footage and/or cubic feet these items may require. Once that list is completed then, P&D can do the math and determine whether a grower can truly rationalize needing upwards of 20,000 cubic feet of storage for "X" number of provisional licenses.

4. Re twenty-four 5,000-gallon fertigation tanks: How many Provisional Licenses does Sun Valley Ranch have? This is important to know. The Commissioners may recall that we observed and documented all activity from growers operating on a 40-acre parcel near us, for many years. This grower had three, provisional licenses. We photographed, documented and reported the amount of water being transported through our property, for three provisional licenses, for many years. This grower used multiple, 2,000-2500-gallon water tankers. Depending on the time of year, they hauled in 6,000 to 16,000-gallons of water per day (emphasis added).

Since each license allows 10,000 sq. ft' of cultivation and you can be assured Sun Valley Ranch will require a comparable amount of water to feed thirsty pot plants, especially during a time when we are facing record breaking drought and heat.

I have attended cannabis hearings from the outset and am somewhat familiar with the ordinances. The regulations that have been adopted make no sense, to me or many others. During the BOS hearing on

June 22nd, re “...third quarter update on cannabis compliance...,” Planning and Development Director Lisa Plowman stated:

‘Your Board may recall that two, distinct cultivation caps have been established in the County. One in the inland area, set at 1575-acres and another in the Carpinteria Area Overlay District, at 186-acres. Through the third quarter, the proposed cultivation grids associated with permit applications continues to exceed both cultivation caps. Acreage being applied for in the inland area totals 3,152-acres, while the Carp Overlay District stands at 249-acres.’

With that said, I will, once again, caution the County on their legal culpability for continually approving these massive projects.

“We the People” of Santa Barbara County voted for Prop 64. Due to misguided decisions, we have been compelled to appeal to the BOS and the Planning Commission to uphold and enforce county/state and federal regulations.

The following comment is part of my speech, during the BOS meeting on June 22, 2021:

‘From the outset, the Board has failed to uphold its promise to protect public health, safety and welfare by:

- adopting cannabis regulations that created heavy, negative, Class-I impacts.
- allowing commercial growers, instead of small growers to get established, prior to 2023 (state recommended).
- tying the hands of P&D and Sheriffs; failing to hire adequate staff and enforcement that could effectively oversee the industry and neglecting to make essential and required regular site visits.
- failing to reduce the overall negative, cumulative impacts in residential neighborhoods and near existing Ag.,
- failing to be transparent in developing and/or amending cannabis regulations.’
- failing to uphold state and county laws; ignoring or diminishing numerous countywide complaints and allowing non-compliant and/or illicit growers to continue operating, unimpeded, for years (the same illicit, non-compliant grower is still operating unimpeded and unenforced in Tepusquet Canyon and has continued to use generators, since 2014).

In 2019, my published letter to the SB Independent stated, “Many people, including me, warned the BOS, years ago, that if they didn’t acknowledge countywide concerns and staff’s wisdom, they would be facing lawsuits as, apparently, they are.” <https://www.independent.com/2019/05/22/beseiged-by-cannabis-cultivation/>

I am notifying you, once again. Considering the current climate concerns with severe drought and heat conditions, the unknown impacts of VOCs on humans, established vineyards, the environment, the ongoing destruction of our rural and scenic lands, etc., there will be even greater and more serious consequences to face, if this County continues on this irresponsible and destructive path.

Respectfully Submitted,

Renée O’Neill

Additional Public Comment re Sun Valley Ranch, LLC and significant differences between that project and the Suarez Cannabis Cultivation Project:

On July 2, 2021, I submitted a letter to the PC re Drum Canyon Appeal of Sun Valley Ranch, LLC. On July 13, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors will consider an appeal of Planning Commission's March 2021, approval of the Suarez Cannabis Cultivation Project.

I found it odd that when I compared Sun Valley with Suarez, the two projects appear to have vast differences indicated in their proposals, regardless of the fact that they are similar in size (Suarez - 34.7-acres, Sun Valley - 40-acres).

I used different colored highlights for ease of reading and expressed concerns/questions in blue font. I believe if you only read highlighted sections and blue text you may get the gist of what I'm trying to convey about the two projects:

Cultivation/Harvest:

Suarez – “The Proposed Project is a request for a Land Use Permit to allow 34.7 acres of cannabis cultivation under hoop structures. No cannabis processing will occur on site and all harvested cannabis will be removed from the site on the same day it is harvested.” (The description given for hoops and harvest periods is too vague. Please specify number of hoops structures and their proposed height. Also, specify number of harvests proposed each year and the duration for each harvest).

Sun Valley – “The project is a request for up to 40 acres of outdoor cannabis cultivation under 12-foot high hoop structures. There will be no processing on-site. There will be up to three (3) harvests per year, with each lasting a maximum of four (4) weeks.” (How many hoop structures? This project provides some specifics but does not indicate the frequency that P&D will monitor or ensure compliance during each harvest period. Will neighbors have to play role of inspectors/enforcers, as they currently have to do with odor)?

Storage Containers/Structures:

Suarez – “Six existing unpermitted structures on the parcel will be demolished prior to the commencement of cannabis cultivation activities. Only one existing structure will be retained, a 120 sq. ft. shed (not part of the cannabis operation). A 160 sq. ft. security kiosk, a 168 sq. ft. two stall restroom building, a 160 sq. ft. pesticide and materials storage container...” **Suarez proposes 160 sq. ft. for storing pesticides and materials (Total of 488 sq. ft., excluding the 120 sq. ft. shed), compared to 2,240 sq. ft. for Sun Valley.**

Are growers allowed to use pesticides? I thought medicinal cannabis was supposed to be grown “organically.”

Sun Valley – “Existing non-cannabis related structures on site include a 1,201-square-foot residence and a 255-square-foot concrete patio. Proposed structures to be used for cannabis activities include one 120-square foot guard shack, seven 320-square-foot shipping containers to be used for cultivation equipment and fertilizer storage, no cannabis will be stored onsite, and twenty-four 5,000 gallon fertigation tanks.”

The description re storage is misleading: Total of 7 containers = 2,240 sq. ft.) but each container actually holds 2,720 cubic feet of storage. Multiply that by 7 containers and you get a grand total of 19,040 cubic feet. Who is going to inspect these containers on a regular basis?

In my Sun Valley public comment letter to PC I stated, "Why on earth would this or any other project require a total of 19,040 cubic feet of storage for equipment and fertilizer? This is highly suspicious and should raise a huge Red Flag (emphasis added). Remember how Herbal Angels used their shipping containers? Let's not repeat these kinds of 'mistakes.'

Santa Barbara County Planning and Development Department has a responsibility to justify the necessity for these multiple, massive storage containers. Require growers to provide a detailed list of what they intend to store in each, individual container and the amount of square footage and/or cubic feet these items may require. Once that list is completed then, P&D can do the math and determine whether a grower can truly rationalize needing upwards of 20,000 cubic feet of storage for "X" number of provisional licenses."

Water/Irrigation:

Suarez – "... two 5,000 gallon water tanks will be constructed..." "A drip irrigation system will be used to eliminate the potential for irrigation runoff and maximize the efficient use of water. Tensiometers will be used to monitor soil moisture and prevent over watering. The Project will offset all groundwater used for irrigation of cannabis and landscaping on a 1:1 basis for the duration of the Project by providing compensation to farmers within the same groundwater basin that switch from irrigated to non-irrigated agricultural uses, and/or by funding irrigation improvements in the same groundwater basin. Irrigation water for cannabis cultivation as well as domestic and fire suppression water will be provided by an existing onsite well and a new water well."

Sun Valley – "...and twenty-four 5,000 gallon fertigation tanks. An existing on-site generator will be disconnected from the well and will be used as an emergency back-up generator."

Why is there such a huge difference in water requirements (**Suarez - 10,000-gallons, compared to Sun Valley - 120,000-gallons**)?

My public comment to PC re proposed water usage for Sun Valley, "The Commissioners may recall that we observed and documented all activity from growers operating on a 40-acre parcel near us. This grower had three, provisional licenses. For many years, we photographed, documented and reported the amount of water being transported through our property, to support three provisional licenses. This grower used multiple, 2,000-2500-gallon water tankers to haul water in (no operable well). Depending on the time of year, they hauled in 6,000 to 16,000-gallons of water per day (emphasis added)."

What source of power will be used to operate the well when they disconnect the generator? Is there electricity onsite? We are well-familiar with the shenanigans and ploys that Tepusquet growers continue to use, to this day. They propose they won't use "permanent generators" but that's because they use "portable generators." There is no electricity on the Tepusquet, USFS Inholding lands, which are accessed through our EDRN. Traffic images show generators and fuel tankers rolling through Tepusquet, on a regular basis, which growers have illegally been using from the outset (emphasis added).

Hours of Operation and Number of Employees:

Suarez - The cannabis operation will employ 4 full-time employees from March through December with an additional 20 temporary workers from April to November. Hours of operation will be 7am to 4pm, Monday through Saturday. Grading will total 280 cubic yards of cut and 280 cubic yards of road base fill

for the parking area and driveway. Access to the site will continue to be provided off Foothill Road along a proposed 20' wide all-weather driveway.

Will they also operate on major holidays?

Where will employees park in relation to the site? Foothill Rd is extremely limited and congested.

How will this increase in traffic impact area residents?

Sun Valley – “The hours of operation will be from 7 A.M. to 9 P.M., daily. There will be 5 regular full-time employees with an additional 12 seasonal employees during planting season and harvesting. A total of 14 parking spaces will be provided to employees. Portable restrooms and hand wash stations will be provided for the project employees.

These proposed hours of operation are appalling! This is not only abusive for employees but to the area residents, as well. How many Ag lands do you see operating after 4:00 or 5:00pm? How many do you observe working on Sundays? What about major holidays? This must be changed and be consistent for all Cannabis-related activities.

Respectfully Submitted,

Renée O'Neill