

## McClenagan, Laura

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**From:** Kym Kemp <mskymkemp@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 03, 2021 4:22 PM  
**To:** Planning Clerk  
**Cc:** Strickland, Abigail; michelle bushnell  
**Subject:** Comment for Planning Commission Meeting on Record Number PLN-11248-CUP Assessor's Parcel Number 221-021-008  
**Attachments:** letter to planning dept final.docx

Attached find letter submitted for hearing November 4 on Record Number PLN-11248-CUP, Assessor's Parcel Number 221-021-008.

Summary: We list a series of behaviors/events by those managing the property at this assessor's parcel number that indicates a pattern of bad faith to the environment, the county government, and to the community. We ask that the Planning Commission vote no.

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In hopes that our County government will finally stop “working with” the current owners of a property, Assessor’s Parcel Number 221-021-008, that is known for its ugly environmental and social impacts in a community that is extremely grower friendly, our family is once again speaking out.



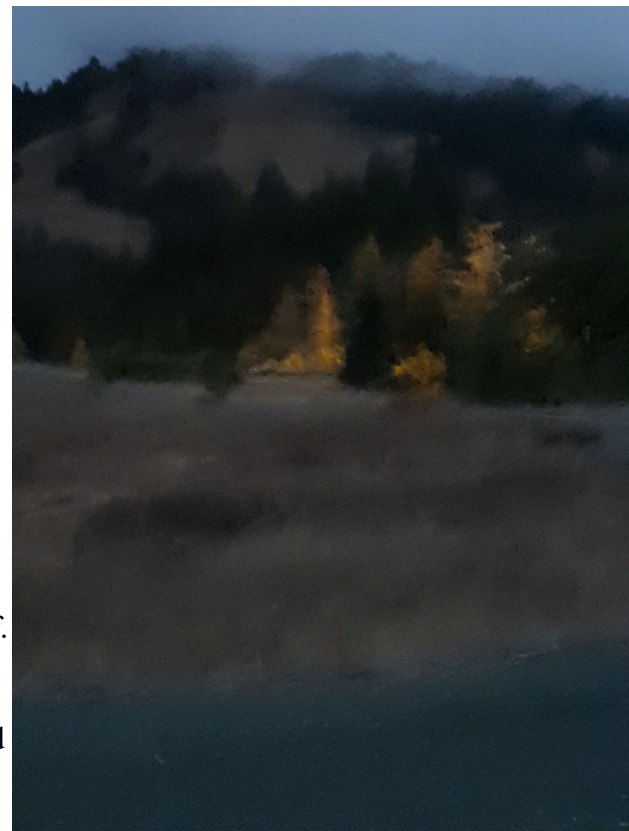
*Illustration 1: Water truck October 18, 2021 at the top of theirs and ours shared driveway.*

In the last year and a half, law enforcement has visited this property twice--removing over 50,000 plants and a wall of processed cannabis. In addition, we’ve watched semi’s haul water there multiple times, asked them to stop stealing our water, had one fire scare, and dealt with uncovered greenhouses lighting the night. But the property and the managers of the property have been a blight on the community for well over a decade.

In 2015, in spite of a culture of not reporting problems to law enforcement, neighbors began reaching out to government agencies asking for assistance with this property. To the best of my knowledge, no one wanted to see the owners face jail time but we did want the egregious assault on nature and our community halted and, if possible, repaired.

I can’t speak for everyone else but this is our timeline starting in 2015 when we first complained. (Yes, we know that the current owners are not legally connected to the previous owner. However, we can say that the previous owner was seen in the area multiple times long after the property changed hands legally. In addition, the same pattern of behavior that impacts the community continues.)

In my job as a reporter, we regularly post information from law enforcement saying that they eradicated some relatively small grow acting on complaints from neighbors. We just want to know what barrage of complaints worked? Because we know multiple complaints were made to government agencies and to County Supervisors by multiple neighbors—at least four different neighbors unrelated to our family have complained and this grow is one of the largest in a remote hill area and the most environmentally damaging that I have ever seen and I have flown over Humboldt looking at cannabis farms in the course of my job. I’ve spoken to two different County Supervisors myself. I’ve spoken by phone or written letters or emails to the Humboldt County Planning Department, the Humboldt County DA’s Office, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the California Waterboard.



*Illustration 2: Lights from greenhouse on September 18, 2021.*

1. In June of 2015, we first contacted government agencies concerned about the environmental degradation on the property. My husband, Kevin Church, a licensed engineer

wrote a letter expressing his concern over the complete denuding of a hillside at this property, Assessor's Parcel Number 221-021-008. (See attached copy of his letter). In it he expressed concern about:

- Significant unconsolidated fill adjacent to drainages leading directly to Salmon Creek
- Grading and over steepened cut slopes that present significant erosion and sediment transport threats to local drainages and Salmon Creek
- Complete removal of nearly all stumpage and understory vegetation down to bare, and unconsolidated/un-compacted soil
- General excavation unnecessary for the purpose of timber harvest
- No erosion control efforts whatsoever
- Photos:



2. In spring of 2016, I flew Humboldt County with an attorney and a cannabis cultivator to get a grasp of the environmental situation for my job as a reporter. This property was rated in the top three most environmentally damaged properties just with what we could see from the air—building on steep slopes, logging etc. See photo taken that day.

3.



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s an excerpt from an email by me to Supervisor Rex Bohn. “My neighbor has had three large water trucks pull into his driveway two days in a row for sure and one day at least one and probably two more. And today I heard what sounded like the same trucks...I just didn't go look. So I can't swear but I believe that he has had 12 full water trucks deliver to his property in four days and ...he's in the permit process. He doesn't cover his greenhouses about half the nights and his lights shine into my son's bedroom. His crew works heavy equipment starting at 6 in the morning and he shaved off about three acres of timber on a steep slope. Five times in 14 months he was reported for having fires. Three of them were just his glowing greenhouses. The other two terrified the neighborhood but were squelched by his workers and didn't get out of hand. He hasn't had a report for over a year after we told him that next time we were letting the inmate crews come to his property to put out the flames if it ever happened again. Somehow that finally got through to him” Supervisor Bohn and I spoke then by phone. I don't have a record of what we said.

4. Oct 26, 2017: Phone call with Planning Director John Ford. In the course of a call



related to my business as a reporter, I told him our family no longer trusted the County to deal with the egregious growers as at the same time they were requesting onerous

changes to cannabis cultivation sites the sizes of family vegetable gardens, they were letting this property owner destroy an entire hillside. He requested evidence. I sent him attached photos showing that heavy equipment was tearing down trees and tearing up land just feet from a stream bed and our property line. In

response to what I believe was Ford's intervention, the equipment work did stop or at least greatly reduced what had been occurring at this spot previously. See images that I sent marked with the excavation work pushing soil above the stream bed and near our property without any notice. (Note: This was after a pond built illegally on the other side of the property by the owner had collapsed onto the Chapman Ranch causing serious damage to that Ranch and accruing fines. We were concerned that this illegal excavation was also a pond that might collapse into the creek and our property.)



5. Sometime before April 2019 Property purchased by H2 Equity llc.
6. The previous owner, Thomas Harwood, was seen in the area for at least 6 months after the sale went through by me and I believe he was seen as recently as this year though that was in a moving vehicle and I can't absolutely confirm that. We are not convinced that he still does not have under the table connections to the property.

7. Summer of 2019 approximately, my son discovered a waterline running through a culvert about 200 yards onto our property
8. In May of 2020, the property was raided by the Humboldt County Sheriff's Department. According to the Sheriff's Department, "During the service of the warrant, deputies eradicated approximately 14,086 growing cannabis plants and over 1,990 pounds of processed cannabis." Included is a photo from the press release.  
<https://kymkemp.com/2020/05/18/over-14000-plants-and-nearly-2000-pounds-of-marijuana-found-at-salmon-creek-grow-says-hcso-met-team/>



9. On June 30 of 2020, just over a month later, the property was raided again by the Department of Fish and Wildlife. According to Janice Mackey, Information Officer for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, an estimated 46,791 illegal marijuana plants were eradicated. In addition, 10 suspects were detained though later released without charges. <https://kymkemp.com/2020/07/19/re-raid-of-a-property-that-replanted-yields-over-46000-plants-plus-a-list-of-marijuana-enforcement-actions-in-humboldt-county-in-2020/>
10. On August 12, 2021, in the middle of deep drought and a community afraid of fire, a neighbor reported a large plume of smoke coming from the property. Cal Fire (including a helicopter) and local fire departments responded to the property but by that time the inhabitants had managed to squelch the fire. This makes at least 6 times that I'm aware of that the property has been the subject of a large firefighter response and the large amount of money and time squandered by local firefighters to deal with this issue.
11. On November 13, 2021, I was shown by a member of the Humboldt County Planning Department Staff what was purported by the current named owner to be a photo of a letter vouching for his behavior and his membership in the local fire department by the Salmon Creek Fire Chief. When I expanded the photo of the letter, it was a form letter that is adapted by the Fire Department for each cannabis farm requesting a permit that simply states the hopes they have that the owner will beef up firefighting infrastructure on the property. The Fire Chief Dan Gribi said that the purported owner is not on the department's insurance as a firefighter nor to his knowledge has the man attended a single meeting.

12. On November 13, 2021, I spoke to Abby Strickland at the Planning Department. She told me that none of the complaints by our family or by neighbors are noted in the property logs nor are the two different warrants served shown. I find that very troubling. It is inconceivable that somehow years of complaints and law enforcement interaction on that property disappeared from the record without the assistance (likely the paid assistance) of someone in the Planning Department.

In conclusion, our family is pro cannabis. We are pro giving cultivators every opportunity to come into compliance in a confusing and expensive process. But this particular property has been managed in such a manner and continues to be managed in such a manner that we believe that the owners do not intend to be good neighbors nor good stewards of the land. Please, if there is ever a time to stand up for the tightknit rural hill communities, now is the time to put a stop to the waterhauling, the carelessness with fire, the mismanagement of slopes and waterways and the damaging of the community's trust. Vote no on allowing this permit.