

Tofanelli sees busy days for incoming supervisors

By Nick Baptista

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The first 100 days of the new term of the Calaveras county Board of Supervisors beginning in January will likely be extremely busy, District 1 Supervisor-elect Gary Tofanelli foresees.

Joining Tofanelli on the board will be three other new supervisors, Clyde Clapp, Jack Garamendi and Dennis Mills.

Tofanelli believes one of the first items the board will tackle will be the urgency ordinance regarding commercial cultivation of cannabis.

"Nobody feels safe," Tofanelli said. "It has to come to a halt and we'll revisit it when the state comes on board and passes recommendations."

Another area of concern for Tofanelli is the county's fiscal shape and reliance on one-time funding for a large portion of its budget.

"It's never a good idea to use one-time money for general expenses," he said.

He sees the board tackling this issue when it's time for the midterm budget review.

An issue that emerged during his campaign was the new lumber operation in Wallace. Trees harvested after the Butte Fire have been processed at the site of the old Wallace mill and nearby neighbors are upset.

"We need to find some kind of resolution between the operator and the residents who have a problem with the noise," Tofanelli said.

Continuing the removal of dangerous trees because of the fire and bark beetle infestation is also high on Tofanelli's list.

"We have to go over where we are in the process of tree removal and FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) money," the supervisor-elect said. "We're apparently not moving forward and winter is here."

The county is depending on federal funding to pay for most of the tree removal, but there have been delays due to environmental concerns and the county adhering to FEMA's accounting rules.

Clearing Cosgrove Creek of vegetation and debris is another issue for Tofanelli.

The creek was the site of a flood 10 years ago and Tofanelli was instrumental in setting up regular clearing of the creek during his term as supervisor from 2009-2013.

“We’ve been very lucky because the drought has not really affected that creek” Tofanelli said. “However, if we get a substantial amount of rain it could be a very dangerous situation.”

Clearing the creek also involves working with the federal government since it is viewed as habitat for the red-legged frog, listed as a threatened species under federal law.

Completion of the county’s General Plan update and what to do with the Valley Springs Community Plan is also high on Tofanelli’s list.

Two Valley Springs Community plans emerged during Tofanelli’s term in office, but neither has moved forward in the current update process. Work has been under way to bring the two in line with one another and Tofanelli said he would be meeting with Planning Director Peter Maurer to see what needs to be done to get a Valley Springs Community Plan included in the General Plan update.

Today marks Tofanelli’s final day on the Jenny Lind Veterans Memorial District Board of Directors since he cannot hold two elected offices.

The district is seeking applicants to fill the final two years of the term in office. Applicants must be registered voters within the district, which encompasses the communities of Burson, Campo Seco, Jenny Lind, Rancho Calaveras, Valley Springs and Wallace.