

# Board continues to ponder pot issue

By Nick Baptista / The Valley Springs News / June 23, 2017

To ban or not to ban commercial cannabis continues to consume the attention of the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors.

The board spent nearly four hours on the subject Tuesday during a special study session on the topic and came away with no firm direction.

Tuesday's study session came after similar sessions May 30 and June 6.

While there was discussion of looking at regulating commercial cannabis activities in the county and possibly placing the issue to a vote, a majority of the board voiced their opinions that county staff should continue taking the necessary steps toward a ban.

Those supervisors were Clyde Clapp, Dennis Mills and Gary Tofanelli.

Tofanelli, who has been open to discussing strict regulations of the industry, addressed concerns he might be a swing vote.

He said it has been his position since running for office last year that commercial cannabis operations should be banned "from all" residential zones and he has not wavered from that opinion.

Mills said the urgency ordinance allowing commercial cannabis cultivation has been very costly to the taxpayers. The county has only received a fraction of the true costs associated with implementing the ordinance.

Clapp said the board should move forward with the ban and let those opposed go through the effort of placing their own initiative on the ballot.

Board Chairman Mike Oliveira suggested the board should allow the voters to decide the issue.

Staff said it was unrealistic to have both a ban and a regulation measure prepared in time for a November election.

Supervisor Jack Garamendi said he was concerned about the cost of having such an election.

Mills was concerned that an initiative would take away any flexibility for the county to modify it in the future unless it went back to the voters.