

Community Comment
Tuesday, March 14

This is Erin Dunn of the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce with a Community Comment.

Last week the Times-Standard ran an editorial about someone commenting at the March 6 Fortuna City Council meeting urging them to consider making Fortuna a sanctuary city against Cannabis.

The paper over simplified the concept of the commenters points—and I know that, because I was the commenter.

I speak on this topic as a private citizen, this is not the view of the Chamber of Commerce —that's not to say it isn't the view either. We don't have a formal policy at this time.

My comments to the City Council came about as a result of a meeting we had at our regular Chamber gathering earlier in the day with Under Sheriff Billy Honsal, County Planning and Building Director John Ford, and our two Supervisors Estelle Fennell and Rex Bohn.

The panel was put together to help Fortuna residents and business owners understand the County rules on Cannabis. Case in point--a parcel of County land surrounded by City residential homes that had been awarded a permit for a 50 thousand square foot grow. That's a tough one to take and people sat in stunned silence after that statement.

What spurred my comment to the City Council was a statement one of the panelists made about the permitted grow—they said “it's too late, the Genie is out of the bottle.”

My thought for Fortuna is, let's keep the Genie IN the bottle and offer an alternative for Humboldt County citizens, families and businesses.

I urged the Council to be BOLD and ban cannabis sales and dispensaries –I should have added commercial grows to that request. Fortuna can still be the perfect place to buy and sell supplies to farmers, and we can provide a steady and reliable workforce.

By saying no to Cannabis, we can offer the doctors and medical staff we are recruiting so heavily an alternative place to live in the County, we can offer new business start-ups a place to thrive without having a Cannabis shop go in unexpectedly next door, and we can offer families an alternative when they are shopping for a home where they know there won't be a Cannabis leaf on every corner.

The editorial's view was that it may be unwise to pass up the money Cannabis will bring in.

My argument is, we may have more business potential if we don't bring it in.

The Fortuna City Council is having a workshop on the topic of Cannabis in the City on Wednesday, March 22, at 6 p.m. at City Hall. If you live in Fortuna, please try to attend and let your voice be heard. You may agree or disagree with me, but this is your chance to express your opinion. That's next Wednesday, March 22, 6 p.m. at City Hall.

The Genie is not yet out of the bottle in Fortuna—let's keep it that way.

This has been Erin Dunn with a Community Comment.