

SLT, EDC taking time to allow pot shops

By Kathryn Reed and Susan Wood

There will be no sales of recreational marijuana anywhere in El Dorado County for the foreseeable future.

This is because on Dec. 12 the South Lake Tahoe City Council and El Dorado County Board of Supervisors at their respective meetings agreed to implement urgency ordinances related to cannabis. Each is a ban for 45 days. (The ban does not affect the current medicinal marijuana operation in the city.)

This is in response to the 2016 California voter approved initiative making recreational pot legal starting Jan. 1. Each jurisdiction has the right to regulate sales and other aspects of the law. What is allowed is growing up to six plants for personal use and smoking at your residence assuming the landlord says it is OK.

It is not legal to drive high – nor will it ever be, private businesses may restrict the use on their premises, it can be illegal in public places, and employers still have a right to say being under the influence is a big no-no.

The city already has a working group of two council members – Tom Davis and Brooke Laine – who are leading a community committee to write a recreational marijuana ordinance with the help of the city attorney.

Three of the six planned meetings have taken place. The time line is for all recommendations to go to the city attorney by the end of January, have it be aired before the Planning Commission in March, with a workshop of the City Council that month, too, and possibly have the ordinance in place by June.

At Tuesday's meeting the Board of Supervisors unanimously voted on the 45-day urgency ordinance to ban commercial licenses for medical and recreational cannabis.

A four-fifths vote for all urgency ordinances – in the city or county – is necessary.

However, it was a 4-1 vote to establish an ad hoc committee of Supervisors Mike Ranalli and Sue Novasel. Supervisor Shiva Frentzen, without saying why, voted no. The committee will study and create ballot measures for various commercial uses tied to taxation.

Novasel reminded the other supervisors that the state's direction seems to be "ever changing." The temporary ban serves as a "wait and see" concession in order to stall decisions until all aspects of the options surrounding the new law are reviewed.

"Nothing's off the table," Novasel told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The county agenda item brought out seven speakers all in favor of supporting the cultivation of the crop, whether for medicinal use or economic benefits.