



Lifting Local Canna-biz Bans

Wednesday night a local activist and real estate investor stopped by and asked me to attend a City Council meeting with him in Atwater – another little ghost town of the central valley. For those of you who don't know the central valley, all towns are pretty much the same. Their city councils certainly look alike, and have the same people singing the same songs from the same songbooks... it seems that being a 'bold lawmaker' in the central valley is an oxymoron.

Most of all city council members across all the towns in the valley are collecting retirement pensions from public service jobs. The kind of jobs that tax-paying citizens support. They've all earned their money by what I call 'in the castle' positions. The town lawmakers have contempt for the very

people who make their jobs possible simply because they (the city councils) are 'in the castle, from the castle' and the rest of us are castle-outsiders.

The Atwater city council was discussing a particular ordinance that allows cannabis operations on a certain strip of land near the highway. I thought it was a good idea to show up at their meeting and say "Hey, what you are doing is fantastic! Setting aside a whole strip of dead land in your town, to be pre-permitted for [cannabis businesses](#), that's progressive!" But then I also had to say that the idea of banning all retail sales of cannabis is ridiculous because, for one thing, no investor is going to consider setting up operations where they can't sell to the locals. Banning retail sales of cannabis is the same as saying "Hey, Dole, you can make your pineapple juice here, you just can't sell it here." Can you imagine Mr. Dole signing up for that?

"Furthermore", I explained to them. "Retail sales of cannabis are already happening in your little town. They have been happening all through prohibition. You aren't stopping retail sales from happening by banning them, you are just making sure that those activities stay in the hands of the black market. You are just making sure that it is an underground activity and no taxes are received."

For the record, I was addressing a city council whose city budget is near bankruptcy! And I invited them all to our farm to visit and see what we do and learn something. I recommended they visit Harborside in Oakland.



“In God We Trust” emblazoned across the building and a pledge of allegiance to the flag at the opening of every meeting. My Canadian visitor felt like she was visiting a quaint old movie set.

The clearing of their voices, the pompous positioning before they spoke – they don’t know this, because they don’t attend other city council meetings in the valley, they don’t know that not one of them sitting on the panel has an original thought on the matter. Their voice-clearing and pompous deliveries of their words aren’t even original. I guess that’s what bugs me the most. They think they are so smart and so wise and so important. But the words that come out of their mouths prove two things: complete ignorance on the subject of cannabis combined with a complete ignorance on what is happening around them in other town-hall meetings, other states, other countries.

I sometimes think that if God assigned an angel to watch over central valley town discussions of cannabis, the angel would quickly hang himself. Or, the angel equivalent of dropping out of the game completely versus having to hear one more politician deliver as if it is golden words of advice, the warning against children getting their hands on it. Or, a pompous warning that money and economics shouldn't guide this heavy 'moral' decision. Grrrrr. Arrrrrghghghgh. Grrrrr! YOU HAVE 12 YEAR OLD METH ADDICTS!!!!

Four citizens addressed the council Wednesday night. All four of them were pro-cannabis businesses in their town. All four of them said it is ludicrous to ban retail sales, to dis-allow retail businesses. One was a doctor, one was a lawyer, one was a real estate magnate, one was a weed-nun. No one spoke against, except the council members themselves.

After hearing us speak, after closing the public comments, they said the same stupid things that I have heard over and over again at council meetings in the central valley. The same things that would make the angel of cannabis hang himself.

We can't have it getting in the hands of kids! That's why we can't have retail sales.

All lawmakers in the central valley use that as their first go-to point. Ridiculous! They don't care that we have a meth addiction epidemic. They don't care that children get into alcohol and pills. They don't care that their town is a ghost-town and has absolutely nothing for children to do. They don't care that since Castle Air Force closed, their population has increasingly gone down and the businesses that were here have moved out. Let's worry about the children getting into

something that's never killed anyone, and let's ignore the meth epidemic and the extreme poverty that the central valley holds.

Let's not focus so much on the money. The decision shouldn't be about money.

Says the old fart who has never worried about money one day of his life! I broke their rules on that one and stood up and reminded them that economic hardship is the number one promoter of disease and sickness. I didn't add this part, but I was thinking it: "If I grew up in your town, I would do meth, too."

When I sat down, I just prayed for a bit of light to shine into their thick skulls. (I accuse all, but really, there were one or two enlightened ones up there, they just don't get to say much. They maintain a foot in the cannabis closet.) I meditated on a golden beam of knowledge flowing into all their heads.

If their town wasn't so shabby and dilapidated and so on the brink of economic ruin, it wouldn't be so infuriating. But it is! Melia Robinson just came out with an article that discusses five towns on the brink of ruin who were saved by the intelligent plant. It discusses the fact that more people shop at the dispensaries than live in the town, because people come from all over to get their medicine. It discusses how the tax revenues generated got them new fire engines, street lights, repairs and upgrades of their main street area. Here's the link. Someone please get the Atwater city council members to read it:

<http://www.businessinsider.com/small-towns-saved-by-legal-marijuana-2017-5?&platform=bi-androidapp/#residents-of-sedgwick-colorado-were-in-talks-to-disband-the-town-when-a-medical-marijuana-dispensary-opened-for-business-1>

As I sat and listened to them talk about how they will have to take more time (code for, have another public meeting, but stack it with people who think their way – narrowly, selfishly and uncompassionately), my thoughts went to the businesses I had done some consulting for in their town and one experience in particular.

I was working on their QuickBooks when a woman came in, big hair and tiny hips, a cloud of perfume around her, clickity click across the floor in her high heels and she was carrying a poodle and a purse and wearing gloves(!) She said “Are the owners’ here?” and the receptionist told her they were not. She said “Well, tell them they owe me a thank you, because Saturday night? At around ten o’clock, I was driving by and I saw a homeless person sleeping in the alcove. I called the police and they took care of it. Tell them Gloria said ‘your welcome’”. She turned away and – clickity click – off she went.

My soul was so offended and though I tried really hard to bite my tongue, I couldn’t do it. As the door opened about twenty feet or so from where I was sitting, I shouted for everyone in the place to hear, “Yes, let’s not be outraged that someone is shelterless! Let’s be outraged that they had the nerve to do that in front of your tender eyes!” In my mind, I added, you ice-hearted bitch. (Yes, I have an evil inner twin and she said that in my ears.) I don’t know if she actually heard me, as the door opening had this noise attached to it and she was twenty to thirty feet away, but everyone in the office heard

me.

It's unfortunate, but I carry that image as the one in my head that represents, sadly, the attitude of many in that town. I am sad for these women, because they are the same ones who hold up the patriarchy. They don't even know their words and actions are betraying their own gender.

At the end of the city council meeting, the woman in front of me turned and asked why we dress like we do. I explained that we are Beguine revivalists, not nuns. I explained that we dress formally out of respect for the plant, as a meditation to be in synch with our ancient mothers and their spiritual practices, that Muslim women are the only women who still dress like our ancient mothers and that makes them targets of discrimination, and so in Sisterhood with them, we also cover ourselves. She listened to all that and said "I like the other kind."

I was so surprised that I could only nod, smile, and walk away to catch up with Sister Claire, who had already headed toward the back of the room. This woman was showing her disdain for our self-declared, self-empowered, woman-owned, woman-run spiritual and tribal operation. I'm always surprised when women don't support women as it seems unnatural. Naughty replies danced in my head. "We like the other ones too – too bad they are going extinct." And "You like the other ones? Would you like to come visit the next time those 'other ones' come visit?" And "You like the other ones? Are you intending to become one?" I had to stifle a giggle because I had caught up with Sister Claire and she didn't know the exchange had happened. I don't like to share hater comments with the Sisters. Best they keep their thoughts positive while working the medicine and doing other important work.

Every time someone throws darts at our [Sisterhood](#), I feel more and more connected to our Beguine ancestral mothers who were persecuted many times in history for being excellent at what they did, and for being excellent at what they did without a patriarchy telling them what and how to do it. So I don't take those arrows personally. I accept that I have a calling, and that I am not certain where the journey will lead, but I am certain that I will strive, as my other Sisters do, every day, to make our ancient Beguine mothers proud.

Sadly, or – weirdly, the Atwater city council decided to schedule their next public discussion of [cannabis ordinances](#) on the summer solstice (june 21st). We are flexible, however, and may likely move our celebration night so that we can pack their room with pro-job, pro-compassion, pro-planet earth people. I know you are all out there. Sixty-eight percent of the Atwater city population voted for Prop 64. You should all come out. Everyone in the valley should come out that night and be heard. We need to stop this nonsense of them continuing to thwart the will of the people. They need to listen to some Nixon tapes. They need to understand that the bans against the plant were rooted in racism. They need to understand that they are on the wrong side of this argument and that one day, their children will be putting cannabis in their grand-children's granola to make sure they ward off a host of diseases.

Maybe you can't come to that meeting, but maybe you would like to call them or email them. Their information is below.

And to end on a more positive note, at least one of the city council members spoke with me after about cannabis and specific diseases and she was also the only one who was ready to act on the ordinance so Atwater could get on with the business of the business. So that's one down and four to go...

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