

## Hidden Valley Lake Association concerned about medical marijuana growing

Contributed by Star Laurence  
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HIDDEN VALLEY LAKE &ndash; Hidden Valley Lake's leadership is looking at how to address the cultivation of medical marijuana in the gated community.

Hidden Valley Lake Association directors held an initial discussion on the matter at the Feb. 12 board meeting. Association Secretary Rick Munroe presented the matter, which arose because a Hidden Valley Lake resident had a portion of a marijuana plant stolen out of his yard and reported it to Hidden Valley Lake Security.

Munroe presented to the board an excerpt from a security report on the theft, which occurred in December.

An unknown subject had cut a section of a wire fence in order to steal part of a marijuana plant. Hidden Valley Lake Security, on the order of Chief Charles Russ, told the owner of the plant to report it to the sheriff's office.

&ldquo;What are we going to do about this, and the nuisance it creates as demonstrated by this incident report?&rdquo; Munroe asked.

He then offered his own proposal &ndash; that Hidden Valley Lake Security be asked to research the matter, including the association's rights to restrict it. Security could then bring its findings back to the board of directors for consideration.

Munroe said if a person wants to grow medical marijuana in their house and they have a license to do so, it shouldn't be a problem. But if it's growing in their yards Munroe suggested it creates a nuisance.

&ldquo;It really is a law enforcement problem,&rdquo; he said, adding that the association's security should not get involved &ldquo;in any way, shape or form.&rdquo; Munroe further urged residents to call 911 if they see it in a yard.

Director Kathy Joseph agreed. &ldquo;Chief Russ can solve it with the authorities, and speak with the narcotics task force and the sheriff&rsquo;s department. I can tell you there was another incident in the past that had involved a gun.&rdquo;

Residents at the meeting appeared to strongly oppose the idea of having medical marijuana grown in their community.

One man asked the board if they were talking about banning versus reporting, and did the board have the right to ban medical marijuana?

Munroe indicated that they needed more information about what is and isn't allowed under medical marijuana laws.

The discussion was closed with a vote from the board to send the matter to Russ for his investigation and a report back. Russ is expected to present his findings to the board at its March 12 meeting.

Communities here in Lake County and in other parts of the state continue to confront concerns that have arisen since the 1996 passage of California's Proposition 215, the Compassionate Use Act, which allows people with doctors' recommendations to use marijuana for medical reasons.

In March of 2007, the Lakeport City Council voted to ban medical marijuana cultivation within the city limits.

Reasons for the measure included the plants' pungent odor when they mature, but security concerns were the major motivator, according to previous statements by Lakeport Police Chief Kevin Burke.

He said that in October of 2006, a man growing medical marijuana in his yard in Lakeport found a suspect trying to steal his plants, as Lake County News has reported. The plants' owner fired a shotgun at the suspect, who escaped. The incident raised concerns about the potential for thefts and violence as a result of marijuana growing.

The city of Clearlake also is looking at whether or not to allow medical marijuana dispensaries.

The city of Ukiah reportedly requires a minor use permit to grow medical marijuana in the city limits.

Elizabeth Larson contributed to this report.

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