

Protestors expected to greet proposal for pot grow, sales facility in

Niwot

By John Fryar Staff Writer

Updated: 03/09/2015 09:18:33 PM MDT

TimesCall.com

Niwot Business Association members are to receive a presentation Tuesday night about a proposal to expand the former Elysian Fields Estate Auctions building on North 79th Street and convert it to a marijuana growing and sales facility.

But Ernie Craumer, a Greenwich, Conn. resident who's the principal and manager of Colorado Real Estate Holdings Inc. LLC — the company that currently owns the now-vacant building at 6924 N. 79th St. — is expected to be greeted by protesters concerned about the idea of planting a marijuana business in their unincorporated Boulder County community's midst, according to Niwot resident and businesswoman Cindy Butler.

"I'm not sure where a lot of people stand on the issue, but I know where I stand," said Butler, who operates Niwot Window Works out of her home on James Court a few blocks away from property that's being proposed to become a marijuana facility.

That kind of business, Butler said on Monday, would be "out of character with the town."

At Tuesday night's Niwot Business Association meeting, Craumer is to be accompanied by an architect and planner for the presentation, according to Boulder attorney Joe French, who represents Colorado Real Estate Holdings Inc. LLC

French said the meeting is intended to give Niwot Business Association members "the lay of the land, and find out what they're thinking" about the possibility that Colorado Real Estate Holdings would rent the building to a tenant who'd then seek the necessary county and state licenses for the growing operation and for retail marijuana sales at that location.

Depending on the questions that arise at the meeting, Craumer wants to schedule a follow-up community meeting to respond to those questions in detail, French said.

"This is just a first introduction" of the plans to the Niwot business community, said Tony Santelli, president of the Niwot Business Association and one of the owners of the Niwot Tavern. "Up until now, everybody's been listening to hearsay."

The meeting, which Santelli said is opened to NBA members but not the general public, is set for 6 p.m. Tuesday at Gunbarrel Motors, 283 Second Ave., Niwot.

Butler said she and a number of other residents and business people are concerned about the impact the proposed marijuana facility would have on the safety of both children and adults living and walking in nearby Niwot neighborhoods, as well as the strong odors that can come with growing operations and the possibility there'd be burglaries and robberies at the retail sales portion of the business.

"We chose to move to Niwot 23 years ago," Butler said, because of its community-friendly and safe surroundings, aspects she suggested could be threatened by the marijuana facility.

Sara Cioni, owner of Painted Primrose, a wedding florist at 7960 Niwot Road that's about two blocks away, said "I deal with good-smelling things."

But Cioni said she personally experienced offensive odors when her flower shop was on Wilderness Place in Boulder, located near a marijuana business, before she moved her business to Niwot.

Cioni said of the proposed marijuana operation being proposed for Niwot: "I'm really shocked that they're coming to little old 'Mayberry.' Why not Boulder?"

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