Agenda Item No: 25.A



STAFF REPORT

Report To: Board of Supervisors Meeting Date: June 18, 2020

Staff Contact: Ben Johnson, Deputy District Attorney

Agenda Title: For Possible Action: Discussion and possible action regarding litigation relating to

> proposed hemp cultivation on Carson City Open Space property located at 4900 Carson River Road and authorization for the District Attorney to take all legal action necessary to protect the rights and best interest of the City, including, without limitation, the preparation and filing of any counterclaims, any appeal in the event of an adverse judgment and all

necessary legal papers. (Ben Johnson, bjohnson@carson.org)

Staff Summary: This agenda item is for the Board of Supervisors to consider authorizing the District Attorney's Office to file counterclaims, including but not limited to breach of contract and requests for declaratory and injunctive relief, as well as any appeal in the event of an adverse judgment, concerning Carson City Open Space property located at 4900 Carson River Road in relation to proposed hemp cultivation at that location.

Agenda Action: Formal Action / Motion Time Requested: 15 Mins

Proposed Motion

I move to authorize the District Attorney's Office to take any and all legal action in its representation of the City in this litigation matter, including, without limitation, the filing of any counterclaims, the filing of any appeal in the event of an adverse judgment and the filing of all necessary legal papers.

Board's Strategic Goal

Quality of Life

Previous Action

January 16, 2020: The Board of Supervisors authorized the District Attorney's Office to initiate litigation relating to the proposed hemp cultivation in consultation with the City Manager if deemed to be in the best interest of the City.

Background/Issues & Analysis

In 2010, Carson City applied for and received a Conservation and Resource Protection Grant (Q-1) from the Nevada Division of State Lands to help fund the purchase of 365 acres of property located at 4900 Carson River Road. The property was purchased from James Jarrard and the Jimmie Pete Jarrard Children's Trust (Jarrard Trust). The State Lands grant provided 75 percent of the total project cost (\$2,788,430) with the remaining 25 percent (\$929,477) was paid from Carson City Open Space funds.

Carson City, through its Open Space Advisory Committee and Department of Parks, Recreation and Open Space (Open Space) identified the Jarrard property as one of the most environmentally sensitive open space projects in the City due to the large presence of wetlands along the western edge as well as the riparian zones along the Carson River.

The Purchase and Sale Agreement between the Jarrard Trust and the City allows Mr. Jarrard to continue ranching and grazing operations on the property provided it does not interfere with or materially impair use of the Mexican Ditch trail, observation of wildlife, and access to wetlands for studies and environmental assessments.

In June 2019, representatives from Tahoe Hemp, LLC entered the property and began clearing brush in preparation of seeding hemp. Tahoe Hemp did not notify Carson City or seek permission prior to clearing. The District Attorney's Office sent a cease and desist email to legal counsel for Tahoe Hemp and requested a meeting to discuss the proposed cultivation.

On June 25, 2019, staff met with representatives from Tahoe Hemp on-site to discuss the project and review the area where planting was proposed. Staff informed Tahoe Hemp that more research was necessary to determine the viability of hemp production on City property.

On November 15, 2019, the District Attorney's Office sent a letter to legal counsel for Tahoe Hemp outlining the City's concerns and interpretation of the Purchase and Sale Agreement as it related to the production of hemp. The letter indicated that the City could not approve the proposed project because it would jeopardize the grant funding. In response to this correspondence, a representative from Tahoe Hemp, Leslie Goeres, sent an email indicating that Tahoe Hemp planned to enter City property and proceed with site preparation for planting hemp for commercial cultivation without authorization and over the City's express objection. On November 21, 2019, a cease and desist letter was sent to counsel for Jarrard Trust and Tahoe Hemp via email and certified mail.

On December 20, 2019, legal counsel for Tahoe Hemp sent a letter disagreeing with the City's position and requesting that the City sign off on the hemp permit application. Tahoe Hemp has also asserted that it has a valid lease or other agreement with Jarrard Trust pursuant to which Tahoe Hemp has been granted permission by Jarrard Trust to cultivate agricultural hemp at the site location in question.

On January 15, 2020, Tahoe Hemp filed a Complaint for Breach of Contract, Inverse Condemnation and Writ of Mandamus in the First Judicial District Court naming Carson City as a defendant. On March 9, 2020, Carson City filed its Motion to Dismiss or in the alternative Motion for Summary Judgment seeking dismissal of the complaint on various grounds. Following briefing by the parties, the Court entered an Order Granting in Part and Denying in Part the Motion to Dismiss. The Court ordered Tahoe Hemp to join the State of Nevada Lands Division and James Jarrard as indispensable parties.

On June 1, 2020, Tahoe Hemp filed and served a First Amended Complaint pursuant to the Court's order. The District Attorney is seeking authorization to file counterclaims against the plaintiffs in order to protect the City's interest in the property.

Applicable Statute, Code, Policy, Rule or Regulation

N/A

<u>Financial Information</u>
Is there a fiscal impact? Yes

If yes, account name/number: Contingency 1010200-501000

Is it currently budgeted? No

Explanation of Fiscal Impact: Carson City may be required to repay the amount of the Grant (\$2,788,430) and convey ownership of the land to the State of Nevada if hemp cultivation proceeds and it is determined that such activity violates the terms of the Grant.

<u>Alternatives</u>

Do not authorize the District Attorney's Office to file counterclaims or provide alternative direction.

Attachments:

2020.06.01 First Amended Complaint.pdf

Board Action Taken:		
Motion:	1) 2)	Aye/Nay
		
(Vote Recorded By)		

1	RICHARD G. CAMPBELL, JR.			
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2	SEVERIN A. CARLSON			
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	Attorneys for Plaintiff			
9	•			
10	IN THE FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT OF			
	THE STATE OF NEVADA IN AND FOR			
11	CARSON CITY			
12	Tahoe Hemp LLC; and James Jarrard as	Case No.	20 OC 00010 1B	
	Trustee of the Jimmie Pete Jarrard Children's			
13	Trust,	Dept. No.	2	
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14	Plaintiff,	Exempt from	n Arbitration	
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15	and Nevada Division of State Lands,	FIRST AM	ENDED COMPLAINT	
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16	Involuntary Plaintiff,			
17	vs.			
18	Carson City Nevada, a Political			
	Subdivision of the State of Nevada;			
19	Defendant DOES 1-10			
20	Defendant.			
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22	Comes now, Tahoe Hemp, LLC and James Jarrard as Trustee of the Jimmie Pet			

NAEMPFER CROWELL

West Liberty Street, Suite 700
Reno, Nevada 89501

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Comes now, Tahoe Hemp, LLC and James Jarrard as Trustee of the Jimmie Pete Jarrard Children's Trust (collectively, "Plaintiffs"), by and through their attorneys Kaempfer Crowell, and submit their First Amended Complaint pursuant to this Court's April 17, 2020 Order

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requiring the joinder of James Jarrard as Trustee of the Jimmie Pete Jarrard Children's Trust and Nevada Division of State as a required parties, and file the following complaint:

Parties

- Plaintiff Tahoe Hemp LLC ("Tahoe Hemp") is a Nevada Limited Liability 1. Company that has operations in Carson City, Nevada.
- Plaintiff James Jarrard is the Trustee of the Jimmie Pete Jarrard Children's Trust 2. and the Kae Jarrard Trust which entered into a Purchase and Sales Agreement with Defendant Carson City, Nevada.
- Involuntary Plaintiff Nevada Division of State Lands is a division of Nevada's 3. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and a required party to this action pursuant to this Court's April 17, 2020 Amended Order Granting In Part and Denying In Part Carson City's Motion to Dismiss, or In the Alternative, for Summary Judgment and is being added as an Involuntary Plaintiff pursuant to Nev. R. Civ. P. 19(a)(2).
 - Defendant Carson City, Nevada is a political subdivision of the State of Nevada. 4.
- The true names and capacities, whether individual, corporate, associate or 5. otherwise, of the Defendant Does 1-10, inclusive, are unknown to plaintiff who therefore sues said defendants by such fictitious names. Upon information and belief, each of the defendants sued as DOE has some responsibility for the damages to plaintiff as a result of the matters alleged below and plaintiff will seek leave of the court to amend this complaint to show their true names or capacities upon ascertaining the same.

Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction is proper in this Court in that the underlying activities in this case 6. occurred in Carson City, Nevada and under NRS 13.030 suits against political subdivisions are properly brought in the District Court located in the same county.

General Allegations

- 7. On or about April 20, 2010, the Jimmie Pete Jarrard Children's Trust ("Jarrad Trust") and the Kae Jarrard Trust entered into a Purchase and Sale Agreement ("PSA"), with Carson City, Nevada whereby Carson City purchased two separate tracts of land in Carson City consisting of 369.78 acres designated as APN 010-071-26 and 010-021-47.
- 8. On or about April 2019, the Kae Jarrard Trust was dissolved and its assets were transferred to the Jarrard Trust.
- 9. Carson City purchased the property for open space and other purposes as set forth in the Carson City Municipal Code Chapter 13.06.
- 10. On or about May 17, 2010, a month after entering into the PSA, Carson City entered into a Nonrevocable Agreement to Restrict Property with Nevada Division of State Lands.
- 11. The Nonrevocable Agreement requires Carson City to utilize the property "only for open space purposes that are consistent with the objectives for which the Property is acquired and the local jurisdictions' adopted open space plan."
- 12. Carson City was required to enter into the Nonrevocable Agreement after it used grant money issued by the Nevada Division State Lands pursuant to a Conservation and Resource Grant, to fund seventy five percent of the purchase price of the property under the PSA.
- 13. By the express terms of the PSA the "Seller retained the right to the use of the property for grazing livestock, ranching or other agricultural purposes", on certain terms and conditions including Seller or its designee(s) having the right to irrigate the property and maintain the irrigations works already in place. Seller also retained all water rights that were attendant to the subject property.

- 14. Under the PSA, Seller agreed that it or its designee would not engage in any activity which would interfere generally with the intended use of the property for hiking, observing wildlife and the use of the walking path along the Carson River.
- 15. On or about June 6, 2019, Tahoe Hemp entered into a Lease Agreement with the Jarrard Trust whereby it would lease the rights retained by the Jarrard Trust to engage in agricultural activities on approximately 98.2 acres of the subject property, specifically to grow hemp plants.
- 16. The portion of the subject property where the hemp would be cultivated would not interfere with Carson City's intended use for hiking or observing wildlife.
- 17. On or about June 6, 2019, Tahoe Hemp also filed a Hemp Growers Application with the Nevada Department of Agriculture. As part of that application process the Department of Agriculture required a notarized statement from the landowner authorizing cultivation of industrial hemp on the property. Plaintiff Tahoe Hemp submitted a notarized authorization from the Jarrard Trust explaining that even though it had sold the property it retained the rights for agricultural use of the subject property.
- 18. On or about June 24, 2018, the Agricultural Department notified Plaintiff Tahoe Hemp that it needed the authorization from Carson City and revoked the previous certificate which was issued on June 21, 2019.
- 19. Plaintiff Tahoe Hemp thereafter requested the Notarized Authorization from Carson City to submit to the Department of Agriculture.
- 20. After several months of meetings between Plaintiffs and representatives from Carson City, in a letter dated November 15, Carson City refused to provide the necessary Notarized Authorization needed by the Department of Agriculture in order for Plaintiff Tahoe Hemp to obtain its Hemp Growers Permit.

- 21. The reasons given by Carson City for refusal to provide the Notarized Authorization were primarily that the growing of hemp on the property was inconsistent with, and directly interfered with the City's planned use of the property as open space for the public to use.
- 22. Carson City also claimed that since the purchase of the subject property was accomplished pursuant to the Conservation and Resource Grant from Nevada, which funded seventy five percent of the purchase price, under the terms of the Non-Revocable Agreement to Restrict Property Use which accompanied the Resource and Conservation Grant, Carson City claims it was under "the impression that the state would seek to enforce the agreement if Carson City proceeded with allowing hemp production on the property as hemp farming was not expressly outlined in the City's grant application and was not the intended use of the land."
- 23. Carson City claimed that it met with the State Lands Manager, and "left with the impression that the State would seek to" require Carson City to divest itself of the property and pay back the grant funds were Carson City to allow hemp production on the property.
- 24. Carson City thereafter, on November 21, 2019, sent a cease and desist letter to Plaintiff Tahoe Hemp ordering it to cease all site preparation for growing of hemp on the property.
- 25. On January 14, 2020, Carson City further affirmed its position that it could not allow Hemp Production of the Property because doing so would "place the property in violation of the grand [sic] funding used to purchase the property."
- 26. Carson City indicated that it would reconsider its position if Tahoe Hemp could secure "an alternative interpretation from State Lands."

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FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION BREACH OF CONTRACT (On behalf of Tahoe Hemp)

- 27. Plaintiffs repeat and reallege each and every allegation contained in paragraphs 1 through 26 inclusive.
- 28. As the Designee of the contractual right of the Jarrard Trust under the PSA to engage in agricultural activities on the property, Tahoe Hemp is the designee of the Jarrard Trust and is a third party beneficiary of the PSA between the Jarrard Trust and Carson City.
- 29. Carson City's refusal to submit the Notarized Authorization to the Agricultural Department is a breach of the PSA.
- 30. Carson City's breach of the PSA is the proximate cause of Tahoe Hemp's inability to grow, harvest and sell its hemp crop which has caused it damages in an amount in excess of \$10,000,000, for 2019, and it will incur additional damages for subsequent years if Carson City does not submit the Notarized Authorization to the Department of Agriculture.

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION BREACH OF CONTRACT (On behalf of Jarrard Trust)

- 31. Plaintiffs repeat and reallege each and every allegation contained in paragraphs 1 through 30 inclusive.
- 32. Under the PSA, the Jarrard Trust reserved the right to have it or its designee engage in agriculture on the subject property which it did by entering into a lease with Tahoe Hemp.
- 33. Under the terms of the lease between Tahoe Hemp and the Jarrard Trust, Tahoe Hemp was to pay the Jarrard Trust \$40,000 a year to lease the property for agricultural purposes. However, lease payments were conditioned on Tahoe Hemp being able to grow and sell its hemp crop.

34. By its refusal to deliver the Notarized Authorization to the Department of Agriculture, Carson City has breached the PSA which has proximately caused the Jarrard Trust damages of \$40,000 in 2019, and such damages will continue to accrue every year that Tahoe Hemp is not authorized to grow its hemp crop on the subject property in contradiction of the PSA's express terms.

THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION BREACH OF THE COVENANT OF GOOD FAITH AND FAIR DEALING INHERINT IN ALL CONTRACTS IN NEVADA

- 35. Plaintiffs repeat and reallege each and every allegation contained in paragraphs 1 through 34 inclusive.
- 36. That there is implied in every contract in the State of Nevada a covenant of good faith and fair dealing which requires the parties to act fairly and in good faith toward the other party.
- 37. That pursuant to the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing the parties covenanted that each would do nothing to injure the other.
- 38. Defendant breached the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing by engaging in the wrongful conduct as set forth herein.

FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION INVERSE CONDEMNATION

- 39. Plaintiffs repeat and reallege each and every allegation contained in paragraphs 1 through 38 inclusive.
- 40. The Nevada Constitution provides a basis for recovery against government entities for inverse condemnation when private property is taken for a public use without just compensation to the owner.
 - 41. Under the PSA, Plaintiffs have a protected property right to use the subject

property for agricultural uses. Cultivation of hemp is a legal activity that is clearly agriculture and there was no restriction in the PSA as to any particular type of crops.

42. Carson City's refusal to send a Notarized Authorization to the Department of Agriculture and its cease and desist letter clearly state it has taken the actions on behalf of the public interest in having the property used for the public enjoyment, as such Carson City has caused a taking of a private property right without any formal proceeding and without having paid Plaintiffs just compensation resulting in an inverse condemnation which entitles Plaintiffs to damages according to proof.

FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION ATTORNEY FEES

- 43. Plaintiffs repeat and reallege each and every allegation contained in paragraphs 1 through 42 inclusive.
- 44. Plaintiffs have been required to retain the services of Kaempfer Crowell to bring this action. Pursuant to NRS 37.185 and under the PSA between The Jarrard Trust and Carson City, the Jarrard Trust and Tahoe Hemp, as the Designee of the contractual right of the Jarrard Trust under the PSA, are therefore entitled to reasonable attorney's fees and costs incurred herein.

PRAYER

- 1. For damages for Plaintiffs in excess of \$15,000.00, in an amount to be proven at Trial.
- 2. For attorney's fees and costs under NRS 37.185 and under the PSA between The Jarrard Trust and Carson City.
- 3. For such other relief as the Court deems proper under the circumstances.

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AFFIRMATION

Pursuant to NRS 239B.030, the undersigned hereby affirms this document does not contain the personal information or social security number of any person.

DATED June 1, 2020.

KAEMPFER CROWELL

By: V

RICHARD G. CAMPBELL, JR.

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

Pursuant to NRCP 5(b), I certify that I am employed by the law firm of Kaempfer Crowell, and that on this 1st day of June, 2020, I deposited for mailing in Reno, Nevada, a true and correct copy of the foregoing document **FIRST AMENDED COMPLAINT** addressed to the following:

Jason D. Woodbury, District Attorney
J. Daniel Yu, Assistant District Attorney
Benjamin R. Johnson, Deputy District Attorney
855 E. Musser Street, Suite 2030
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Attorneys for Defendant Carson City

An employee of Kaempfer Crowell

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