

# Saddle Creek Community Services District

## Regular Meeting of October 17, 2017

### AGENDA SUPPORTING DATA

#### 7. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

- d. Discussion and action regarding the District weed abatement services, fees charged and related processes.

#### **Recommended Motion**

No specific action is recommended at this meeting. Board direction to the General Manager is suggested.

#### **Background**

In the general manager's report of the September Board meeting, we briefly discussed concerns with the District's weed abatement processes. Staff was directed to place this item on an upcoming agenda.

In past years, the District has performed weed/grass removal work on private property (vacant lots) as a means of fire prevention and improved aesthetics, as well as the reduction of suitable habitat for mosquitos and vermin. A notice has typically been sent to property owners in fall each year, stating that the weeds must be removed, or we will remove them at the cost of the property owner. There have been no major concerns with this practice, and we have not aggressively pursued collection of unpaid mowing fees; although most pay readily.

There are a couple issues that require Board direction at this meeting:

1. The cost to provide the service exceeds the fee charged. Staff recommends that we evaluate the cost of the service and propose a fee that covers all associated costs. A public hearing is required to adopt such fees.
2. The District is not authorized to perform work on private property without specific approval of the property owner. We recommend the development of an agreement to serve as a request for service and liability release.
3. The District cannot force (or enforce) the removal of weeds unless it follows specific administrative procedures including conducting a public hearing in advance of performing the work. Staff recommends only performing the work on those properties requesting the service after mailed notice.
4. The implementation of Measure A could raise community awareness and concern over whether tax dollars are being spent maintaining private property, which is the responsibility of the property owner. This can be resolved by only clearing properties that request the service and agree to pay the costs.

The majority of the properties cleared belong to Castle & Cooke, and they may well authorize us to perform the mowing. At minimum, we should establish policies and procedures for implementation of this program, and revise the fees to cover costs. It is customary and acceptable for us to perform community outreach to educate and strongly encourage all property owners to clear weeds as well.