

Heath and Human Services receives support for pallet homes in Del Norte

February 28, 2023



The Del Norte County Board of Supervisors offered its support for the Department of Health and Human Services to submit an application to receive funding from the Encampment Resolution Funding Program.

The vote was 4-1 with 4th District Supervisor Joey Borges dissenting. The motion to instruct DHHS to apply for the funding was offered by 2nd District Supervisor Valerie Starkey and seconded by 5th District Supervisor Dean Wilson.

In her support of pallet homes with three years of wraparound services Starkey expressed her support and referenced 2016 presidential candidate Hillary Clinton famous quote, "...it's going to take a village," (to effectuate change in hoping to better the lives of people who are experiencing homelessness.)

Wilson stated his support by identifying an established area which must be secured so law enforcement can do its job. Under current state law, Wilson, a three-term sheriff, said officers are not able to arrest low level

crimes committed by those who purport to be homeless but in a contained organized group, law enforcement can be far more effective.

Borges questioned the location of the proposed pallet village on Williams Drive adjacent to the now Juvenile Hall and stated its location is problematic as it situates adjacent to the fairgrounds and quiet multi-family and modular housing development.

Public speaker and former Triplicate editor Dan Schmidt spoke in support of the pallet village.

“The issue of systemic homelessness is the issue of our generation,” he said.

Schmidt voiced his support for the vacant Del Norte Juvenile Hall to be converted to the new Care Court system, supported by State Senator Mike McGuire and signed into law by Gov. Gavin Newsom. Public Speaker Branden Bieber of Smith River shared his opinion of opposition as “not thought out and not in the best interests of Del Norte County.” Bieber expressed his mistrust of the Department Of Health and Human Services and its quest to expand its clientele. He opined this latest effort will attract more homeless to our small community.