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 - Dan & Colleen, Moraga

Lamorinda's Religious Services



St. Giles Episcopal Church of Moraga
 Worshipping at St. Mary's College Chapel. All are welcome at our services.
9 a.m. Sunday Service: Holy Communion - with St. Giles' Choir.
 Child care is available all year.
 1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga. 925-376-5770

Willow Spring Church
 1675-1689 School Street, Moraga
 www.willowsspringchurch.org
 (925) 376-3550


Sunday Service Times:
 Prayer @ 8am, Traditional @ 9am,
 Contemporary @ 10:30am

Weekly Activities:
 Wednesday Community Bible Study @ 10am
 REVERB (youth) @ 7pm
 Friday Night BLAST! Kids Club @ 6pm
 Saturday Night Catalyst (Young Adults) @ 7:30pm

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE
 Church Services and Sunday School (up to age 20); 10 - 11 AM
 Informal Testimony Meeting, Wed 7:30 - 8:30 PM
 24 Orinda Way www.christianscienceorinda.org

Free public lecture March 20 at 7:30 p.m.
 "The Healing Power of the Golden Rule." See our website for details.

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, 433 Moraga Way Orinda



8:15 a.m. Traditions Worship Service
 9:15 a.m. Coffee Fellowship
 9:40 a.m. Education for all ages
 10:45 a.m. Celebrations Worship Service
 Childcare available for ages 5 and younger
 925-254-3422

Our Savior's Lutheran (ELCA)
 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette
 283-3722 • www.oslc.net

Sunday mornings at OSLC:
 Classic Worship, 8:15 am
 Education Hour, 9:30-10:20 am
 Contemporary Worship, 10:30 am

Choral Masterwork Concert
 7pm 3/14 (see website)

St. Anselm's Episcopal Church
 A Loving Community

Sunday Services: 8 and 10 AM
 Active Youth Program, Childcare

682 Michael Lane, Lafayette, 284-7420, www.stanselms.ws

City seeks volunteers for vacancies on the City Open Space Committee



The Lafayette City Council is soliciting applicants to serve on a newly approved City Open Space Committee.

This new five-seven-member body will be responsible for drafting an open space plan, identify open space opportunities, developing a strategy to acquire open space and to serve as advocates for the acquisition and preservation of open space in Lafayette.

The committee will be asked to deliver its draft plan to the City Council in October 2009.

Members of the committee will be appointed by the City Council on the basis of education, community involvement, training and experience in the fields of city government, and related fields.

Questions regarding the committee may be directed to the City Manager Steven Falk at sfalk@lovelafayette.org.

Individuals interested in this volunteer position may obtain an application from

The City's website at www.ci.lafayette.ca.us or
 City of Lafayette Offices
 3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite 210 or

Call the City's Clerks Office at (925) 284-1968 and an application will be mailed
 Completed applications must be received by 5:00 pm on Friday, March 6, 2009.

The Lafayette City Council is also soliciting applicants to serve on a newly approved City Charter and Communications Committee.

Letters to the Editor

Share your thoughts with our community! Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writers and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly.

All published letters will include the writer's name and town (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only), and should be 350 words or less. Letters may be edited for length or legal considerations.

email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

To Our Neighbors,

Many of us who choose to live in the Bay area take pride in our region's reputation as "tolerant." White/black, Muslim/Jew, conservative/liberal, gay/straight - we, for the most part, try to get along.

So, imagine living in Orinda as a lesbian couple knowing that "traditional family values" is used as justification to restrict your rights, ala Prop 8. Imagine trying to assimilate into Orinda as a person of color knowing that 1% of the population is African American and even less is Hispanic, according to census data. Imagine being a senior citizen in Orinda and finding yourself identified as capitalizing on Prop 13 for paying your taxes, all because you are outspoken (see recent letters to the editor).

Orindans, we can do better. We can be respectful and accepting of our differences. We can and should be more inclusive. Or, shame on us.

Bob & Kim Larsen
 Orinda

To the Editor,

The treatment Edward Vogt reported receiving from the City of Orinda (Letters to the Editor, 2/18/09 issue) illustrates just how oppressive local governments can be toward property owners. I wouldn't have believed it, had it not brought back memories of our family's experience with the Orinda planning process in 1994 when building our house. We had to endure factually incorrect and logically flawed input from Orinda's Design Review Board, which tried to force us to build our house on the lowest portion of our large hillside lot where it would have had essentially no view, despite our proposed upslope building site having had full neighbor support and zoning compliance. In their seemingly well-intentioned desire to make our proposed house less visible from afar, the Design Review Board demanded we move the house to the downhill setback despite the fact that it would have involved removing more trees and made the house far more visible from the local street. Other demands included our installation of an elevator, a dark green roof (resulting in a higher summer AC bill), and that a "certified arborist be required to supervise all grading and construction activities" - a requirement even our highly respected and seasoned arborist said was ridiculous. Only after considerable effort and aggravation did we prevail against the city, keeping the uphill view location we enjoy today, and thereby avoiding what would have otherwise been a significant loss in property enjoyment and value. Others we know of have been less fortunate and, over the years that followed, we personally saw some other unjustifiably hostile actions by the City against nearby property owners.

City-imposed land-use rulings, however well-intentioned, are often made by personnel lacking in legal land-use knowledge, planning experience and impartiality, and can result in severe destruction of land value and onerous cost burdens on an individual property, that can far outweigh any purported benefits to the community. Often these rulings smack of an underlying intent to impede development or, at best, to achieve near-perfection without any regard to cost imposed on the property owner, rather than to reduce environmental and visual impact in a balanced, reasonable manner.

Orinda, with its forward-thinking, educated, and fair-minded citizenry and city council is in a good position to start, today, to set an example of sane environmental policy balanced with due respect for civil rights, by ceasing the practice of imposing homeowner restrictions that are out of proportion with any actual benefit to the community.

Sincerely,
 Joel M. Libove.
 Orinda

Editor:

If you're lucky in your lifetime, you'll live long enough to witness one of those one-in-a-lifetime event. I was fortunate enough to witness such as event at last night's Moraga Town Council meeting. The event I witnessed was the evolution of a representative democracy into the new "selective representative democracy." This new form of democracy re-paves the conventional political organizational chart from where our elected representatives are accountable to the public to the public being held accountable to elected representatives.

This sea-change in political science occurred when the Moraga Town Council took it upon itself to enter into a new contractual agreement for a town manager without the input or solicitation of public comment. This "stealth" contract contains a total annual compensation package of nearly \$300,000. Please keep in mind that the former Oakland City Administrator was compensated nearly as much for a population of 20 times that of Moraga. To round out the night and to a stunned audience, each and every member of the Moraga Town Council proceeded to pontificate and lecture to those who were unfortunate enough to be subjected to this self-serving diatribe. One of the highlights of these personal lectures was when one councilmember opined that Moraga suffers from a negative public perception brought about by "you citizens." In fact, the negative public opinion was brought about, for the most part, by the dysfunctional and argumentative Moraga Town Council itself. The other highlight was from one councilmember masquerading as the local equivalent of Nancy Pelosi who matter-of-factly told the audience that "you elected us" and "you entrusted us" and "let's give this man a chance" and "let's welcome him." I guess I would feel welcome if somebody guaranteed me \$300,000 a year. The irony is not lost with me. As a former candidate for the Moraga Town Council, I was privy to many personal conversations with three current sitting council members. Without exception, both publicly and privately, budget considerations were of paramount importance. However, the contrast between their election promises and their elected decisions is striking. The council reiterated the need to look at adjoining locales such as Lafayette or Orinda for comparable compensation packages. But the comparison failed to include the fiscal state of the adjoining communities budgets. Lafayette and Orinda enjoy well-managed and well-planned budgets. Unfortunately, Moraga has enjoyed neither of these qualities. I ask that colleges and universities look at this new "enlighten" version of representative democracy and see if it works for their communities.

Dennis Wanken
 Moraga

Public Forum **JOIN IT**

On the Selection of Moraga's New Town Manager

I write to you today both as a resident of Moraga and as President of the Moraga Citizens Network, a group that has worked for four years towards transparency in our town government. On Wednesday, February 25, 2009 our Town Council unanimously voted to hire Michael Segrest as Moraga Town Manager. The Council initiated a thorough nine-month process to find a manager that would work well with the Council, Staff and residents, as well as a person who would enable Moraga to work through the financial challenges it faces.

I feel it is important for Moraga residents to know what the process was that resulted in the hiring of Mr. Segrest, and how open and available it was to all residents.

The five men and women elected to represent Moraga citizens started the process by choosing Jay Tashiro in June, 2008, to be the Interim Town Manager. He was chosen, in part, because he had experience in assisting the Corte Madera Town Council in recruiting his successor as a Town Manager prior to his retirement. On July 9th, at an open regular meeting of the Town Council, the Council directed Mr. Tashiro to prepare a Request for Proposal (RFP), a 25 page document used to secure an Executive Recruitment Firm. The council chose to employ a professional search agency, rather than handle the search on its own. On the agendas of the next four Council meetings was something related to the Executive Recruitment Firms, providing interested citizens with opportunities for participation.

During the second half of September, Ms. Peckham of Peckham & McKinney, the selected firm, interviewed a cross section of the town in order to develop a Town Manager profile and prepare a recruitment brochure. All Council Members were interviewed individually, as were all department heads, the fire chief, President of the Chamber of Commerce, General Manager of the Country Club, and a representative from St. Mary's College. All of these individuals represent sizeable numbers of Moraga residents, so through them, the Moraga community had a part in developing that profile.

In late October, the recruitment brochure for the Town Manager position was completed, and posted on both the Town website and the Moraga Citizens Network website. This document was available for viewing on the Town website until early December, when the application process was closed. It is still posted on the MCN website. Eighty-seven applications were received; Ms. Peckham reduced that to 15, by using the profile developed.

In January, three Special Council meetings were held to: 1) review the 12 top candidates' qualifications, 2) to interview and then prioritize the top seven candidates, and 3) to interview the top 3 candidates and prioritize those. These meetings were not open to the public, though the council did discuss holding a public meeting. On January 28, Mr. Segrest emerged as the top candidate, so Ms. Peckham initiated a reference check that included criminal, credit, and employment history. At a Special Meeting on Feb. 3, the Council reviewed the reference report presented verbatim and the tentative offer of the Town Manager position, which included the Council-established parameters for the sub-committee comprised of Mayor Trotter and Vice Mayor Chew. The Council Sub-committee and the Town Attorney met with Mr. Segrest to negotiate an employment agreement, which was completed on Feb. 19. The process came to a conclusion on Feb. 25, when, after hearing comments from the public and answering questions, the Council voted unanimously to hire Mr. Michael Segrest.

Regarding a benefit package, this too has been public, listed in the recruitment brochure mentioned above, and in more than one Council meeting. The Council decided that it was worth offering a good salary to a highly qualified Town Manager, because his judgment, knowledge and experience could save the town hundreds of thousands of dollars. Additionally, experience has shown that equity in pay is important in securing a qualified person. The Moraga Town Manager's base salary will be \$180,000, in the same range as the town managers of Orinda, \$172,000, Martinez \$194,000 and Lafayette \$209,000. Vacation and sick pay, along with retirement and other benefits, are comparable to the city managers mentioned above.

Educated and informed citizens create a vital healthy community. Moraga Citizens Network commends the Council and Jay Tashiro for their thorough transparent process.

Ellen Beans, Moraga