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## Letters to the Editor

Editor:

As Ralph Waldo Emerson once observed: "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of small minds." Clearly, Orinda's City Council recent investment decisions bear witness to that observation. How on earth can the city council even entertain the idea of selling AAA rated bonds, from one of the best companies in the world, paying 5% in a 0% interest rate environment, maturing in less than 1000 days,

on the grounds that it conflicts with a newly formed policy ostensibly created to reduce risk?

It should be obvious to anyone of the meanest intelligence level that any currently available investment opportunity, invested using the new guidelines of the investment policy created in the spirit of "we have to DO something!" to show we are engaged, active leaders, will be an inferior alternative in terms of yield, safety, and risk.

By his own admission, Councilman Glazier is bewildered that any exceptions to "policy" might actually occur in real life that make perfect sense to everyone except the policy makers. That the city council accepted that faulty line of reasoning speaks volumes about their financial sophistication, analytical capabilities, and, most depressingly, their collective judgment.

Mark Twain commented that "A cat won't sit on a hot stove twice - nor a cold one, either."

Comforting to know that the collective wisdom of our elected cats will vigilantly and vigorously protect us from cold stoves.

Robert I. Recker Jr.

Orinda

Editor:

Lafayette's latest scheme to become a Charter City, like Oakland, Richmond and Vallejo is bad. Their plan will tax our children's inheritance.

The propaganda says the money is for roads and police. The reality is, they can spend the money any way they want. In the past, special interest groups always received priority.

I live near a city park that is closed to the public. It was custom rebuilt for a special interest group spending \$millions in taxpayer's money. It has many major flaws. The City of Lafayette's representatives said the bathroom holding tank wouldn't stink and would only need pumping once a year. It's pumped 4 loads a week. It stinks to high heaven when it's pumped. It was recently pumped on a Saturday when other people could be sickened by the stench. Other city representatives said the parking would be fine. It's a nightmare. I'm amazed no one's been killed.

In the past I tried to find out how much taxpayer subsidies this special interest group receives. Representatives of Lafayette's City Hall all said " We don't give them cash." How's that for evading the truth?

If you believe changing Lafayette to a Charter City so that it's easier to raise your taxes is good, you will probably think wiring money to Nigeria to receive a check for a million dollars is a good idea.

Bruce R. Peterson

Lafayette

Editor:

For those of us who haven't been following this issue closely, perhaps it would be helpful to put it into simpler terms. I think what I hear the people saying is that under the guise of "revitalizing the downtown", commercial interests have hijacked the democratic process to permit the construction of office buildings that will line their pockets. Apart from some additional tax revenue, there is little benefit to the citizens of Orinda. However, in exchange for the additional tax revenue, we stand to lose the quiet amenity of our downtown area and will be forced to endure more suffering in the form of traffic congestion and parking trouble.

If what I have said is true, then it sounds like business as usual in the USA. This rot permeates every level of our democracy. That is why the rest of us need to stand up and stop it now.

Sincerely,

William W. Ayer

Orinda

Editor:

I'm joining those who support leaf and dirt blowers. I've lived in Orinda over 15 years, and marvel at how popular they've become. So many neighbors use them, I feel left out- almost defenseless, you might say- so I bought my own. I love it so much, they'll have to pry it from my cold, dead hands!

To my fellow Orinda "blowers" - your arguments make such perfect sense! One can only stand back in awe of such brilliance, such erudition, such trenchant analyses underpinning your forceful defenses of the leaf blower!

I once worried about the way that toxic particles, settled on the ground, were blasted back into our neighborhood's atmosphere. I read that diesel exhaust, pesticides, animal fecal matter, brake lining dust, etc. can stay airborne for

up to two days. I considered the EPA's report on Particulate Matter causing cardiac and respiratory illnesses and deaths; I respected the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's admonition that "leaf blowers should not be used in residential areas."

However, Orinda's letter-writing blower advocates set me straight. One writer called blower-generated particulate/exhaust pollution a "Trojan horse." Others said "respiratory symptoms are nonsense" and "why don't we ban cars too." In the face of such irrefutable counterarguments, I'm irresistibly compelled to disregard the settled science! I also worried about the tranquility-shattering noise, disturbing and distracting literally scores of properties from just one blower. Noise creates stress, high blood pressure, and an inability to focus, relax, or concentrate. What about those at home trying to work, to unwind, to nap, to recover from illness, to enjoy their retired years, to raise children? I learned that over 100 cities in California restrict or ban the leaf blower, specifically because of how it disrupts.

However, thanks to the pro-blower letter-writers and their manifold, cogent counterpoints, my concerns were assuaged. For example:

"Give it a rest! We all make noise... fascists are behind a ban on leaf blowers... Mind your own business... Use earplugs... We're not home during the day...Go ask your neighbors to stop... I can't hear any where I live...What about barking dogs...Why should we have to change just to please you... Deal with it"

Who could ever whine about Orinda's noise pollution after hearing such pithy, enlightened rejoinders? Certainly not I...

Finally, I thought I had a right to enjoy my property, free from unnecessary, excessive noise. I expected that before some new, polluting activity was introduced into our community, it would first have to be city-approved.

However, my "misconceptions" have been forcefully realigned by voices of enlightenment:

"We're saving so much time and money... Blowers and wood chippers are necessary ... our budget for yardwork is limited...rakes and brooms are a great hardship ...we have a 7,000 square foot deck/driveway... it will cost us double and triple to give up the blower...we're too old/busy/sick/to revert to rakes and brooms...blowers represent progress...I don't need you dictating how I should do my gardening...it's your problem, not mine"

Now I get it: if leaf blower noise drives you crazy, just remember your neighbors are saving themselves time and money, and remind yourself to "deal with it!"

After all, it's only a problem six days a week, right? And just look at all these lovely, leaf-free yards!

Sincerely,

Peter G. Kendall

Orinda

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