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Published September 28th, 2011

Letters to the Editor

Editor:

I wanted to express my thanks and appreciation to Jennifer Russell, Director of Park and Recreation in Lafayette for listening to my concerns this spring over the fencing at Lower Community Fields in Lafayette. It became clear while watching baseball games there that the low fencing at this field was an accident waiting to happen. In addition, there was no shade protection for people watching the games. Ms. Russell was very receptive to my suggestions and quickly handed the project over to Greg Travers, Parks Maintenance. He was tasked with coming up with a solution that would make the ball fields safer and more comfortable. He was successful, and was able to do it for about \$2400. Great job!

Sincerely,
Traci Reilly
Lafayette

Editor:

Contrived Downtown Plan meetings at Orinda Elementary schools?

Here we go again. City officials seem to once again be trying to come up with ways to change Orinda's General Plan, with its current height limit of 35 feet.

The latest "public meetings" are now going to be held at the four local elementary schools in October and November. Apparently, the city will present only their downtown plan. They concur pretty much with a local group called "Orinda Vision" in their desire to go 55-70 feet high in structures, construct condos and new retail (thus displacing our independent, small businesses), raze city blocks, create underground parking, and build a transit hub with many residences over the BART parking lot (BART was stopped from putting in solar panels there). In addition, an extensive bridge from the Crossroads side to BART and the village is being considered.

This "Vision" has been proposed in many other communities. The results could be Tuscan style architecture with hanging greenery, where every city starts to look alike --- and retail often goes vacant. Most in the community do believe that beautification and updates are in order -- but perhaps not at the expense of our village character. A concerned group of residents formed SaveOrinda.com to inform others. -- and have proposed a ballot initiative, like Walnut Creek and Berkeley, to see if this is the direction our community wants.

Personally, I have been making positive presentations with my own ideas (see "Another Vision for Orinda", Lamorinda Weekly, April 27 and ""Local Resident Offers Compromise on Downtown Plan", The Orinda News, June). The proposals appear to have been well received.

However, when asked if alternatives for the downtown plan could be put forth at the upcoming elementary school meetings, the answer from the city seems to be no. A panel which could present various approaches is apparently not an option.

My proposals can be done as a community project, which is in keeping with the volunteer atmosphere of Orinda. The city indicates their choices are mandates, but is that so? The viewpoints from residents seem to be largely ignored. My ideas and story boards will be available for your purview at the meetings, even if I and others are not allowed to present. Please be prepared to ask questions at the meetings; otherwise our human scale downtown and our view of its surrounding hills could permanently disappear.

Ann O'Connell-Nye
Orinda

Lafayette Measure G

Editor:

As a 32 year resident of Lafayette, I have found it to be one of the most appealing cities in the nation. Wonderful weather, great schools and parks.

However, if you happen to live on one of the twenty-five percent of the roads that are crumbling, every trip to and from your home includes an asphalt obstacle course.

We have an opportunity to fix this problem. That is why I have joined a community-wide coalition of residents and organizations - including the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, the Lafayette Homeowners Council and the Lafayette Taxpayers Association - in supporting Measure G on the November ballot.

Measure G will fix the remaining failed public roads in 10 years or less at a cost of \$89 per year per house. The money raised will augment City funds dedicated to road repair. Lafayette has funds to keep all roads in good condition for many years after the tax ends.

Good roads raise property values, improve safety for all residents, reduce vehicle costs, and improves the quality of life for all of us in Lafayette.

Let's come together to solve a big remaining problem.

Please join me in voting Yes on Measure G!

George Burt
Lafayette

Dear Editor

I would like to encourage everyone in Lafayette to vote for measure G in this next election.

I am a resident of Lafayette (on one of the "failed" roads) and also a local real estate agent. I am keenly aware how the state of our roads affects our property values. When neighborhoods look good and well-maintained, people want to live here. Its as simple as that.

I know people think that our City, with the taxes we pay, ought to be able to keep up with the roads,. Unfortunately, because of how we became a city, Lafayette gets very little of our property tax money. Concerned citizens and members of the City Council came up with this proposal for a parcel tax combined with hefty contributions from the City's reserve funds. It is a plan whereby within 10 years we should be caught up and maintaining all of Lafayette's roads going forward.

Those of us on the "failed" roads pay the same taxes as other households in Lafayette. We have voted and pay for the school parcel taxes, even though many of our children have long since graduated and moved on. We do this because it is right to provide the best education possible for our children. It is only fair.

By the same token, it is right and fair that all of us in Lafayette have the benefit of good, safe roads on which to live and travel. Please vote for Measure G!

Thank you!

Pamela Halloran

Lafayette

Editor:

Yes On Measure G

When the City of Lafayette earlier recognized that the roads and drain facilities it inherited from the County in its 1968 "incorporation", were in serious failure modes, it appointed two committees of knowledgeable volunteers - one, to assess specific "work needs" - - the other, to develop and implement strategies for funding the work...i.e., Capital Project Assessment Committee (CPAC...and, Capital Projects Funding Committee (CPFC). These two functions essentially replicated the processes which business and industry employ to deal with ongoing corporate capital funding needs.

Since "roads" are a basic element of Lafayette's "founding universe" of Its limited governance function - the "3Ps" of Public Safety, Planning and Public Works...the CPAC and CPFC teams used comparable approaches to convey to voters, why it was in the personal interest of every property owner, to support a bond issue for restoring priority elements of these badly degraded elements of infrastructure.

CPAC categorized "needs" of "drains restoral" that would minimize any flooding or other hazardous water runoff conditions to town infrastructure or residence properties. In the case of roads - priorities included main central arteries - and, connecting-sections roads linking the town's various sub-communities. It was recognized that these were the high priorities which "willingness-to-pay studies" gave as most likely to be approved by voters.

The "campaign stories" conveying "needs rationales", concentrated on encouraging voters to recognize that their "individual self interests" were being fully accommodated in the bond tax. It was also noted that for those seeking personal investment opportunities, purchase of the tax exempt bonds served such purposes well (the bond interest applying nicely to paying the bond tax).

So it is, that the Lafayette Homeowners Council has been applying many of these same approaches to communicating how virtually every Lafayette

taxpayer will enjoy the benefits of "paying a little now" (to fix remaining roads) - as opposed, to paying a great deal more if the roads are allowed to

become totally degraded! And, as before - the Lafayette Taxpayer's Association is supporting the tax as it did the original Roads measure.

Don Lively

Lafayette

Editor:

I have revised figures for The Lafayette City Council's Party Palace's costs and debts. It took five weeks of persistence to get the numbers out of the Lafayette Administrative Services Director. \$11,485,634 in interest was not previously available. Lafayette's Party Palace's current total cost is \$65,485,634.

The Lafayette Redevelopment Agency has missed 21 payments accruing \$5,069,553 in interest for the last 5 years. The RDA currently owes the General fund \$6,806,453. This money could have been used for road repairs. But people are easily tricked into voting for road taxes.

In 2007 the tax proponents hid debt information in the full text of the measure that was not mailed in the voter information package. In 2011 the information about debt, is in the fine print of the full text of the measure again. Now the smiling tax proponents are trying harder to trick voters, with large print in their propaganda, denying debt. The \$28,000 taxpayer funded, Lafayette Vistas propaganda piece, leaves out little words like "up to", "may" and "the City Council desires to commit". If you fail to apply for the full text of measure G, you will never know the truth. The full text of Measure G and the ERU table are also available on the City's website. www.lovelafayette.com. News: Click on Special Municipal Election. The propagandists never mention these links. The debt that they deny, is written in the full text of Measure G, number 4. Specific Purposes. The amount each apartment unit and business establishment is gouged, is in the ERU table. If you read the full text carefully, you will find that the City Council is trying to remove road repairs from the General Fund's expenditures.

\$2,038,433 in interest payments went for the 1995 road bonds in the last 5 years.

I witnessed six people in the entire City

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