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**Letters to the Editor**

Share your thoughts with our community!

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only).

Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis.

email: [letters@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com)  
Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

**Join us at Aegis of Moraga for our "Ask The Expert" Seminar and Book Signing**

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Presented by Harold Lustig, CLU, ChFC

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*By the end of the session, you will learn about:*

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- Understanding long-term care and the coming economic crises
- Strategies to avoid spend down
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Editor:

Thank you to Cathy Tyson for her September 28 article *Zoning Issue Heading to Home Stretch*. In pursuit of a few clarifications, I contacted Lafayette City Manager Steve Falk by e-mail shortly after reading Cathy's article. Mr. Falk was gracious enough to respond to my questions promptly.

First, I asked *why* city staff failed to downgrade the Christmas Tree Lot from APO to LR-5 as directed by city council in April 2010. The application for the Terraces of Lafayette was not submitted until March 2011 -- city staff had 11 months to complete the downgrade. Mr. Falk shared the process was not completed due to staff restraints resulting from the workload of the Downtown Plan as well as staff reductions. Given the consistent and unwavering pressure to rezone from numerous Lafayette citizens, I am left to wonder why city staff did not manage to fit this important work in during those 11 months.

Lafayette belongs to the Association of Bay Area Governments. One of ABAG's many functions is to allocate the low-income housing needs distribution among Bay Area Cities. Lafayette's 2007-2014 ABAG low-income housing allocation is: 133 -- Very Low Income, 77 -- Low Income, 80 -- Moderate Income and 91 Above Moderate Income = 361 total units. Mr. Falk shared that the developer, O'Brien Land Company, plans to build the 315-unit rental apartment complex, Terraces of Lafayette, as affordable housing for moderate-income residents. If that happens, the Christmas Tree Lot project would more than fill the allocation of 80 moderate-income units. This project is completely out of character for the area. There are currently no apartments or high-density housing in Lafayette on the north side of highway 24 in the Pleasant Hill/Reliez corridor.

It's important to note the City of Lafayette is currently reviewing applications for 677 units in 8 different projects throughout Lafayette. Mr. Falk told me, if built, these total units would satisfy 142% of Lafayette's ABAG low-income allocation. Why is our city council so hell-bent on changing the character of our city? These ABAG allocations are strongly encouraged but NOT required.

Jean Follmer  
Lafayette

Editor:

Proper Use of MOFD Fund

On September 27th, the Moraga-Orinda Fire Board decided, 3 to 2, against purchasing a \$2 million commercial building to use 55% as their district headquarters and 45% as a speculative real estate investment. It was a good decision for a number of reasons; not the least being it prevented an inappropriate use of funds.

The building was going to be purchased with money in their "Special Use Fund" which is funded by the Orinda and Moraga Fire Flow Parcel Taxes. Fire Flow Tax money, at least from Orinda taxpayers, was never intended for this purpose. It was not what the voters were told it would be used for when they agreed to the almost \$100 per household tax back in 1997. (A full description of what was promised can be found on [www.FairForOrinda.org](http://www.FairForOrinda.org).)

However, the Moraga Building was just one of six options. Three of the five remaining options also utilize Fire Flow Tax money, just less of it, which is just as inappropriate.

The best option for the district to consolidate its administration and save on that consolidation would be the "zero cost" option of moving its administration into excess space in the Orinda City Hall. While Orinda would charge MOFD rent, that rent just goes around in a circle back to the taxpayers who ultimately end up paying the bills.

And if the district has any extra funds at all, and this includes the \$3 million it plans on using for rebuilding the District's least utilized station off of St. Stephens drive in Orinda, it should use them to pay down some of the over \$50 million in unfunded employee benefit liabilities it has accrued.

Steve Cohn  
Orinda

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Letters continued on next page

**Join our Public Forum**

If you have significant knowledge about an issue facing Lamorinda, or one of its communities, that requires more than the 350 words to which we must limit Letters to the Editor, don't despair! You can submit your letter to our Public Forum section. Just send your letter to [letters@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com) and let us know you'd like to be considered for the Public Forum. We will not accept Public Forum submissions regarding a current ballot measure or candidate for public office. Opinions expressed in Public Forum are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly.

**Trivia...**  
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Here are the answers to the questions from one popular Pub Trivia category: **Think Pink!**

1. Pink Cadillac
2. Pink Elephants
3. Pink Slip
4. In the Pink
5. Pink Ribbon
6. Pink Squirrel
7. Pink Ladies
8. Pink-Collar Worker
9. Pink Triangle