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Letters to the Editor

Editor:

Ken Tom was recognized at the April 24 meeting of the Moraga Town Council with a proclamation from the Red Cross. My husband and I attended that meeting, and we want to add our congratulations and appreciation to Ken for what he has done for our community.

A Moraga Citizen of the Year, Ken is devoted to community safety and emergency preparedness. He played a major role in the establishment of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training. He also is responsible for the formation of the Moraga Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness (MNEP) team, and is a member of the recently re-established Moraga Citizen Corps Council. He is the community liaison to the Red Cross and has aided in preparing and participating in community Disaster Drills. More recently he devoted his time to locate and confirm Red Cross Disaster Shelters for the Town of Moraga. He also set up the Red Cross training sessions for those who have volunteered to work in a shelter. Because of his accomplishments, our community is much better prepared in the event of earthquake, wildfire or any other disaster that should come our way.

Linda Borrelli
Moraga

Editor:

I would like to express my respectful opposition to the proposed BMX park in Lafayette. When we moved to Lafayette three years ago, one of the things we initially fell in love with was the picturesque hill with the swing on it. My wife and I had visions of one day enjoying the swing and hill with our children, who were infants at the time. In the ensuing years, we have also come to greatly enjoy nature walks on the path along the hill.

The BMX park strikes me as not just a serious waste of funds (\$350,000 and counting is nothing to scoff at), but more importantly, a benefit for a very small demographic (mostly boys, ages 10-15) at the expense of the other 95% of Lafayette's population who currently enjoys this section of the park; being asked to pick up the tab for a project that is directly against the interest of the other 95% of Lafayette's population only adds insult to injury. I would like to clarify that when I was a boy, I too was a BMX enthusiast. I grew up in a considerably less wealthy town, and I more than got by riding my bike on residential streets or in empty parking lots without any problems. My childhood friends and I certainly never expected our town to provide a BMX park for us. Furthermore, BMX biking is a "fad" - by the time we turned 16 and could drive a car, we put the bikes behind and were more interested in girls or our jobs.

In summary, the proposed project is a waste of taxpayer money that is directly against the interest of 95% of Lafayette's population, while the intended beneficiaries will only make use of the park for a few years before outgrowing the activity.

Sincerely,
Josh Norek
Lafayette

Editor:

I have always enjoyed being a CERT volunteer during our Moraga Triathlon, working to keep the roadways safe for bikers. But this year I experienced the Triathlon as an insider, as a biker, with my 17 year old granddaughter running the 5K and a terrific Junior Olympian 13 year old swimmer from Saklan school. As a result I saw and felt things I hadn't before.

For starters, I offer my cheers for the outstanding organization and planning provided by the Moraga Parks and Recreation Department, headed up by Jay Ingram and his two excellent assistants, Kimberly Nelson and Kim Burrows. This seventh Triathlon brought in 372 athletes, from 5-73 years old, from Lamorinda and beyond. Volunteers, wearing purple t-shirts, were everywhere helping, guiding, directing in multiple ways which helped keep us nervous athletes calm! Oodles of thanks to all of them.

But the most touching and surprising experience I had was feeling the support of the racers and the people of Moraga! Along the chilly foggy route between 8 and 9 a.m. were people cheering us on, like one dad sitting on the curb with his toddler, clapping as each rider approached. Then there was Morgan Parrill sitting in a lawn chair on a Camino Pablo corner with his Sunday paper and friendly shout-outs and waves. Most surprisingly though was a guy playing his bagpipe at the corner of JM and Canyon Road, the eery music energizing my legs. Passing athletes were also cheer leaders, like some of the women bikers who passed me with words like, "Keep it up!" "Good for you," etc. And the CERT "guards" and police were also great with their smiles and waves. Granddaughter Jessica on the running route through the Campolindo development echoed what I had experienced.

I have a deepened appreciation for what our town offers to its residents and beyond, for the excellence that is embedded in these opportunities, for the quality of Moraga's leadership and volunteers, and certainly for the

supportive positive energy that we share with others who have taken on a significant athletic challenge. Go Moraga!

Ellen Beans
Moraga

Editor:

Re: your coverage of the April 8th Lafayette City Council Meeting. The BMX dirt jumps proposed by Parks, Trails & Rec Department (PTRD) should never have become a "controversial" issue. If PTRD had established a methodology for polling all residents from youth to seniors; identified multiple recreational opportunities based on broad input; assessed their relative merits and flaws; prioritized based on cost, feasibility, and beneficial impact to the community (i.e., value); and then presented a plan; we would now enjoy consensus. Instead, good people with divergent opinions are divided thanks to PTRD's lack of process and due diligence. Since 2008, at the behest of BMX'ers who used the creekbed to create jumps, this project has been single-mindedly pursued by PTRD and approved by City Council at every step, despite skyrocketing costs and environmental challenges. (Our deserted, million-dollar roller rink and petanque court must have been similar pet projects.) Even after four+ years, PTRD has failed to provide a reasonable justification for BMX jumps aside from, "some people - we can't say exactly how many - think it's fun and don't want to drive elsewhere to do it." They have not quantified projected usage, or acknowledged the impact of more cars on already over-used residential streets. (Ironically, a Lafayette Traffic Calming initiative is currently underway in Burton Valley.) PTRD could not specify annual maintenance costs - anywhere from \$5,000 to \$70,000 - or assessed how ongoing BMX maintenance will worsen existing, underfunded facilities. As frustrating and disheartening as the current situation is, there is hope. The \$2M+ in developers' fees that is due to flow into PTRD's coffers present a unique opportunity and responsibility to create a lasting legacy that will serve the broader community, BMX'ers included. I urge both PTRD and City Council to abandon their current imprudent course and take a fresh, critical look at how best to spend those funds to bring about the greatest VALUE for all - including possibly acquiring a more suitable site or exploring a joint funding model for BMX jumps. It is not too late to set things right.

Respectfully,
Kathi Torres
Lafayette

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[back](#)

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