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Letters to the Editor

Editor:

We were interested to read Bill Brown's letter to the Lamorinda Weekly (October 22) wherein he categorically rejects the reasonable assertion that older Orindans living in large homes might someday want to downsize and remain in Orinda, calling this notion "a complete fabrication." We beg to differ.

Many older homeowners downsize for a variety of reasons. We know Orindans who made this decision and would have preferred to remain in Orinda but had to relocate elsewhere because of the lack of suitable housing alternatives. In fact, one of the signatories to this letter, a prominent Orinda volunteer who owned a large home here for many years, has just moved to a home in Moraga after a fruitless search for suitable replacement housing in Orinda.

One-third of Orindans are 65 or older. Mr. Brown says he knows several, but clearly he doesn't know them all. There are many, like the undersigned, who moved to Orinda for the same reasons he did and who want to continue to enjoy living here.

But we are realists who take a long view. We expect that at some point we-like many before us-may wish to downsize for any number of reasons: perhaps to free up equity in our current home, eliminate the burden of maintenance, and/or transfer our home to children who grew up here and who now have families of their own and wish to live here. A condominium or apartment downtown, within walking distance of restaurants and other retail services, public spaces and amenities including BART, would be an attractive alternative to moving elsewhere in Lamorinda or Walnut Creek.

No one is asking Mr. Brown or anyone he knows to move from their homes in the semi-rural areas of Orinda. They should stay in their homes as long as they wish and are able to do so, as will we. But Mr. Brown does not speak for us and others who, when we have outgrown our homes, may wish to remain in Orinda, specifically in a smaller and more conveniently located residence in a downtown with village character.

Bob and Karen Burt, Dennis Fay, Cassandra Forth, Mark and Carol Penskar, Mark Roberts, Tom Trowbridge
Orinda

Editor:

There goes Moraga, really. I am stunned. Personally, I was so accustomed to reading about these monster development plans year after year. Yet these plans never moved forward ... until now. If you have a sentimental bone in your body, do not turn right onto Moraga Way when you drive out of Safeway; you will be sickened to see what is coming. And truly do not turn right off Moraga Way onto Camino Ricardo! I am warning you.

If you enjoy our annual Pear Festival, you will be saddened to see all of these old pear trees being ripped out, and the ground being plowed. Seeing this actually happen after being numbed into thinking that it never would ... and, just how many additional homes are being built across from the Rheem Shopping Center? Can you even imagine? If you live on the other side of town, maybe you don't realize the scope of the new construction that is already underway. Only by seeing where the construction has started will you begin to realize the impact that this huge swell in population will have on our community. Personally, I am going to avoid the Camino Ricardo construction area; I have already seen enough to get this upset.

This rapid-fire development is nightmarish. Nothing could have prevented this because it was privately owned property? What happened to preserving our "semi-rural suburb?" I remember the outcry about OSH and how that one store would bring trucks and all sorts of additional traffic into Moraga. Wait until we see the impact of hundreds of new homes, and thousands added to our

population. Traffic, roads, our schools! What is the total number of new homes, residents, and vehicles coming soon to Moraga? Surely one of our incumbent Town Council Members know. While the number of new "units" might have been discussed, what is the estimated growth in population in the next 6 months, or one year, or however long it will take? Are the schools prepared for the influx of this many new students all at once?

My guess is that most residents of Moraga don't even know this is going on, but it will affect every citizen of Moraga. Think of the number of additional cars on the road ... think of the lines at the checkout at Safeway, or at our remaining post office. I think the majority of Moraga residents were lulled into believing that this would never happen, or who thought it might happen, but far in the future, and certainly not all at once. Now, there is nothing to stop it.

Jari Hazard
Moraga

(Editor's note: We received the following election-related letter too late for inclusion in our Oct. 22 issue. The writer subsequently requested that we publish it in this issue.)

Editor:

Eve Phillips and Dr. Linda Delehunt, two new names to select for Orinda City Council.

Why new councilmembers? Because the city approved the massive Eden Senior Housing building, constructed across from the fire station on Orinda Way. The structure is almost 50' high (35' is the limit); it covers the entire lot, all the way up the hill.

Many asked, "How did this building come about? Is this the type of development we can expect in the village?" Probably -- if the same people are re-elected.

I am an independent resident, aligned with no groups. I attended most of the downtown meetings for years. I noticed if residents speak out, the city demeans them as "disgruntled" and "uninformed". This would change with Eve and Linda at the helm.

Eve was valedictorian of her '95 Miramonte class, has engineering degrees from MIT with an MBA from Stanford, and is a technology entrepreneur. She returned to Orinda two years ago; she and her husband plan on having a family here.

Linda has her doctorate, is an educator/administrator, and worked in Sacramento. She and her husband raised two daughters in Orinda; she has volunteered extensively.

While beautification and updating are essential, Eve and Linda focus on keeping height and density issues within the law. They are consensus builders.

The city seems only interested in residents' opinions that agree with theirs (e.g. www.OrindaVision.com). With the Orinda Association no longer our watchdog of city government, residents formed www.SaveOrinda.com and later came www.OrindaWatch.com with extensive followings.

I do not support the following candidates: incumbents Dean Orr & Amy Worth plus Carlos Baltodano (formerly of the planning commission/PC) voted for the huge Eden project and voted down Montessori School. Bob Thompson declines to state his support of the 35' limit. View candidates' interviews on www.insideorinda.com. Google newspaper articles, especially the ones about private emails circulated by the PC chair, a vice-mayor & a developer to "educate" (coerce?) the PC to vote against Montessori and the recusal/apology to the community at a city council meeting.

Yes, please only vote for Eve and Linda.

Ann O'Connell-Nye
Orinda

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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