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## Letters to the Editor

Editor:

A Letter to the Editor titled "A Practical Housing Strategy for Orinda" appeared in the December 17 publication of Lamorinda Weekly. I have a different view.

Initially, the author states that Orinda is obliged to complete the Housing Element process. However, as has been discussed during recent City Council Meetings, this "obligation" isn't as clear cut as it would seem. Additionally, Alternative 3 of the Housing Element, which does reside within Orinda Village, was passionately argued against by the sensei and a multitude of young students of a martial arts studio located at 1 Orinda Way. Like many Orinda residents, I am also extremely concerned about the dire parking situation which will result from the loss of the existing parking lot at 27 Orinda Way (Rite Aid). There is scant street parking downtown and easy accessibility to this lot is absolutely essential for participation in public meetings and classes, as well as Park activities. Other serious concerns regarding all three Alternatives, including this one, have been expressed by council members and citizens.

I was surprised to see "village character" mentioned in a discussion of high-density market-rate housing that includes additional building height and higher floor area ratios. The Orinda General Plan defines village character as "a commercial area of relatively low density with a predominance of small-scale, low lying buildings of varying architectural styles (generally not exceeding two stories)..."

Yes, the City's Municipal Code does indeed discuss downtown development. This situation exists because a previous attempt to deviously include this subject in the Planning Process Review Task Force proceedings was met with such severe community opposition that City Staff was later specifically directed by a City council member to exclude any mention of a "Downtown Plan" in the prior Housing Element. The Municipal Code was a more stealth vehicle for this contentious subject. The eighteen thousand Orindans who will not financially profit from downtown development need to decide whether or not we want to subject ourselves to the urbanization of our semi-rural community and subject our neighbors to displacement by high-density housing.

Bruce London  
Orinda

Editor:

Can someone explain the 'logic' being used by our town staffers and members of the Moraga planning board to change zoning rules and principles of sound community planning in order to push an out of character housing project at the entrance to our town (Town Center Project)? Let me repeat what every affected neighbor is saying. The town is defying logic and trying to hammer a square peg into a round hole by greasing the deal. This project has created an unusual amount of local opposition and I hope wise minds prevail here. It's amazing that those of us who oppose this project and want it stopped before it goes any further have to basically sue the town to get them to pay attention. There's something very wrong with this picture. Do any of the Planning committee members live in the area that will be impacted by the project? Do the paid staffers live in the Moraga? Will any of these people be impacted? Is it simply money that's driving this project or is there something more sinister behind this? Those of us in opposition need to stand united and take every possible action to stop or better, relocate this project to another part of Moraga where it will have less visual and environmental impact.

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Moraga

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