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## Letters to the Editor

Editor:

In disbelief, I read the article, "The Chickens Are Coming" in the Lamorinda Weekly. Having lived on a farm with chickens when I was young, I thought the article was a spoof. How could housing chickens in our small yards be good for the chickens and how would noise, odor, flies, vermin be contained in these small yards without invading the space of neighbors.

I attended the Moraga Planning Commission meeting regarding allowing and keeping chickens and bees in residential neighborhoods. Except for my comments, quality of life and environment was not addressed. The speakers conveyed an attitude of entitlement, some already raising bees and chickens unlawfully on their property. The issue of entitlement for those owning land was a double surprise to me because there have been several attempts over the 40 years I have lived in Moraga to limit/regulate projects which increase noise, traffic and endanger the environment.

A proposed ordinance was developed by town staff with input from a small group of volunteers. While the proposal lists some general standards, there is no requirement for permits or the installation of sustainable chicken coops; no metrics for measuring nuisance levels of noise, odor, flies, pests and vermin; and no provisions for compliance with measurable standards. If passed, the ordinance would allow anyone to purchase chickens and neighbors would be left to rely on chicken owners' goodwill, competence and attention to cleanliness in caring for their chickens. There is no provision for how and by whom the regulations would be enforced and how much it would cost. Perhaps this issue has not been well enough publicized. This is the first I have heard of a ground swell of enthusiasm for chickens. There is a reason why the current ordinance for housing farm animals requires one acre of land to raise chickens. The multiple nuisance factors regarding chickens in a small residential yard and the invasion of space of neighbors living in close proximity argue for keeping chickens/farm animals on the farm. If chickens would be allowed in our neighborhoods, their housing would have to be well thought through, well regulated and have enforceable repercussions.

DeEtta Kay Reynolds  
Moraga

Editor:

It's that time of year (Sept 19-20) when 100,000 folks will enjoy the best of art, wine, music and other goodies at the 20th Lafayette Art & Wine Festival. Once the dust settles at 6 p.m. on the 20th, Lafayette and its 23,000 residents will revert to their unique combination of communion with nature, honest personal endeavor and strong commitment to family and friends.

This "town" (it's really not a city) is the gem of the East Bay with its semi-rural ambiance, its commitment to quality of life and its impressive array of engaged citizens. Within my group of Lafayette friends, I count friends in local government for many years; others who have helped local schools for years with swimming and volleyball; neighbors with their kids attending the great schools here and involved in local swimming and/or soccer; finally those friends, who had so much to do with setting up the Nextdoor blog and other communication methods that so many of us use today or our daily needs and chat.

Their friendship and local contributions are two major reasons why I have lived here for years with nary a regret. While acknowledging the march of progress, I am passionate about retaining the quaint charisma of our lovely little town. That's why my friends and I have banded together to form "Save Lafayette," a not-for-profit organization seeking to keep our residents aware of activities in the city and to decide for themselves, as Lafayette voters, how they want this little gem of a town to protect its semi-rural character, great schools and strong community for their children and future generations.

We will be holding various events in the coming weeks, including volunteering for the festival and manning our own festival booth just in front of the Bank of the West. Please come by to meet us and learn more about our grass-roots organization - we would love to meet you!

Michael Griffiths  
Lafayette

Editor:

Kudos to the Lamorinda Weekly (August 26 issue) for its in-depth coverage of real-estate projects in Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda.

Each one of these projects - Deer Hill in Lafayette, Moraga Center Homes in Moraga, and the Wilder subdivision in Orinda - is associated with controversy.

Why are these projects even being considered during a time of extreme drought? On June 16, the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) sent a letter to its customers, telling them that household water use would be limited to 1,000 gallons per day. Excessive use would be penalized. EBMUD provides water to Lamorinda residents and businesses.

Lamorinda is essentially full. It has no space for additional development. More development means overcrowded schools, a loss of a semi-rural environment, less recreational space, more polluted air, more traffic, and less downtown parking.

It's time that elected officials in Lamorinda showed courage by placing a moratorium on new construction. Specifically, there should be a ban on new water hook-ups in Lamorinda.

All new development projects ought to go to voters - for approval or rejection - of more development. Lamorinda's elected officials appear to be afraid of voters' sentiments.

Local city councils must be pressured into preserving, not desecrating, the unique and cherished Lamorinda environment.

Richard S. Colman  
Orinda

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

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