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## Moraga to consider Gun Violence Prevention ordinances

By *Sophie Braccini*

During its 2017 goal setting session, the Moraga Town Council decided to consider ordinances aimed at protecting the population from gun violence.

A group of Moraga residents have asked that two local laws be considered: One to enforce safe storage of firearms, and one to prohibit firearm home dealers to be located near schools or in residential neighborhoods.

It took community organizing and political lobbying for Allison Anderman to get this topic on the agenda of the town council for discussion, and initial skepticism was not going to stop her. A mother of two young children living in Moraga, Anderman is a lawyer working with the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, a nonprofit that was formed in the wake of the 1993 101 California St. shooting in San Francisco. Anderman explains that she and her followers are not trying to stop people from owning guns, a right protected by the Second Amendment to the U.S. constitution, but to propose local ordinances that enforce responsible ownership of guns in order to prevent tragedy. She said that 100 jurisdictions have implemented such local ordinances, including Tiburon, Palm Springs, San Francisco and Oakland. Lafayette that was one of the pioneers of such an ordinance over 20 years ago.

Moraga Police Chief Jon King indicated that in his opinion state laws were sufficient and that his concern was that a local ordinance would not be enforceable. He confirmed that there was a registered gun dealer in a Moraga home, but that to his knowledge that person was repairing and not selling weapons. Anderman later commented that she had been surprised to see that someone near a school operated such a business. To King's comment that more education would be more efficient than new ordinances, she cited mandatory seat belts had to become law in order to make a difference for people's safety.

Anderman had talked to candidates for the council at the end of 2016 and had been advised to garner as much community support as possible and propose the topic at the goal setting session on Jan. 26. She presented her case, now backed up by 110 Moraga supporters, explaining that she and the Law Center would advise the town for free. Several people also talked in favor of the passage of ordinances, including Doris Chen, who was raised in Moraga and recalled the 1991 tragedy when one of her younger classmates, a 13-year-old boy, was accidentally killed by one of his friends who wanted to show him a gun his father owned, and that had not been safely stored.

Anderman also produced statistics showing that the passage of such local laws prevents teen suicides and accidental deaths by firearms.

Anne Grodin was Lafayette's mayor in 1993-94 when gun sale regulation was approved. She remembers the emotional context at the time. The discussion took place in the months that followed the 101 California St. shooting. A gun shop had opened where Trader Joe's is now located, with a huge stuffed bear in the windows, attracting kids that were coming to the nearby Baskin Robbins. Grodin remembers a young Lafayette mother who was among the victims of the 101 California shooting.

"Her husband came to meetings with their infant in a backpack," remembers Grodin, "It was a tumultuous time and our residents wanted protection."

Lafayette now requires a land-use permit reviewed by the planning commission to be authorized to sell firearms. The city also created zoning areas where gun sales are permitted and not permitted.

Council members did not agree to put the passage of the two ordinances as a goal in 2017, but to make its consideration one of the priorities, looking at what Lafayette passed in order to save staff time.

The goals and priorities will be discussed at the Feb. 8 council meeting.

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