

Letters to the Editor

Lafayette Planning Commission rules

I am responding to your article regarding the Lafayette City Council serving as the Planning Commission due to the fact that the Planning Commission no longer has a quorum in response to the new conflict of interest rules passed by the City Council.

The new rules require that all Planning Commission and Design Review Board members resign if they have, or any family members or working colleagues have, business in the city of Lafayette. Previously, and in accordance with state law, these members were required to recuse themselves as opposed to resign if they found themselves in this situation.

The City Council refused to apply the new conflict regulations to themselves. But now that they are sitting as the Planning Commission and these new rules apply to the Planning Commission shouldn't the rules apply to them as well? I know so and as a result resignations should be forthcoming.

As the saying goes, what's good for the goose is good for the gander.

Patricia Curtin
Lafayette

Orinda Library Parcel Tax, Measure J

My family is a family of readers. When my family of five moved to Orinda eight years ago, one of our favorite family community activities was visiting the Orinda library. My kids were 1, 3 and 5 when we first moved to Orinda, and back then, we spent many afternoons sitting in the children's section of the library, reading books. As my kids have gotten older, we don't have quite as much time to sit in

the library reading books, but my kids relish the opportunity to stop by the library and check out books. When the summer reading program begins every year, my kids beg to sign up for the reading program and eagerly complete their summer reading. Personally, I love perusing the New Releases at the library whenever I can, and loading up on new books to read. My family of five has been known to stop by the library on any given weekend and check out a large stack of books for all of us to enjoy.

Our Orinda library benefits the Orinda community in so many ways. It provides a safe space for school-aged children and teens to meet after school to do homework, research class assignments, or just read for pleasure. It provides meeting spaces for local community volunteers. It also offers an indoor activity space for families with young children to encourage book exploration.

I strongly support the proposed Orinda library parcel tax, Measure J. The tax will only assess residents an additional tax of \$30 per year. In exchange, the library will be able to remain open 7 days a week. Measure J funds can only be used for the library, extending library hours from 35 hours per week (which is what the county provides) to 60 hours a week. Please join me in voting Yes on Measure J on the June ballot.

Hillary Weiner

Orinda

Vice President, Orinda School Board of Trustees

PG&E work on St. Mary's Road

At the most recent City Council meeting, PG&E discussed this summer's large gas pipeline replacement project along St. Mary's Road. The project is

a Capacity project, according to PG&E, which means the width of the underground pipeline will be widened from 4 inches to 8 or 12 inches in order to serve more customers. It's a large and expensive project that will cause traffic nightmares, so why is this PG&E's first priority? There are much more urgent pipeline safety concerns in our community.

Ten years ago Lafayette residents reported the 4-foot exposed pipeline near Beechwood Drive to PG&E, yet the pipeline remains exposed to corrosive elements to this day. By law, PG&E should have all segments of pipeline under at least 36-inches of soil. Also, Lafayette has no automated or remote shut-off valves which would lessen fire, property damage, or injuries in the case of accidents. Pipeline experts tell us internal "pig" inspections are the best safety practice, however these have never been conducted in Lafayette, nor are they planned for in the near future.

So, what's in the ground behind our yards and in our parks? PG&E admitted in the City Council meeting that their "critical infrastructure" of pipeline along St. Marys Rd was installed in 1952 "before modern radiography was used to inspect welds" and that welding inspection was "only visual." We know from earlier PG&E reports that other pipelines are even older, and this is the exact problem that resulted in the explosion in San Bruno and killed eight people.

Think about that for a moment: PG&E knows the Lafayette pipelines were installed with outdated materials and techniques, have uninspected welds, can't be shut off automatically, wind through busy neighborhoods, lie exposed above ground, and won't be internally inspected. And their top two pri-

orities in our community is to increase service capacity for Moraga and to cut down 500 trees in Lafayette and Briones Park?

We asked these questions, and PG&E's inability to answer the simplest of questions as to project safety prioritization shines a bright light on the flawed and reckless safety decisions made by their risk management group. Every single Lafayette resident is affected by pipeline safety. It is the responsibility of each resident to hold our utility and elected officials accountable. A PG&E Open House to promote the tree removal maintenance program to residents is an unnecessary distraction from the true safety issues that need to be revealed and discussed.

We request the City Council to discuss this issue as an official agenda item during the next City Council Meeting, consider recalling this unnecessary and destructive Tree Cutting Agreement which was made under the false pretense of urgent safety, and force PG&E to address the true safety risks that lie beneath our feet. We ask City Council to stop defending PG&E now and get on the residents' side of this matter of community safety. Michael and Gina Dawson
Lafayette

No on Storm Drain Fee

Have you ever played Jenga? You know, the game where you pull blocks out from the bottom of a stack of other blocks, and hope like heck that it doesn't fall down. If it does ... you lose ... and you might have to take a shot or something.

This is exactly how our state and local tax increases work (but without the shots). Since we voters need to approve them, politicians must sell us on the need and

assure us that the money won't be spent elsewhere. As so they tell us, "This money can only be spent for Purpose X." Why? Because it's what we want to hear. It's a sales tactic ... and it works!

But is it the truth? Technically, yes - but it's like Jenga. The blocks at the top of the stack are the "new guaranteed Purpose X tax money" we just voted for. But the blocks at the bottom are the existing budget for Purpose X with no such guarantee. What happens to these blocks? Well ... they get pulled out, of course, because that's how the game is played. But instead of putting them back on top of the stack, they get used elsewhere. So what taxpayers get left with is Purpose X sitting on top of a wobbly stack of underfunding - which is exactly where we started. And do we really want our taxes to be guaranteed for any specific purpose? In a perfect world - probably not. Our politicians would then be able to use our money for it's highest value use and not get locked into "emergency funding problems" that seem to be arising every week. This, however, would require a considerable amount of trust in those who spend our tax money ... and I most certainly am not going to sell you that bridge.

Some of you probably remember when the California Lottery came along, which is a sugar coated tax on the poor. They promised us that those proceeds could not be used for anything other than funding our schools. Technically, they told us the truth, but then pilfered all of the "unguaranteed money" from our schools instead. Now we have this Storm Drain Fee in Moraga with the same "guarantee." I just love games ... don't you?
Doug Home
Moraga

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No on L

NO Deer Hill Development!

In 2015, the City of Lafayette denied our right to vote on the Homes at Deer Hill project. In February 2018, the Court determined that the City violated state law and ordered the referendum to be put on the ballot.



Don't Increase Traffic Congestion!

- ▶ Don't add **1,224** daily car trips to an already gridlocked intersection!
- ▶ Already 40,000 daily car trips daily on Pleasant Hill Road (plus 4% more annual growth) is **ENOUGH!**



Don't Build a Toxic Tot Lot/Sports Field

- ▶ Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) monitoring data shows the Deer Hill site reaches **UNHEALTHY AIR POLLUTION LEVELS FOR CHILDREN.**
- ▶ **Children playing sports will breathe up to 4 million dangerous particles a minute, which can cause "respiratory and cardiovascular disease, various cancers and developmental disorders. It would be irresponsible to lure unsuspecting parents and children to breathe the hazardous air at this site especially under the guise of a safe location for healthful activity."** - James Leach (author of The Sustainable Way, recipient of the City of Lafayette 2017 Environmental Award of Excellence), letter and presentation to City Council, April 2, 2018.*
- ▶ Deer Hill site "not viable", **proposed 2 other sites on city/school district land** - School Board Fields Committee Member letter to City Council April 23, 2018*

* See www.SaveLafayette.org for more complete information.



"The Terraces" Apartments are Effectively Dead

- ▶ The EIR identified 13 adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated.
- ▶ The apartments **HAVE NEVER** been approved by the City.
- ▶ The apartments can be **DENIED** by the City.
- ▶ Voters can always reject the apartments by referendum and/or it can be denied by litigation.



Keep Lafayette Semi-Rural

- ▶ Support Citizens' top priority - **OPEN SPACE.**
- ▶ Keep Mt. Diablo views accessible.

**Lafayette Can Do Better...
Our Families
Deserve Better!**

VOTE NO on L!

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An organization of concerned citizens to preserve Lafayette's quality of life. Tax ID#: C3814447