



Independent, locally owned and operated!

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published March 31st, 2021

Lamorinda councils hold annual tri-city meeting

By Vera Kochan

In what can be described as a Lamorinda "State of the Union Address," council members and staff from Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda held a special Zoom meeting March 25 to keep each other and residents up-to-date on tri-city news. Also joining the meeting were state Sen. Steven Glazer, Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan and Townsend Public Affairs State Capitol Director Casey Elliott.

Glazer kicked off the informative meeting with discussions regarding proposed legislation while stressing the importance of having good communication with everyone. Some of the legislation includes the state's extended tenant eviction moratorium and billions of dollars in rent relief; \$2 billion in grants to help businesses stay afloat during COVID; the state's own version of the federal stimulus relief payments; \$6 billion to help reopen schools; wildfire prevention, affordable housing, and economic recovery; proposed legislation to open training camps for forestry management to prevent wildfires; created a path for former law offenders to enter into the workforce; legislation to deal with short-term rentals that violate local ordinances; creating a mental health bill that increases funding, has better oversight and creates reforms; and the Broadband For All initiative that makes sure everyone has access to the internet.

Bauer-Kahan discussed the importance of maintaining funding to organizations like The Food Bank during COVID. California is working hard to keep small businesses open and she reminded owners to contact either herself or Glazer if they needed help navigating through the pandemic - Bauer-Kahan can be reached at (925) 328-1515 and Glazer at (925) 258-1176). Other legislative news included: introducing AB10 to force schools to reopen; working with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and Caltrans toward continued fire mitigation efforts; hold utilities accountable through AB 21 for necessary vegetation management work; creating local ordinances that require investor-owned utilities to contact MOFD if they are coming into a city for fire mitigation burns; introducing a Hate Crimes bill that would raise penalties for anyone who makes a terrorist threat on a protected class of people; and working on AB 988 - where if anyone needs mental health assistance they can call 988 (much like calling 911).

Elliott gave an overview of the American Rescue Plan Act (COVID Relief Funds). On March 11, President Biden signed the Plan into law, which contains \$1.9 trillion in funding to help accelerate economic recovery from COVID and represents the sixth federal relief package since the pandemic began. It provides assistance for individuals in the form of stimulus checks; Pandemic Unemployment Compensation; rental assistance; earned income credit; and expanded child tax credit. Assistance for businesses have included expanded eligibility for PPP; assistance for restaurants; additional Economic Injury Disaster Assistance Loans; and modifications to the Shuttered Venue Grant Program.

Lamorinda's town and city managers gave a brief discussion on how each municipality was dealing with business assistance programs during COVID. Both Lafayette and Orinda have significantly relaxed regulations in order to ease the burden for businesses struggling to stay afloat during the pandemic, as well as keeping a receptive line of communication as to the owners' needs. Moraga has made available a Small Business Grant Program that assists small businesses to operate during COVID. To date the town has distributed 10 grants totaling \$2,000 each.

The final portion of the meeting was devoted to Lamorinda's Advanced Planning Initiatives and any major current development projects. Lafayette has been busy with its General Plan update and response to AB 2923, which affects zoning requirements. City leaders created an advisory committee and held public meetings to provide input to city staff. The city continues to be involved in community engagement through PlanLafayette.org; EngagementHQ; social media; Weekly Roundup; Lafayette Vistas; direct mailings; and videos. Future visions for Lafayette include workshops; a virtual walking tour; and weekly activities on EngagementHQ. There are four major developments in the works, in addition to four major housing entitlement projects and four major housing projects under construction.

Moraga has recently finished its long awaited Moraga Center Specific Plan Implementation Project and Development Update. First adopted in 2010, it allows for a mixed-use development in the heart of town with retail and entertainment; office space; a boutique hotel; assisted living/congregate care facility; and varying degrees of residential housing. MCSP also used an advisory committee for input in such matters as the Moraga Ranch Overlay District; shared parking; a town square; streets, trails and bridges; and creek and channel setbacks. Moraga's new housing includes the Bellavista development and Los Encinos (which is currently under construction). The Moraga Country Club has plans for an expansion which includes a facility update, a new fitness facility and additional new amenities for its members.

Orinda's growth will come in the form of the ConnectOrinda Plan with the main objectives being to connect the two sides of downtown; support future pedestrian access along San Pablo Creek; preserve Orinda's unique sense of space; produce grant-eligible projects that can be funded; beautify downtown; activate the library terraces; and build a consensus for the final plan through community engagement. There is also the Downtown Orinda Precise Plan which began in early 2020. It too involves public input on issues regarding downtown commercial; downtown office and public areas excluding the BART station. Major Projects Update includes the Wilder subdivision; J & J Ranch subdivision along with the Moraga Adobe; The Station Project of retail and office space; and a Senior Housing Project.

All in all, the Lamorinda area has not remained dormant during the past year of the pandemic, but has continued to conduct government almost in a business-as-usual manner.

Reach the reporter at: vera@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA