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Letters to the editor

Drought concerns regarding commercial development

Poor judgment has become the hallmark of the Orinda City Council. The Lamorinda Weekly (Sept. 29, 2021) reported that a "retail development named 'The Station' is scheduled to break ground this fall."

The Station will be located at 25A Orinda Way, across the street from the Orinda Public Library.

Currently, Orinda (and the rest of California) is experiencing a severe drought. This is not the time to permit more commercial development in Orinda, which will add to city's increased use of water.

Orinda is already too crowded as anyone who, during rush hour, drives on Camino Pablo in the neighborhood of BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit).

The Weekly reported that Orinda City Council member, Nick Kosla, "expressed gratitude to the developer for bringing Orinda its first commercial project in decades." Mr. Kosla ought to be more concerned about the well-being of the entire Orinda community. Apparently, Mr. Kosla believes that commercial development is more important than having adequate water supplies during a drought.

Let's hope that Orinda's voters, at the next city council election, will remember the council's lack of wisdom in supporting development during a time of drought.

Richard Colman

Orinda

Orinda Council considers raising height limit

The Orinda City Council will be considering whether to raise the height limit downtown from 35 to 55 feet. Why?

What do the consultants say? One consultant said the required additional housing could be accommodated with the existing height limit. I have a non-public email from our Planning Director, Mr. Buckley, saying that. (I obtained it via a public records act request.) Another consultant said a higher height limit would make development more likely.

Also, consider bias. The proposal comes from the planning staff. Planners want something to plan, they don't preserve. If they wanted to preserve, they would not become planners. There are two city council members on the council's downtown planning subcommittee. One, Nick Kosla, earns his living as a consultant to developers. <https://www.koslaventures.com/> The other, Inga Miller, is a very nice person. If she has ever pushed back on a staff proposal, I don't recall any such occasion. Link to feasibility study: <https://cityoforinda.app.box.com/v/DPPFeasibilityMemo>

com/v/DPPFeasibilityMemo

There was also a discussion at a joint council and planning commission meeting on Nov. 19, 2020. Link to staff report for that meeting: [https://orindaca.iqm2.com/Citizens/FileOpen.aspx?Type=](https://orindaca.iqm2.com/Citizens/FileOpen.aspx?Type=1&ID=1792&Inline=True)

1&ID=1792&Inline=True

Link to video of that meeting: [https://orindaca.iqm2.com/Citizens/SplitView.aspx?](https://orindaca.iqm2.com/Citizens/SplitView.aspx?Mode=Video&MeetingID=1910&Format=Minutes)

Mode=Video&MeetingID=1910&Format=Minutes

Bear in mind, please, that the proposed redevelopment will mean the destruction and loss of our local businesses. The buildings they occupy will be demolished, and replaced with new, taller buildings. The livelihoods of the owners and employees of those businesses will be destroyed. They will not be able to afford higher rents in the new developments, and even if they were otherwise able to return, they would have no income during the years between the start of demolition and the completion of the new buildings.

If you object to destroying our local businesses and to raising the height limit, send an email to the city clerk, Sheri Smith ssmith@cityoforinda.org. In the subject line write "I object to raising the height limit" in the body of the email, write whatever you want. The existing businesses and height limit will only be preserved if enough residents can persuade three council members.

Nick Waranoff

Orinda

Orinda

Have a say in ARPA funding

Lafayette property and business owners and residents, the City of Lafayette will receive \$6.372 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. Some of the funds can be used for small businesses and to make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure. You can have a say in how your tax money is used.

I would advocate approving funds for enhancing the East End District, if even cosmetically, for the businesses from First Street to Pleasant Hill Road on Mt. Diablo Boulevard by:

1. Resurrecting the failed irrigation system so businesses can enhance their properties to attract customers;
2. Enhancing the East End District with maintenance of the existing landscaping, pruning trees, fixing uneven sidewalks and lighting failures;
3. Repainting the center turn lane, bicycle lanes and parking lines; and
4. Installing a HAWK light system for the crosswalk at Hampton Road and Mt. Diablo Boulevard with new colored pavers like Brown Ave.

If you agree and have other recommendations, contact the Mayor and City Council directly at

jrobins@ci.lafayette.ca.us or Tom Myers, Economic Development Manager at TMyers@ci.lafayette.ca.us. Mr. Myers was hired by the City to gather information from the community to help make recommendations to the City Council on how best to spend the funds and will be sending out a postcard survey this month. Be sure to complete it before the deadline.

Dawn Eames
Moraga,
(Lafayette property owner)

A tribute to Kenny

A beautiful tribute book honoring Kenny Murikami of Moraga Garden Center, featuring 62 Lamorinda gardens Kenny has been instrumental in, will be available Oct. 16. Kenny will receive all the profits. The 100-page softcover book is \$50 and can be purchased at Moraga Ace Hardware/Across the Way, Moraga Garden Center (until Oct. 31), McDonnel Nursery, Orchard Nursery/Lazy K, Orinda Books, and Outdoor Supply Hardware. There will be an opportunity to make an additional retirement honorarium donation to Kenny at point of purchase for those that so desire. This is a limited run of 200 books and over half have already been reserved; if you wish to reserve a book notify Bobbie Preston: barbarampreston@comcast.net and indicate where you plan to pick up your book.

Bobbie Preston
Moraga

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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