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Letters to the Editor

Dollar Tree

Editor:

Last Monday, I attended the town planning commission's meeting discussing Dollar Tree's proposal to open a store in the Rheem Shopping Center. My general impression was that the planning commissioner, Lori Salamack, was going out of her way to appease Dollar Tree (and its landlord, Kimco). The meeting concluded with a conditional approval of Dollar Tree's application - despite overwhelming dissent from the community.

Moraga citizens primarily are concerned that Dollar Tree will: 1) diminish the value of their homes, and 2) create a health hazard for its children and residents. These concerns are serious. They are valid. They are well supported.

The overwhelming majority of attendees at Monday's meeting believe that opening a Dollar Tree will harm the value of their homes. One of the commissioners explained that the town would take protective measures and enact special provisions to make sure that the "unsightly" retailer adhere to the town's standards of quality. That the commission has to enact special restrictions to ensure that the Dollar Tree does not conform to its usual "eyesore" standards makes it clear that there is a perception problem for this retailer. Perception matters in real estate - and Dollar Tree is perceived as a low-end, dump of a retailer. Statistics confirm that Dollar Tree is not a store associated with affluent communities. In fact, Moraga median home values are in the very top percentile of the 287 Dollar Tree locations in California. During the meeting, a commissioner testified that there is no evidence that Dollar Tree would harm Moraga home values-however, that commissioner has not bothered to look at the evidence. The estimated paltry sum of \$13,000 in tax revenues that Dollar Tree would contribute to the town coffers would not offset the economic harm and negative perception associated with this store.

Second, a well-prepared resident presented a lengthy list of violations committed by Dollar Tree. There is an indisputable history of neglect by Dollar Tree. Dollar Tree has sold poisonous toys to children; Dollar Tree has recalled hundreds of thousands of cadmium based jewelry toys; Dollar Tree has violated health codes; and Dollar Tree will continue its pattern of seeking profit at the expense of the public. Dollar Tree consistently ranks at the bottom of consumer protection agency rankings and has a disgraceful history of indifference to its customers. One of the few voices of support for Dollar Tree came from Rheem's landlord, Kimco. This is the landlord that has jacked up rent on two successful locally owned retailers-Loard's Ice Cream and Lori's Swim Shop-forcing them to move to Safeway's shopping center. I fail to see why Kimco's opinion should have any weight when it has demonstrated that it is focused on its own profits and not interested in furthering the interests of the community. It is in everybody's interest to support our local businesses and shop in Moraga's establishments as much as possible. The local, home-grown stores who know my family and children are an important part of the neighborhood, of the fabric of Moraga. We don't need a sub-par national chain - with a long history of product recalls - interfering with what we have here.

Sincerely,
Jonathan Levy
Moraga

Editor:

So, the recent influx of discount retailers is trying to make a further stakehold in our town of Moraga. The holy grail tax of revenues from these retailers that we are opening our empty storefronts to are not to suit our own needs, but are from commuters from surrounding areas, such as Oakland. So much for minimizing traffic and taking care of our own needs, eh? On the daily needs front, Safeway has us, and we must go out of town to seek alternatives, ourselves. Our beloved Longs has gone glittery and gaudy on the outside, without any concern of what we seek for on the inside.

What are we Moragans doing about it? What is the Town Council doing about it? Are they enabling the planning commissioners to act and not follow Salamack's/developer's wishes? Is the Planning Commission without teeth to act in the best interest of its citizens? They express concern, but turn their heads in unison, and act as puppets. Is Moraga doing enough to protect its vanishing quality of life and bucolic atmosphere? Gaudy signs, empty storefronts, declining revenues, declining home values, and we want to approve more commercial/high density housing? Where is the logic here? Where is the basic common sense?

We are fooling ourselves, burying our heads in the sand, and letting others control our destiny.

We can't even take care of what we have - try taking a walk along Camino Ricardo or Woodside without encountering trash, broken tvs and recliners, and overgrown 'landscaping' encroaching onto the cracked sidewalks.

No longer proud to be a Moragan,
Ferenc Kovac
Moraga

Editor:

Rheem does not need a Dollar store, what it needs is a decent grocery store that would challenge our Moraga Safeway. Trader Joe's comes to mind, with St Mary's college nearby, it would seem to be a good fit. Anywhere Trader Joe's has opened a store it brings more business.
The only way I can think of pushing for it is to go to their website, click on "About Us" and go to "Contact Trader Joe's", they have a drop down option for "Location Request."

DaniŠle L. Meilhan
Moraga

MOFD Candidates

Editor:

John Wyro, Director of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District from Division 4, has a demonstrated record of outstanding service since our fire district was formed in 1997. His experience with the fire service began even before the merger, when Orinda was an underserved unit of Con Fire.

As a member of the Board of Directors, he has been very well aware of the fiscal issues facing the fire district and our community. He has been at the forefront of the efforts to reform the pension system. In the face of falling tax revenues, he and the board have succeeded in retaining a balanced budget while maintaining full fire and medical services for our community.

I have had the dubious opportunity to experience emergency medical services both before and since the formation of MOFD, and I can state unequivocally that there is no comparison. Orinda was able to acquire paramedics trained and equipped to provide advanced life support, as well as modern ambulances and fire engines, only after the separation from Con Fire and merger with Moraga.

John Wyro played a large part in MOFD's development and its outstanding reputation today. When re-elected, he will serve as next year's president of the MOFD Board of Directors. He has that combination of experience, fine judgment and the ability to get things done that mark the ideal candidate for that position, and I urge the voters of Division 4 to re-elect him.

Gene Gottfried, M.D.
Orinda

Editor:

I support Bob Jungbluth for Moraga-Orinda Fire District Director. MOFD needs change and it needs a director who will strongly represent Orinda and its tax payers' interests. Orinda pays 65% of MOFD's tax revenue but only holds 2 of the board's 5 seats.

Does this make a difference? Yes it does. Right now Orinda is subsidizing Moraga with about \$1 million in the funding of MOFD. This has been going on since the district was formed. The MOFD board has contended that this was equitable because firefighters from Moraga serve Orinda with no reciprocal service. Recent analysis of district operations has determined that this is not so.

Orinda is served by 11 of the district's 19 firefighters. For this it should be paying 58% of the district's \$17.9 million of property tax revenue, or \$10.4 million. Instead it is paying \$11.5 million. Orinda is subsidizing Moraga by over \$1 million this year; it has been subsidizing Moraga since the inception of MOFD; and it is projected to continue to subsidize it by ever increasing amounts into the foreseeable future. This subsidy could triple by the time Wilder is fully built.

I believe that Bob Jungbluth will stand up for Orinda's rights which John Wyro has neglected to do for 13 years. Bob will insist that the inequity question be answered and will press for an equitable solution of the problem working with MOFD, the City of Orinda and the Town of Moraga.

We cannot afford NOT to elect Bob Jungbluth.

Steve Cohn
Orinda

Moraga Candidates

Dear Editor,

Dave Trotter is committed to Moraga and I encourage Moraga residents to re-elect him to another term on the Town

Council. He has an excellent, 20-year record of service to our Town as a member and Chair of the Planning Commission, a director of the Moraga Historical Society and Moraga Park and Recreation Foundation, as a coach for youth sports teams, and for the past four years as a member of the Town Council and as the Town's mayor in 2009. I work with Dave on the Save Mount Diablo board of directors. He is committed to the preservation of open space and is an articulate and thoughtful advocate for it. He will uphold the Moraga Open Space Ordinance and work to protect other important open space and ridgeline areas in accordance with the Town's General Plan. Moraga needs councilmembers who not only run on a platform of protecting the Town's semi-rural character, but then vote to protect and preserve these values. Dave has consistently done this.

As our Mayor and as a former Chair of the Planning Commission, he has shown the ability to encourage full and open discussion of controversial issues, respecting the viewpoints of all speakers. Through work on the Save Mount Diablo Board of Directors, I have observed his ability to think independently and reason his way through difficult problems. These are important qualities which will continue to serve the Town well on the Council.

Please vote to re-elect Dave Trotter to the Moraga Town Council on November 2.

Malcolm Sproul
Moraga

Orinda Candidates

Editor:

I have had the privilege of working with Sue Severson on a regular basis often as co-chairs of philanthropic events. Sue Severson is a woman of uncommon foresight, fortitude, energy, passion who always, always, puts the well-being of our community first. We are truly fortunate to have such a talented and compassionate person willing to represent us as a member of the city council for another term.

Sue deserves to be re-elected for all that she has done to benefit Orinda in her numerous positions of leadership: as our mayor, our school board rep, president of Miramonte Parent's Club, and her endless volunteering . If you were to spend a week following Sue around observing all she does for our city you would be overwhelmed at the amount time she dedicates to our community and the passion and professionalism with which she goes about making a difference. For years, Sue and her family have donated their time and money in a magnanimous and anonymous manner to many worthwhile local organizations, all because they believe it is the just thing to do. In short, Sue has done so much for us and will continue to be there for us well into the future, it is now, our turn to reward her by doing something for her; please join me in helping to re-elect Sue Severson to the Orinda City Council.

Thanks,
Richard Westin
Orinda

Editor:

For the last 6 years, I have had the pleasure of working with Dean Orr, Chair of the Orinda Planning Commission. I write to ask Orinda voters to join me in voting for Dean Orr for Orinda City Council.

Dean is smart, does his homework, and works really hard to listen to all citizens and to build consensus. His background as a community volunteer, and as a designer of both outdoor and indoor living and communal spaces, will serve Orinda well as we work together as a community to create a vision of Orinda, and our downtown, that will serve our residents well today and into the future.

Dean supports the need to work collaboratively with the other local agencies that serve our small city-the fire district and the utility districts-in order to keep our tax dollars and emergency services local and to maximize infrastructure improvements. As the father of two small children, Dean works hard to support our recreational opportunities and our local schools-and he is one candidate who has been endorsed by key school leaders, and most former Mayors. In this election we have unfortunately seen negative campaigning in state-wide races; here in Orinda, it is important to keep our focus on what unites our community, rather than what could divide us. Dean seeks no preconceived outcome, but does have the consensus-building leadership skills to bring us together and to help our city build a positive future! Please join me in voting for Dean Orr on November 2nd.

Victoria Smith
Orinda

Editor:

I had the great privilege of meeting Sue Severson while serving as President of Orinda Arts Council (2002-03) and was struck immediately by her depth of character, sincerity, poise, and willingness to hear every voice and concern. Sue balances her volunteerism between civic duties, work in the schools, support for the arts, and family life. Her generosity of spirit and humanity are insurmountable. Our community has been the lucky recipient of her positive presence, practical solutions, and experience. She understands and believes fiscal responsibility as priority and

supports ongoing respectful communication between our community members and leaders. Sue Severson is a leader of utmost integrity who richly deserves to be re-elected for Orinda City Council. Please join me in supporting Sue Severson for Orinda City Council.

Elena Pang
Orinda

Editor:

The November Orinda City Council election is very important. None of the three incumbents: McCormick, Severson or Worth support a vote by the citizens on having our own fire district (the only way we will get road repair funds) or on keeping Orinda's downtown semi-rural. Let the citizens vote.

Incumbent Amy Worth is trying to buy the election with expensive mailings.

The incumbents have no interest in restricting the Moraga Adobe development to protect Orinda from a fire storm such as the Great Oakland Fire.

Scott Zeller is running for the City Council. He is in favor of retaining Orinda's semi-rural character and opposes raising the downtown height to 55 feet (80 feet to some roofs). He is in favor of letting the citizens vote on major issues such as downtown remodeling and Orinda forming its own fire department. He is in favor of protecting Orinda's history and Orinda's safety in the Moraga Adobe development.

I recommend that you vote ONLY for Scott Zeller in the election. If you feel you must vote for two candidates include Dean Orr.

Clyde Vaughn
Orinda

Editor:

Experience, dedication and clear vision; these are the traits that Sarah Butler offers and why we support her for the Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees. Sarah has volunteered extensively over the last 12 years at the elementary and middle school level, adding her insight and positive attitude to her positions as the Co-chair of the Las Trampas Creek PTA Legislative Council and on Glorietta and OIS Site Councils. Her personal goals are those needed to keep OUSD on track during the current financial challenges: improving communication and collaboration between parents, schools, district and community; fiscal responsibility, continuing strategic improvement; and attracting and retaining quality teachers. Sarah is a conscientious straight talker who can work on a committee in a constructive manner. She has a unique ability to analyze details while being mindful of the ultimate objective to keep excellence in education alive in Orinda's schools. She makes it her purpose to know all the money facts and instructional programs of Orinda's schools. As a leader on the Legislative team for Orinda schools, Sarah has extensive knowledge of the workings of the school budget situation in Sacramento. She has knowledge, vision and passion to lead OUSD through the financial impacts of the budget crisis on California's schools. Please join us in voting for Sarah Butler on November 2nd, 2010.

Robin Bradley and Vee Hoff
Orinda

Editor:

I have known Julie Rossiter in a variety of capacities for more than five years. She has been associated with my daughters' swimming teams and schools. In addition, she has been instrumental in solving school issues. She worked extremely hard on the passage of Measure A, volunteered with the Del Rey Annual Fund Committee, and is currently the Del Rey legislative representative to the Las Trampas Creek Council.

Julie is organized, efficient, extremely competent (did I mention she has a law degree), and has an excellent rapport with all of the people she has worked with. Her communication skills, both verbal and written, are excellent. Her best asset may be her ability to cross the divide, and work with those with differing opinions to come to an amicable solution that will benefit the whole rather than the extreme.

In summary, I highly recommend Julie for the position of Orinda School Board trustee. She will prove to be a valuable asset to the Orinda students, teachers, and administrators.

Respectfully submitted,
Randy DeVecchi
Orinda

Editor:

What is Proven Leadership?

I strongly urge Orinda voters to consider a PROVEN LEADER, Scott Zeller, for Orinda City Council.

This is a critical time for Orinda. Insider forces want to change the semi-rural nature and village character of our

city.

Scott Zeller has demonstrated an uncommon sensitivity and understanding of why Orinda voters choose to live here. It's more than the excellent schools, the safe, clean neighborhoods, and proximity to a BART station. It's about a semi-rural way of life, a village character to the downtown, and all of the intangibles, which that implies.

Scott Zeller is the **ONLY CANDIDATE** asking these questions. Why won't this city council conduct a wide-spread, professional survey of what Orinda citizens want in the downtown? Why does this city council tolerate a Planning Director, who should be a steward of the citizens, serve as the salesman for an insider-spawned, downtown re-development plan? What won't this city council put the Proposed Downtown Plan on the ballot for a vote by the citizens? Why won't this city council listen to Orinda's citizens?

Scott Zeller has more actual **LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE**, than any of the other candidates, with more than 15 years heading up a government agency with a larger budget and more employees than the City of Orinda. Scott Zeller knows how to oversee a large organization and how to interact with various constituencies, including unions. He is also **NOT** a real estate, pro-developer insider. Scott Zeller has pledged not to take campaign contributions from them, and won't be beholden to them.

Cherish Orinda, as Scott Zeller does.

Owen Murphy
Orinda

Editor:

One overlooked function of a city council is to support or oppose legislation in the state Legislature. On February 17, 2009, the council passed Resolution 18-09 by a vote of 5-0 to endorse Assembly Constitutional Amendment (ACA) 9 by Assemblyman Jared Huffman. That ACA would have made it easier to raise taxes on Orindans by lowering the voter threshold for approving special taxes from 2/3 to 55 per cent. I voted for McCormick, Severson, and Worth in their last bids for council, but their support for state legislation to make it easier to raise taxes on homeowners in a difficult economy has forced me to withdraw my support this November and I would urge other Orindans to not support them, either.

Thank you for consideration of my views.

Cordially,
William Weber
Orinda

Editor:

For many years, Sue Severson has brought great energy and resourcefulness to the many challenges facing Orinda. From infrastructure to the arts, Sue has worked to bring the community together to meet these challenges. Sue actively involves all interested parties in the community, listens to every point of view and attempts to build consensus to develop the best plan of action for Orinda. Her approach in public service is to maintain a respectful attitude toward all participants in the process, foster open and responsive communication, and focus intently on fiscal responsibility.

In her current term on the City Council, she serves on several key City committees, including the Audit Committee, the Finance Advisory Committee, the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee; the Public Works Aesthetics Review and the Lamorinda School Bus Program.

Our city has benefited greatly from all of her hard work both on our City Council and in her previous role as Orinda School Board Member. Orinda needs capable, responsible City Council members like Sue to keep our city strong. Sue believes that we succeed in maximizing the quality of life in Orinda only through a collaborative effort partnering with the community, schools and business.

Please join us in voting for Sue Severson for Orinda City Council.

Thank you.

Mark and Marcie Tuttle
Orinda

Editor:

The five of us are former mayors of Orinda and have a continuing interest in our community. Because that interest includes Orinda's future, we are enthusiastically endorsing two candidates, Amy Worth and Dean Orr for the City Council election in November.

We served on the Council with Amy Worth and know firsthand that she is a dedicated, hard working Council member whose experience will be valuable to the Council as it moves forward with the important issues Orinda faces.

Dean Orr will be a new member of the Council, but we have had the privilege to observe him on the Orinda Planning Commission for the past six years. He has been an outstanding member of the Commission and has served as its Chairman the past 3 years. We have been impressed with his fair, open minded and practical approach to the issues with which the Planning Commission deals. He has no agenda except to do what is right for Orinda. We are confident he will be an excellent member of the Orinda City Council.

Please join us in voting for Dean Orr and Amy Worth.

Sincerely,

Bill Judge, Joyce Hawkins, Laura Abrams, Gregg Wheatland, Allan Tabor
Orinda

Editor:

Voting day is fast approaching on November 2, 2010. We would like to ask the residents of Orinda to join us and give Julie Rossiter their vote of support for Orinda School Board. Julie is an ideal candidate for this important role. Julie has lived in Orinda for over 6 years. Her children and family love the schools and community that they have called home. Previously, Julie has volunteered in the classrooms, as Del Rey Parents' Club Annual Fund Treasurer, Co-Chair of Operations on the school auction, Co-Chair of the annual parents gathering, Representative of the parcel tax campaign, and is the current Del Rey Legislative Representative to the Las Trampas Creek Council.

Julie became an attorney and practiced as a litigator in employment law. She will work hard and serve the Orinda School Board well. She has the ability to understand complicated issues. She will negotiate with others in a style that is positive, yet effective to navigate through this difficult time when funding is immensely challenged.

We have known Julie and her family for 6 years. She is the kind of person we want representing us! She is kind, thoughtful, smart, an engaged mother, friend, wife and active member of our community.

Julie is endorsed by all five current members of the Orinda School Board: Jack Bontemps, Matt Moran, Pat Rudebush, Riki Sorenson and Pam West.

Please join us in supporting Julie Rossiter for one of the three open seats for the Orinda School Board. She will serve us all well!

Best,

Karla and Michael Vukelich
Orinda

Editor:

Choose the Right...Vote for Sue

There are lots of voices that want to be heard in Orinda on any issue, but few choose to step forward to truly and selflessly serve the people. Sue Severson is one of those.

Sue has helped lead our community through these tight and challenging times, and no one can refute that she has had the best interests of all Orindans, especially our youth, always at the forefront of her agenda and her actions. She has demonstrated this long before her current council term through her many years of dedicated volunteer service on numerous Orinda causes, and is deserving of your vote this election to another successful term on the city council.

Vote for fairness, honesty, and dedication. Vote for Sue Severson.

Michael & Annette Linney

Orinda

Editor:

I urge your vote to elect Sarah Butler to the Orinda School District Governing Board.

Sarah has worked as a volunteer at all levels to support Orinda schools and to protect its excellent, cost-effective educational programs. For over 10 years, she has served on school site councils, Glorietta, OIS and Miramonte parent clubs, and the Education Foundation of Orinda. That work has given Sarah a broad perspective and understanding of key issues that the Orinda School Board will need to manage to maintain its excellent schools with shrinking resources.

Having also headed the Las Trampas Education Legislation Team, Sarah is a go-to person about State budget and legislative issues that affect our schools. More than ever, the future of our public schools and budgeting will require sophisticated knowledge about what's happening in Sacramento, and Sarah is uniquely qualified to address the challenges ahead.

Elect Sarah Butler to the Orinda School Board.

Diane Oshima

Orinda

Editor:

Chris Severson is an Orinda native who is passionate about Orinda and its schools. He greatly appreciates the excellent education he received here and is committed to keeping the quality of education high for all current and future Orinda students. Chris will work hard to use our limited resources efficiently and to keep class sizes small.

Chris served as Chairman of the Orinda Family Science night in 2008 and has worked on numerous school fund

raising projects to bring in additional funds to supplement the schools. Chris will bring great energy, intelligence and collaboration to the difficult task of navigating our schools through the upcoming challenges. In these difficult times, we need leaders like Chris who will listen to the community and work with all stakeholders to come up with the very best solutions for our children.

Please join us in supporting Chris Severson for Orinda School Board.

Rick & Nancy Booth
Orinda

Editor:

I am writing to recommend Julie Rossiter, Chris Severson, and Sarah Butler for Orinda's school board. They are all well-informed community volunteers who have a good understanding of the issues the district faces. Furthermore, they all are focused on student learning and maintaining the excellence of the district.

School board members need to have a broad view, encompassing all students and all schools. I strongly believe that Rossiter, Severson, and Butler are the best candidates to fulfill this important civic duty. They embody Orinda's values-excellent education for all students.

Linda Landau
Orinda

Editor:

In a town that prides itself on its schools and a longstanding tradition of community support, one candidate sees the Orinda School District as a train wreck. In trying times of severe budget cuts, electing a candidate who is angry, confrontational, and arrives with an agenda will sow distrust and disunity, and waste time that should be spent addressing the issues facing the district.

Bekki Van Voorhis-Gilbert showed her true colors at the Candidates' Forum on October 7th, flaunting the fact that she is not endorsed by any current board members (nor any Orinda public officials, I note). And it is no wonder, with her abrasive attitude and negativity.

It appears that Ms. Gilbert has spent substantial sums on her campaign, yet failed to disclose her expenditures to the county elections office by the October 5th deadline -- rather hypocritical, given that "disclosure and transparency" are central to her stated platform. When angered about yard sign limits imposed by the city, she brought in the ACLU to engage the city attorney (at Orinda taxpayers' expense).

We need officials who will roll up their sleeves and work for our kids, not throw punches. Please elect Sarah Butler, Julie Rossiter and Chris Severson for the good of our community.

Jim Landau
Orinda

Lafayette Candidates

Editor:

Lafayette City Council Needs Traci Reilly!

In the upcoming November election, Lafayette residents will vote to fill two City Council seats. I strongly encourage you to vote for Traci Reilly.

One of the impressive qualities of Traci's is her commitment to community service and civic duty. I met Traci through Lafayette Juniors, a women's service organization in town dedicated to helping those in need, where she demonstrated polished leadership skills in several board and chair positions, including two terms as president. For ten years Traci dedicated countless hours that helped people in our community. Whether it was heading up one of our fundraisers for the year (Kitchen Tour and Rummage Sale) or through delivering Meals on Wheels, making comfort pillows for women with breast cancer, making blankets for foster children, and cleaning up the Community Center Tot Lot, Traci worked with enthusiasm and terrific organization.

In recent years it is evident that Traci's involvement with city issues has taken the forefront of her efforts. Public safety is a major focus as seen through her time spent to increase police staffing, serving on the Crime Prevention Commission, and her leadership in the passing of the solicitor's ordinance.

Traci has the ability to make everyone feel connected to the community. She is an interested listener and also an effective communicator who has a genuine understanding of the public's interests. Her interest in civic affairs and service is clearly evident and her community experience is solid.

Traci is a natural fit for Lafayette City Council, and I encourage all Lafayette residents to vote for Traci Reilly!

Amy Parlett
Lafayette

Editor:

In this year's Lafayette City Council race, Don Tatzin offers years of experience and brings demonstrated commitment, innovative solutions, a history of careful land-use planning, and a prudent fiscal management style to the position.

Don knows that good schools are a critical element of a successful community and sought greater cooperation with the school districts. At the request of the Lafayette School District Governing Board, Don participated in the recent strategic planning process.

Don conceived of the first citizen Financial Review Committee in the 1990's, which resulted in the Council improving the efficiency of government services. During the past decade, the City has put more money into police services and roads while maintaining a balanced budget.

We have lived in Lafayette since 1968 and have seen the downtown become more vibrant with improved public landscaping and more shopping choices. Simultaneously, neighborhoods are protected from excessive development and the views of largely undeveloped ridgelines remain. Don chaired the Hillside and Ridgeline Committee that created enhanced protections for our most visually attractive ridges.

We support Don because he will bring four more years of thoughtful leadership to the Council.

Carol and Bob Singer
Lafayette

Editor:

The Lafayette Homeowners Council Candidate's Night on September 30 ended while residents were still attempting to pose questions. This is an open letter to Brandt Andersson that states what I did not get to say then.

The very character of Lafayette is under attack. It has been under attack throughout the entire Downtown Specific Plan process, and it is under attack by you. These attacks, if they succeed, will be irreversible.

Here are my observations. You feel that in deciding the fundamental character of our town you have the right to totally disregard the views of the overwhelming majority of residents. And you are misrepresenting your record and views during this election.

When zoning for the "Christmas Tree Lot" diagonally across from Acalanes High School was before the City Council this year, dozens of residents and their homeowners' associations voiced their views. They unanimously opposed multifamily zoning that would allow apartments and condominiums. They wanted to preserve the semi-rural character of this vital gateway to Lafayette, and wanted to avoid exacerbating traffic problems. You belittled their understanding of the measure up for vote, utterly disregarded the sentiments they were expressing, and voted for multifamily zoning.

With respect to the DSP, repeated surveys and public statement, including from the LHC, other homeowners' associations and dozens of residents, have expressed overwhelming support for maintaining the small town character of the Downtown that is enshrined in the current General Plan. You have not. My involvement in battling the DSP was prompted in significant part by your statement that you favored urbanizing ("semi-urban," you called it) the Downtown. You have consistently supported substantially increased building heights and population densities throughout the Downtown that, if adopted, would dramatically change it.

Your campaign hides all of these facts. Your introductory speech at the LHC Candidate's Night talked about "keeping an open mind" and listening to residents. You have not done so. You do not respect our wishes. And now, in this campaign you do not candidly state your record or your views.

Eliot Hudson
Lafayette

Dear Editor:

I urge Lafayette residents to vote for Traci Reilly for Lafayette City Council. There are two seats open on the five-member council. Traci would be a great addition to the Council, bringing her experience, fresh perspective, and commitment to fiscal restraint. She has a deep and broad understanding of city issues and is connected to the pulse of Lafayette residents. Traci's background includes leadership positions in the elementary and middle schools and in philanthropy. She has been Chair of Lafayette's Crime Prevention Commission and helped champion the No Solicitors Ordinance, which was adopted in 2009.

People are generally pleased with the quality of life in Lafayette. However, this past year, the city has been considering major agenda items that could immensely affect the Lafayette we love. The Charter City/Property Tax Transfer proposal and the Downtown Specific Plan both represent controversial issues. The city has deferred consideration of the Charter City proposal until after the election, and the Downtown Specific Plan continues to work its way through public hearings. Given these important issues, rather than re-electing both incumbents, Lafayette residents would greatly benefit from casting one of their two votes for Traci. She wants to see more public outreach and education on the implications of complex proposals. She understands the views of many homeowners who feel frustrated by the process or feel their voices are not being heard.

Traci is an outstanding candidate. In low-profile races, incumbents have a distinct advantage over challengers, who are not as well known. I urge residents to learn more about Traci and where she stands on issues facing Lafayette by visiting her website at www.tracireilly.com. You can also view her impressive list of endorsers, which includes

leading homeowner advocates, school and community leaders, as well as former Police Chief Mike Fisher, former Mayor and Councilman Ivor Samson, and former Assemblywoman Lynne Leach. Traci is the right candidate for Lafayette City Council.

Linda Murphy
Lafayette

Dear Editor.

This year's election presents Lafayette residents with the opportunity to elect an outstanding candidate to our City Council. Traci Reilly is a bright, articulate, and knowledgeable candidate who has much to offer to our city. At age 43, Traci is younger than the current council members, but has a wealth of experience. Her background includes leadership positions in public service and in the school and volunteer community, including PTA Executive Board positions at Lafayette and Stanley, and President of Lafayette Juniors. Traci has been Chair of Lafayette's Crime Prevention Commission since 2008 and helped champion the No Solicitors Ordinance, which was adopted in 2009. Traci is committed to having the Lafayette City Council and city staff serve its residents well. She wants transparency in city government and wants the city to do a better job of informing its residents of important proposals that it considers. People who know or have met Traci are impressed by her understanding of the complexities of the city government.

Traci has earned the endorsements of leading homeowner advocates such as Guy Atwood, Jim Cunha, George Burt, Joe Garrity, Eliot Hudson, Linda Murphy, Marie Parti, Maeve Pessis, Alida Smith, and David Van Etten. She is endorsed by leaders in the school community, including Diane Camporeale, Michelle Chan, Julie Donlan, Astrida Lalor, Francie Low, Ellen Seiler, Pam Severson, and Christine Wang, as well as current and past Lafayette Juniors leaders such as Marci Dublin, Fran Miller, Amy Parlett, and Rosylyn Stenzel. She also has the backing all her fellow Crime Prevention Commissioners - Larry Belusa, Rita Charles, Kim Tejada, Tom Titmus, and John Worden - as well as former Police Chief Mike Fisher, former Mayor and Councilman Ivor Samson, and former Assemblywoman Lynne Leach.

I encourage voters to elect Traci Reilly to the Lafayette City Council.

Isy Milosevich
Lafayette

Dear Editor,

As a long-time resident of Lafayette who is frustrated by the conditions of our roads, I am thrilled that Traci Reilly is running for Lafayette City Council. Traci understands that fixing our roads is a priority for residents. She also is committed to reducing city expenditures and considering all finance committee recommendations before asking homeowners and property owners to levy additional taxes on ourselves to pay for road repair.

Last year, the street on which I live was repaved. But because our street was a low priority street on the city's list of roads needing repairs, six of us homeowners had to pay 50% of the cost of repaving. This represented a large financial burden.

Especially given the current economy, homeowners and property owners will benefit from having Traci Reilly on the City Council. In order to fund road repairs, she plans to look first to the city internally to find more efficiencies. Traci also supports repayment of the \$6 million loan from the City to the Redevelopment Agency as soon as feasible, and that it be used to repair our roads and drains. Traci will also work to restore the \$400,000 the City took from road funding when it received a like amount from the new Waste Management fees, which resulted in no increased funding for roads from such fees. Traci understands the burden that additional taxes would impose upon Lafayette residents and businesses.

Traci Reilly has my vote.

Sincerely,
Rachel Browne
Lafayette

Editor:

We urge our fellow citizens to vote for our neighbor Don Tatzin for re-election to the Lafayette City Council in the November election. For the past eight years that we've lived in Lafayette, we've come to know Don as a person who works hard to preserve the best features of our community, improve those that can use upgrading, and make sure the city is managed in a fiscally responsible manner.

We both grew up in neighboring communities and always thought of Lafayette as a place we would like to live some day. After we moved here in 2002 and got to know the city better, we knew we had made the right decision. We love the residential neighborhoods, the restaurants and other downtown businesses, the reservoir, and especially the new library.

Most people probably don't know how much time the city councilors put in on our behalf. We often see Don out in his backyard playing Frisbee with his border collies with one hand and turning pages in his 100-page City Council reading package in the other. Given his long history of serving the Lafayette community, we believe Don has the

depth of knowledge and problem-solving ability to help the city make good decisions for all of our benefit.

Sincerely,
Brian and Teri Fournier
Lafayette

Other

Editor:

I wrote a short opinion favoring Proposition 19. The first tax I've ever been in favor of. By the end of the week, I received an anonymous letter in the mail. It was 18 large words of potty-mouthed name calling Something like the most obnoxious kid in the fifth grade would say. There wasn't an intelligent word in it. I don't know if they're mad because I'm against the enormous tax free profits in the drug trade and they are a dealer, or if they are blaming me because their child became a drug addict. Children of people like this are prone to addiction. Several friends and a neighbor smoked themselves to death with tobacco. It's legal and heavily taxed. Same with alcohol. Cannabis should be in the same category. It's nowhere near as addictive as tobacco. People are always brawling after drinking too much alcohol. I never hear that about Cannabis users. A long time ago a young man told me he used heroin because it was cheaper than weed. Cowardly, nasty letters or not, I'm voting yes on Proposition 19.

Bruce R. Peterson
Lafayette

Editor:

Orinda's Future Hinges on 2 Nights - Oct. 13 & 18

Like most of us who live here, I truly love Orinda for so many reasons. That is why I'm protective of our city and what happens to it. I'm sure you are, too.

Therefore, it is essential that every resident attends the Public Workshop about the Downtown Plan! Please mark your calendars for Monday, October 18, 7-9 p.m. at Fellowship Hall, Orinda Community Church.

The meeting is being listed as a Downtown Revitalization Workshop. It is more about major changes in Orinda's General Plan, ordinances, and zoning. This should be an opportunity for you to be heard.

The Downtown Plan is proposing a jump from the current 35 foot height limit up to 55' - 70' (depending on the pitch of the roof). Can you imagine the 18 foot high buildings on Moraga Way (across from Peets and Lupetti's) razed from existence and more than tripled in height? Where will our human scale downtown go, along with our view of the hills? Can Orinda be beautified/updated? Sure.

Do we want traffic congestion and years of construction to result in a faux, contrived city in its place? No thanks.

Santana Row wouldn't work here. Are we supporting local businesses and the Orinda Theatre? We should be.

Big box stores plus Crate & Barrel and the Gap have been suggested. Orinda is unique.

Should there be downtown housing? O.K. but not high condos and offices with underground parking everywhere.

Do we want our City Council and city officials to listen to residents and have a vote by citizens on the direction of our City? Five people on a City Council should not decide for 17,000+ residents who pay the property tax.

So please be there that one night at least!! In addition, Candidates' night for Orinda City Council will be on Wednesday, October 13, 7-9 p.m., at the Library Auditorium. This is the most important election in years.

Your attendance on these two nights about our Orinda could determine its future. See you there!

Ann O'C.-Nye
Orinda

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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