

Published October 4th, 2017

Orinda Town Hall with Baker, Andersen, and Phillips

By Sora O'Doherty



Assemblywoman Catharine Baker at the Sept. 25 Town Hall. Photo Sora O'Doherty during last year's election, which saw, as she called it, "a lot of backwards steps."

Assemblywoman Catharine Baker, County Supervisor Candace Andersen and Orinda Mayor Eve Phillips held a town hall to interact with their constituents on Sept. 25 at the Orinda Library auditorium. The event was well attended, with most of the audience on the more mature side and very polite. There were no protests, and little contention.

Everyone was in agreement in opposing Senate Bill 35, which removes local control over housing in localities found not to have met state housing goals, signed into law Sept. 29 by Gov. Jerry Brown. Legislators and public at the town hall agreed the bill will take away local control.

One area where not everyone was in agreement was the proposed raising of the dam at Los Vaqueros Reservoir by 49 feet. Orinda resident Richard Coleman asked if any other alternatives had been considered and if the assemblywoman supported the proposal. Baker replied that the dam is existing infrastructure, and that raising it could provide additional storage that would allow other counties to bank water. If this happens, it will increase revenues for Contra Costa County.

Cindy Swanson, a 12-year resident of Lafayette, spoke against a measure signed by the governor last year that prevents companies that boycott or discriminate against any sovereign state, including Israel, from doing business with the state. Baker stated that she supported the legislation. She said that she supported the measure that took a stand against anti-Semitism, especially

A big topic was BART parking and Highway 24 access. Transportation, Baker noted, can make your day miserable all day long. Baker has authored legislation to require transportation dollars to be spent only on transportation projects without diversion to any other areas. She mentioned that State Sen. Steve Glazier, who was present for part of the Town Hall, managed to get an inspector general for BART, although the position is not independent: BART gets to select three names from which the position will be filled. Andersen advocates for local control and for creating jobs in communities rather than fighting for transit villages.

Safety was also of significant concern to all. Although crimes on individuals have decreased, property crime has risen by double digits in the area, according to Baker. Andersen praised Lafayette Police Chief Eric Christensen as the "poster child for crime prevention." Phillips said there is a broad consensus for police cameras in Orinda and that there has been a decrease in crime because of the cameras. She opposes automatic cameras because the data is available to federal authorities, but she said that the city is doing its best to keep residents private and safe.

Reach the reporter at: sora@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA