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## Letters to the Editor

Editor:

The Orinda City Council should proceed with the process of amending Orinda's General Plan. It has been three years since the citizen's task force submitted its final report. Only the downtown portion of the report remains to be adopted.

It is time for the Council to finish hearing the recommendations and vote on the two remaining issues: the addition of housing downtown and the enabling of more flexible zoning standards, including an increase of the height limit to 55 feet. The Council has heard sufficient public testimony. It has surveyed the community. No citizen vote is necessary.

Those of us who have studied in detail the recommendations before the Council are satisfied that the addition of a modest number of housing units would add to the vitality of downtown and that the modest height limit increase proposed would not deny views of the hills in any material way.

We elected our City Council to be our representative body. We applaud the Councilmembers for their openness, dedication and patience. It is time for their vote.

Tom Trowbridge  
Orinda

Editor:

We are two of the over 100 Moraga voters who participated in asking neighbors to sign petitions to stop the implementation of an ordinance that would have effectively banned all off-leash dog walking at any time at Rancho Laguna Park with no concrete alternative in sight. In less than two weeks, our group of similarly minded people collected over 1800 signatures of registered Moraga voters to tell the Council it had made a mistake. The outpouring from the community was inspiring.

Although a few people who wanted to end a 30 year tradition - and ban the adults and children in our community who love to meet in the evening (and morning) with their dogs at the park - have complained about the referendum, the people who gathered signatures all said the vast majority were eager to sign the referendum. Voting is our cherished democratic process. Many expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to voice their feelings and many offered to circulate petitions to their friends and neighbors. A number of people who circulated petitions do not own dogs and rarely go to Rancho Laguna. They were just baffled by the Council's decision and its failure to acknowledge what many people in the community treasure - a short time each day to get together and talk (with or without dogs). The messages we heard most often were that people are happy with Rancho Laguna the way it is, the 3-2 Council vote was not the way to eliminate something that so many people enjoy, and the Town has better things to do with its time and money than to continue trying to cut off users from Rancho Laguna.

Collecting over 1800 signatures in less than two weeks time was not difficult because the majority wants Rancho Laguna to remain "as is." We turned in the petitions on June 6, and the next day the Town Clerk verified that there were more than enough signatures to temporarily suspend the ordinance. Now the County Elections office will examine the signatures and inform the Town within 30 business days of its review. If, as we expect, the final number of verified signatures is more than 10% of registered Moraga voters, the Town Council will have to decide whether to rescind the ordinance that ended off leash hours or put it on a ballot for all of us to vote on.

This effort was so positive in so many ways. It got people talking and gave people a chance to be heard. It allowed all of us to participate in keeping Moraga a great place to live. There are a lot of happy faces at Rancho Laguna now. Thank you, Moraga!

Trish Bare, Moraga Tina Brier, Moraga

Editor:

What delicious irony: The June 6 edition of Lamorinda Weekly that gave us an article titled, "Spirit Van Program Seeks Friends with Funds in Moraga" about the Moraga Town Council declining to add \$3,500 to van service funding for disabled seniors and seniors without drivers licenses also told us in another article about "Sidewalk Beautification" in Lafayette, CA funded by federal taxpayers in Lafayette, AL, Lafayette, CO, Lafayette, IN, Lafayette, LA, Lafayette, MN, Lafayette, MO, Lafayette, OH, Lafayette, OR, Lafayette, NJ, and others.

Since these fellow Lafayettes have shared in the tens-of-thousands of dollars cost of putting "decorative brick" in front of the Round Up (sic) Saloon, Lamorindans should not complain when Representative John "Free Lunch" Garamendi asks us to contribute to a \$100 thousand park bench in Lafayette, AL honoring the memory of former Rep. Willie "Boll Weevil" Wilson or \$200 thousand for a bronze statue of a praying prawn for Lafayette, LA, or \$300 thousand for . . . a decorative brick sidewalk in front of the Square Down Saloon in Lafayette, NJ.

To borrow from that old quote about death: Everyone knows there is no free lunch . . . but no one believes it.

Edward C. Hartman  
Moraga

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