

Letters to the Editor

Orinda council should vote “no” on Wilder Amendment

The Orinda City Council should reject the proposed Eighth Amendment to the Wilder Development Agreement. An important issue is being overlooked.

The issue that is being overlooked is that the City and the Developer have a binding contract that the Developer wants to change so it can make more money, while offering the City little or nothing in return. It is the duty of the Council to represent and defend the interests of the City and its residents. The Developer is not a charitable organization but rather a for-profit business. The Developer wants concessions so that it can make more money. It is the job of the Council to obtain a quid pro quo that has value substantially equivalent to the value that the Developer desires. Yet I see no mention of this in the discussion.

The City Staff is equally culpable. The Staff, like the Council, has a duty to represent and protect the residents of Orinda. Yet a member of the Staff told me that it is not the City Staff’s duty to obtain a quid pro quo. I respectfully disagree.

I also respectfully disagree with Councilmember Gee, who reportedly stated that “she could see how residents might feel that things had been misrepresented, but that was between the homeowners and the developer.” The Council should not take action favorable to a Developer that might lead residents to feel that things had been misrepresented by the Developer, especially considering that the City is getting little or no value in return.

It is very disappointing that, with the exception of Mayor Worth, we cannot count on our elected Council, to represent and defend our interests.

Nick Waranoff
Orinda

Moraga Storm Drain Fee

We’ve all seen the signs around town, now here are the facts:

Each of our property owners in Town are being asked to vote on a fee based on their fair share of storm water that they contribute to the Town’s storm drain system. This fee (if passed) will be paid as follows:

- 75% percent will be paid for by single family homeowners,
- 5% by schools,
- and the remainder by commercial, multi-family and other property owners.

This proposed fee will be used to address long overdue maintenance/replacement of the storm drain utility that runs throughout our town. It is exactly the same as a sewer, electricity, or phone/internet bill that all of us (including the schools) are already paying. In fact, it can easily be argued that the storm water utility fee is something we all should have been paying all along.

For the Moraga School District for instance, the fee is calculated to be \$21,400 per year for all of their properties, which equates to 1/10th of 1 percent of their annual \$23 million budget. Or put in other terms, approximately \$12 per student per year.

For the average homeowner, the fee will be \$120 per year or about \$10 per month (two lattes at the new Starbucks).

In my view this is a very small price to pay to avoid future sinkholes/disruptions in our town, maintain our overall quality of life and preserve safe drinking water reservoirs for all East Bay Area residents.

Please open your ballot when you receive it in the mail, check “Yes”, sign it, and mail it back in the pre-paid postage-free envelope.

Bret Lorie, Bess Inzeo, and Serina Culleton
Teachers in Moraga School District

A request for yes on storm drain fee

Moraga has a problem – a big problem – a problem that needs attention. It needs attention now.

Our public storm drain system is old and deteriorating. Conspicuous failures tell the story – the Rheem Boulevard sinkhole that disrupted traffic for a year; failure of this same pipe 40 feet away 10 years earlier; flooding of the Pavilion on the Hacienda grounds in 2006, caused by a failing culvert on the same drainage creek.

Yes, there is a problem, no matter what the naysayers claim. The next sinkhole is just a matter of time. Who knows how serious.

The Town has proposed a solution to avoid failures causing disruption and flooding. But the program will

cost a lot of money – money the Town does not have. No matter how much the Town tightens its belt, no savings could be realized that would dent the program cost. New revenue is essential.

Some say the Town has no credible plan. Experts say otherwise. What is certain is that the problems will not just go away. Deferring the work will only cost more as storm drain system deterioration continues. The proposed solution is a positive step toward solving the problem. Naysayers have yet to propose a credible alternative – not one.

The property-related fee program is based on the Prop 218 rules that were developed by the Jarvis-Gann Taxpayer group who also brought us Prop 13. It offers a reasonable way to assess property owners to fix the problem. A majority of voting property owners must approve in order to enact the fee measure. Sure, schools and churches will be assessed. They contribute to storm water runoff, no matter what the naysayers claim. The storm drain fee would be just like the charges property owners pay for all other utilities.

If the fee is not enacted, no future Town Council is likely to try again to pass any kind of measure any time soon. Meanwhile, the storm drain system continues to rot. It’s time to act.

Please do the sensible thing. Vote YES. Be sure to sign your ballots before mailing to the Town.

Michael Metcalf
Moraga

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer’s name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. Visit www.lamorindaweekly.com for submission guidelines. Email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

Join our Public Forum

If you have significant knowledge about an issue facing Lamorinda or one of its cities that requires more than the 350 words to which we must limit Letters to the Editor, don’t despair! You can submit your letter to our Public Forum section. Just send your letter to letters@lamorindaweekly.com and let us know you’d like to be considered for the Public Forum.

A new Finestra (window) opens at the Hacienda

... continued from page A5

Jeff Assadi’s plan is to open a new full-service La Finestra including catering operations.

The proposal included the town making an initial expense, not to exceed \$60,000 for a new ADA restroom, an investment that would remain with the property. Current

recreation activities would be relocated to the Casita and La Sala. The Hacienda grounds, including the Pavilion would still be available for rental for weddings, private events or meetings. The restaurant would become the preferred caterer for the Hacienda events.

The proposed lease terms would be five years, renewable, with a market rate rent, plus a percentage rent on net revenue.

Results of the April 17 meeting will be added to the on-line publication of this article.



We urge you to vote YES on Measure L, the Council-approved plan for the Deer Hill property. Your **YES** vote preserves over half of the land as open space and community parklands, while allowing a limited number of homes and providing many benefits to Lafayette residents.

- ✓ **YES** for 11 acres of public parklands and trails
- ✓ **YES** for a full size, all weather, multi-use athletic field
- ✓ **YES** for a 2.9 acre dog park with separate areas for large and small dogs
- ✓ **YES** for a new neighborhood park and playground, the only one north of Highway 24
- ✓ **YES** for a 78 car parking lot near Acalanes High School
- ✓ **YES** for over \$500,000 in bicycle and pedestrian improvements on Pleasant Hill Road
- ✓ **YES** for 44 single family homes
- ✓ **YES** for a new public trail with scenic views of Mt. Diablo

VOTE YES ON MEASURE L on June 5, 2018

Please join these community leaders in supporting Measure L!

Don Tatzin, Mayor
Cam Burks, Vice Mayor
Mike Anderson, Councilmember
Mark Mitchell, Councilmember
Anne Grodin, former Mayor
Brandt Andersson, former Mayor
Carol Federighi, former Mayor
Erling Horn, former Mayor
Teresa Geringer, President, Lafayette School Board
Meredith Meade, Lafayette School Board

Fred Lothrop, Chair, Emergency Preparedness Commission
Carol Singer, Chair, Parks, Trails, and Rec Commission
Joe Dougherty, Parks, Trails, and Rec Commission
Mark Poole, Parks, Trails, and Rec Commission
Patricia Curtin, Former Planning Commission
Will Lovitt, Former Planning Commission
Karen Maggio, Former Planning Commission
Dino Riggio, Former Chair, Circulation Commission

Bart Carr, Co-Founder, Sustainable Lafayette
Amanda Walter, Board, Sustainable Lafayette
Donn Walklet, Vice Chair, Lafayette Open Space
Janet Thomas, Board, Lafayette Community Garden
Dan Horowitz, Crime Prevention Commission
Dan Ventrelle, President, Lafayette Little League
Doug Pearson, President, Lamorinda Rugby
Kathy Merchant, President, Lafayette Chamber
Jenny Kallio, President, Lafayette Homeowners Council

(partial list—titles for identification only)

www.YesonL2018.org

Paid for by Yes on L, a coalition of Lafayette residents, business and community leaders for Deer Hill plan and park; Committee major funding from Dennis O’Brien, including O’Brien Land Company.