

Letters to the Editor ... continued

Yes on Storm Drain Fee

Moraga property owners – I urge you to vote YES on the storm water fee.

Our problem is clear – Moraga’s storm water system is old and parts of it are failing.

There is a plan to make things better. Doing nothing will only make things worse.

Now, our choice is simple:

- Vote YES – Provide funds now to repair our deteriorating storm water system.
- Vote NO – Wait for the next sinkhole and pay the excessive cost for an emergency fix.

If you have not voted, find your ballot, mark it YES, sign it and send it in. You don’t even need a stamp.

If you can’t find your ballot, contact the Moraga Town Clerk (925-888-7022) for a replacement – then vote YES.

If you have already voted, thank you.

Moraga needs to solve its storm water problem. Moraga needs to adopt and execute its Storm Drain Master Plan. Vote YES to make it happen.

Bob Reynolds
Moraga

More on storm drains

Our family moved to Moraga 46 years ago. Since then, I have been continuously and extensively involved in our Town’s governance. Based upon that experience, I’d like to share some insights I believe are relevant to our storm drains problem.

First – no Question – we have an extremely serious problem.

- Our storm drains were built to County standards in the 1960s and early 1970s. They are reaching the ends of their useful lives;
- Unless we act now, major sinkhole failures are likely to occur throughout Moraga in the

near future;

- Addressing the need now is far cheaper and much less disruptive than waiting to incur the extreme costs of fixing sinkholes after they develop;
- The magnitude of the total need means it will be extremely expensive to fix;
- Our Town’s financial reserves are minimal. Any new, major storm drain problem could well exceed the Town’s resources;
- New financing must be found to repair the existing system, and for continuous maintenance and long-term replacement of the system’s elements.

Second, there is no “hidden pot of gold” nor feasible major changes in the cost of the Town’s current operations that could conceivably solve the problem.

As a leader in our Town’s 1974 Incorporation drive I can attest to the fact that our Town was designed to run on the cheap with minimal staff. That’s how our Town was initially run. It’s exactly how it continues to be run today;

- A 12-person, blue ribbon Committee I chaired found the Town is run with fewer staff and a significantly smaller per-capita cost than any city in our county or any comparable city in our region. A recent update of our committee’s data confirmed that continues to be the case;
- The amount and timing of hoped-for future disaster fund reimbursements is unknown. The timing of any future developer fees is also uncertain. Neither potential fund source would be nearly enough to solve our storm drains problem.

We need to act now. I’ve voted for the Storm Drains Fee. You should also!

Dick Olsen
Moraga

Request for transparency

For all that is structurally wrong with Moraga’s proposed storm drain tax – including taxing schools, churches and the fire department, and no articulated financing plan attached to it – one item often lost in the discussion is the opacity with which the Town has handled the entire process. This includes councilmembers forming an “independent” advocacy group before even voting on moving forward with the ballot initiative. Most recently, it includes double-dipping and taxing residents for money it already has.

Specifically, a \$1.1 million creek daylighting project at the Hacienda is part of the proposed storm drain tax. However, the Town has secured \$1million in grants to fund that project, yet still intends to tax residents the full amount.

Residents deserve more transparency, and should only be asked for what is actually needed.

Therese Meuel
Moraga

“YES” on storm drain ordinance makes the most sense

Those opposed suggest there has been fiscal mismanagement by Town government and/or Town Council/Mayor, claiming funds should have been budgeted for years to ensure properly maintained storm drains. Moraga receives much less back from the county from our property taxes than Orinda or Lafayette and our town’s budget has always had more services/projects to support than funds available. What happens? The most important, pressing needs are funded and those deferrable without immediate serious effect are deferred. That’s often not a problem for a while, but long deferred maintenance suddenly results in a major sinkhole which has to wait until funds can be scraped out of other budget categories to address the

now very costly repairs. Budgeting with insufficient funds by crisis management puts us where we are today. That’s not fiscal mismanagement; that is struggling to do the best job possible with inadequate funds to accomplish everything important. I grant very little, if any, credence to the “no” camp’s slogan “fiscal responsibility first.” The facts don’t support the claim.

For the average homeowner, the fee is \$120 annually. Long ago, \$120 was a significant amount of money. Today it is not. \$120 annually is 33 cents a day.

Fellow Moragans, 33 cents isn’t even postage stamp money, it’s parking meter change (except in San Francisco.) Less than a postage stamp per day will fund long deferred maintenance/repairs to our aged and collapsing storm drain infrastructure, hopefully preventing another sinkhole requiring major repair expenses. The need is great, urgent and the cost is minor and manageable by virtually all homeowners, schools and churches. (Rainwater runoff is directly proportionate to structure roof area and (land) property size.

It is entirely appropriate that all property, including schools and churches pay the fee.

Ballots must be received at the town offices by May 15 and can be delivered there or mailed as soon as possible. If you haven’t yet voted on this very important measure, please vote now and please vote YES! It is the right and wise action to take.

Fred Marschner
Moraga

Vote Yes on Measure J

It’s easy to take for granted that our library will be open whenever we want to borrow a book, read and study quietly in a comfy armchair, or attend an educational program. After all, nearly 200,000 items were checked out – 11 per Orinda resident – and almost 8000 adults

and children participated in library activities. However, our library’s accessibility and high level of service are in jeopardy.

Unfortunately, the county provides only enough funding to keep the library open 35 hours a week. The current parcel tax passed a decade ago increased service to 60 hours and seven days a week, but its purchasing power has eroded over the years. That’s why it is important to pass Measure J which adds \$30 to the existing tax or about 8 cents per day – a small price to pay for such a valuable community resource. Please vote Yes on Measure J either absentee or in person on June 5th.

Susie Epstein
Orinda

Measure J

To the editor:

I can’t remember the last time I checked a book out of the library, but I’m pretty sure I can count the years since in double digits. Still, I’m supporting Measure J for what the Orinda Library brings to this community I call home.

I choose to live in a community where everyone has equal access to information and entertainment, where my retired friends can read professional journals, my book club friends can borrow the latest bestseller, and my friends learning a foreign language can reserve a room for their study groups to meet.

I value a community that values children and education. I’m always delighted to see students get off the bus after school and head to the library, or to watch a toddler proudly carry her latest selection of books to the car.

Even though I may not check out a book anytime soon, I want to know that my library is ready and open seven days a week, not just for me, but for my community.

Sincerely,
Pat Rudebusch
Orinda



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

Do you have questions about Measure L?

Drop by for a cup of coffee and get more information. Look for our sign!

THURSDAY, MAY 10
8:30-9:30am
Coffee Shop
50 Lafayette Circle

TUESDAY, MAY 15
8:30-9:30am
Starbucks
3547 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

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.