



Published March 31st, 2021

Letters to the editor

Opinion by Ian Kallen

It is true that there are a number of multi-residential housing projects in downtown Lafayette. City Manager Srivatsa's observation that Lafayette needs "The Terraces" is not disingenuous. The project, which includes affordable units, is based upon California state law mandating up-zoning for most zoning classifications. City Manager Srivatsa does not "kowtow" to anyone, but she does obey the law, City ordinances and City policies.

The assault on Lafayette comes from Sacramento via laws and bills, including AB 68, AB 1485, SB 13, SB 330, SB 9, SB 10, and many, many others. Lafayette fights tooth and nail for our rights and local control of our own zoning policies. Mayor Candell and City Council Member Burks, especially, as well as Council Members Gerringer, Anduri and Dawson, work to mitigate or eliminate these state zoning mandates. This fight is part of their jobs as Council Members, and they do it well with support and help from our City staff and other regional organizations.

Population growth in Lafayette remained flat from the 1980s until about 2015. Since 2015 we have welcomed about 2,500 new citizens. Our city officials do not measure success by population growth. Rather, they measure it by the successful, downtown retail and dining opportunities, the distinguished architecture of buildings such as the Lafayette Library and Learning Center, the Veterans Memorial Building, and the Town Center projects. They measure success by the excellent condition of our roads and drains, the pleasant ambience of our public spaces and public art, the involvement of our volunteer citizen commissions/commissions, our Community Center and recreational facilities, and the fiscal health of the City. The list goes on.

I, for one, commend our City officials and our City staff for their dedication, hard work and commitment to the betterment of life in Lafayette as they navigate new state laws.

Erling Horn
Lafayette

San Pablo Creek `Oversight'

The City of Orinda is the federal floodplain manager for San Pablo Creek in downtown Orinda. As such, the City is responsible for ensuring adequate flood protection for our downtown businesses and residents. Unfortunately, the City depends on protection from a creek channel that unraveled nearly as soon as it was built in 1958. If you don't believe me, look at the huge slabs of broken concrete in the creek behind Vintage House. Once built for protection against a 50-year flood event, the system now offers protection against, at best, a 25-year event. Flooding of the downtown in the vicinity of Safeway is inevitable.

The good news is that the Downtown Precise Plan process secured consultants to explore improvement of flood protection for the Village, while also examining restoration options that would establish public amenities, such as a restored and publicly accessible creek and creek-side trail. The bad news is that a vocal minority of Orindans who oppose creek restoration seem to have persuaded some members of the City Council to waver on flood protection and a restored San Pablo Creek.

At the March 16 meeting, the public was made to wait until 12:15 a.m. to hear two council members speak in opposition of a simple staff-recommended contract amendment which would enable the City's consultant to perform the necessary hydraulic analysis and creek survey for flood control and creek restoration.

Shouldn't the council lead floodplain management and creek restoration?

We should not wait for private developers to drive our plans for a restored downtown and creek. Instead, our elected council members, aided by the Planning Department, need to provide the vision for a flood-safe, restored downtown area. The consultant's amendment would lay the foundation for these projects.

This matter may come before the City again. If so, I urge the community to tell the Council you support responsible floodplain management and downtown creek restoration. These projects aim to improve both flood risk reduction and conditions for wildlife and recreation. Importantly, they are essential to a revitalized Downtown.

Bob Stoops
Friends of Orinda Creeks

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