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Letters to the editor

Lafayette's character

I appreciate the letter by Mr. Hudson in the Nov. 10 issue. Lafayette Council is allowing a substantial change in the character of Lafayette by overbuilding housing and removing commercial to achieve this end. Driving around Lamorinda, one doesn't see this frantic increase in housing in Orinda or Moraga, only Lafayette. Many of us like the small town character of Lafayette, with local shopping and amenities. I understand the need to provide more housing, especially affordable housing in this state. I only ask why is Lafayette taking the brunt of this, while our neighboring communities are doing very little. There are sites all over Orinda and Moraga that could benefit from additional housing: for example: Orinda BART lot, which could provide parking and housing for thousands, town center in Moraga which has large plots of vacant land. The planning process in Lafayette is divided in a such a way, as the full impact of a development: traffic, character in relationship to the surroundings, how it affects the overall atmosphere of the town, etc., is only considered piecemeal by various commissions. The council and the planners and the town staff really have to stop trying to make Lafayette, Walnut Creek Jr. It will never achieve this, you will only ruin the charming town we have here now.
Leonard Dorin
Lafayette

Orinda Garbage Fees; Another Unfair Tax

The Orinda City Council, once again, threw 1,600 Orinda families under the wheels of the bus for the Council Members' own personal benefit. I'm talking about the agreed upon garbage rate increase which allows the City to collect \$1.2 million for road maintenance; limited to the publicly maintained roads four of the five Council Members live on; while denying service to 20 percent of Orinda's residents. The Council euphemistically calls the neglected roads "private" roads. The only thing private about them is the money used to maintain them; maintenance the Measure R sales tax defines as an essential public service. All aspects of these roads, providing access by the residents (members of the public) and by public service providers including fire, emergency medical, police, utilities, mail and package delivery, is identical to the services provided to members of the Council on their publicly maintained roads. We are talking serious money. Approximately \$4 million a year is spent on the 64 miles of publicly maintained residential streets the Council Members and 4,200 other families live on; for road bonds and current maintenance. The 1,600 families living on the roads the Council refuses to deem "public", and thus maintain with public funds, pays \$1.5 million of that cost; a \$350 a year benefit into each Council Member's pocket. The Council Members should be ashamed to allow this behavior to continue.
Steve Cohn
Orinda

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