



Published May 25th, 2022

## Letters to the editor

No Mow May

No Mow May is a tiny idea with huge consequences! Here's the idea - stow your lawnmower for the month of May and let the weeds come to bloom. The plants that we consider weeds are actually food that is essential for pollinators, like bees, just coming out of hibernation. The U.S. has nearly 5,000 species of native bees and many of them overwinter underground. When they come out of hibernation, they are hungry. No Mow May is all about feeding the bees.

So sit back and watch the grass grow for the rest of the month! Contact the person who mows your lawn and give them the rest of the month off. The bees will thank you.

Ellen Beans  
Moraga

Orinda council fails on affordable housing

State law requires Orinda to up-zone for over 600 units of affordable housing. Other cities have a different number. In the Bay Area, affordable housing for a four-person household allows for a maximum income of \$150,000. A document called the "Housing Element" must be submitted to the state by January 31, 2023, showing where the re-zoning will occur.

State law, however, allows for this zoning requirement to be satisfied by zoning sufficient sites for a density of 20 units per acre or more, without actually requiring that affordable housing be built on the sites designated for affordable housing. In order to actually obtain affordable housing, many cities, including Lafayette, have enacted "inclusionary housing ordinances" requiring, e.g., that 15% of units in new projects be affordable. Yet rather than enacting such an ordinance (which could be copied from Lafayette), or even committing to enact such an ordinance, the Orinda council has allowed "staff" to submit to the state a draft Housing Element that merely proposes that Orinda will "research" the subject over a multi-year period. The Mayor should be faulted for failing to cause the Council to provide direction to staff, instead by inaction leaving the decision to "staff," which is already in discussions with developers. "Staff" unsurprisingly, and in the absence of direction from the Council, has chosen to submit a draft Housing Element that is a developer's dream: up-zoning for increased density without a requirement for any affordable units. The Mayor, the Council, and staff should be embarrassed.

Nick Waranoff  
Orinda

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA