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## Friends of Orinda Creeks complete first creek improvement with more planned

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Bowen credited former Orinda City Manager Steve Salomon with suggesting that creek restoration in downtown Orinda be approached in phases. The planning of the current phase began about a decade ago. Engineering and permitting took roughly two years. Once everything was in place, construction took about a week and a half.

The next phase that the FOC hopes to see come to fruition involves the stretch of San Pablo Creek that runs beside the Chevron Station on the corner of Santa Maria Way and Orinda Way in the Village. According to Bowen, Chevron has generously offered to donate the creek portion of their property to the city to promote restoration of San Pablo Creek downtown.

"As additional properties change hands or new proposals for development [are presented]," Bowen says, "we'll look at those and try to accommodate creek restoration." Discussing the two projects, the weirs and the Chevron property, Bowen explained, "As pieces of the puzzle, they both fit into a meandering creek restoration vision. Both stretches are in the right place

relative to the restoration plan." Similar to the just completed portion on the County property, The channel location on the Chevron property cannot be changed.

The FOC is very attached to its vision of a meandering creek, although the city has yet to be convinced. The FOC presented its vision of the restoration of 1,400 linear feet of San Pablo Creek from Santa Maria Way down to just before the Safeway parking lot to the City Council for the Downtown Precise Plan.

The FOC vision includes a meander, or bend, between the County parcel and the Safeway parking lot. After discussions with the city, the FOC had modified its plan for the meander to reduce its scope as well as reducing the number of parking spaces that would be affected by its creation. Experts hired by the FOC, at their expense, believe that this can be accomplished, but the city has chosen not to include this concept in its Downtown Precise Plan, as the opinion of city expert consultants differs from those experts employed by the FOC.

Another area where the FOC differs from the city is in regard to a trail along the creek bank. The FOC favors an

informal, unpaved trail, while the city plans to put in a paved trail that the FOC believes will damage the riparian area around the creek.

Where both groups agree, however, is in the necessity of restoring San Pablo Creek as it runs through Downtown Orinda. Vice Mayor Inga Miller and Director of Planning Drummond Buckley came to see the restoration work. Buckley commented, "We believe this to be a momentous accomplishment, hopefully followed by additional restoration along other segments of the creek in the near future. Restoration of San Pablo Creek is an important objective of the Downtown Precise Plan currently under preparation by the Planning Department, including the recently-completed creek study prepared by PlaceWorks and Questa Engineering." As noted, the FOC disagrees with that study.

Miller said, "We were absolutely admiring the FOC's work, and we are really excited to see the progress on San Pablo Creek, to see the weirs constructed out of natural materials and riparian plantings." She added, "We are really excited to see this step towards the restoration of San Pablo Creek."

## Hundreds gather for School Board Candidate Forum

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"One thing we focused on was learning loss during the pandemic," he said. "We've rebounded a bit and are on our way to full recovery. Social and emotional learning helps support [students] to move forward." Sturm said, respectively, that this question involves a false assumption and when you see it through a different lens, this year's CAP scores are the highest since the pandemic. Foreman agreed with both speakers, and said that social emotional learning is critical to education. "We've seen a high increase in suicides," she said. "I don't see this as a distraction at all."

Many audience members expressed disappointment that Larsen, McSorely and Lind didn't show up. As for those who attended the forum (as well as those who didn't make it), hoping to learn the full spectrum of perspectives from the six candidates, Goralka said there's still hope. "They can visit votersedge.org

and see the top three issues of any (and all of) the candidates. Your vote is your voice. Vote the way that feels right to you. It's not about how your neighbors or others feel. It's about how you feel."

The consensus among the candidates who did show up was that they wished their counterparts were sitting at the table beside them so that they could have had an opportunity to debate with each other and so that voters could have learned about the breadth of perspectives.

"I'm both a candidate and a voter and I would've appreciated an opportunity to hear the full range of views on a full range of issues," Sturm said.

"The fact that we had a full gym shows that the community is thirsting for an actual conversation where we can present ideas," Smith said. "I appreciate that the League of Women Voters, a non-partisan organization, organizes these types of forums. I know there'll be six candidates on the ballot and I

hope the candidates who showed up tonight were able to answer some of the questions of people in the audience and hopefully we'll earn some of their votes."

Foreman contrasted the experience of the public forum to the Lafayette Education Association Teachers Forum when all six candidates showed up. "I appreciated that time to hear from the other candidates and have an event where there was a contrast," she said. "The event with all six of us was more comprehensive. Teachers got a picture of who all six of us were," adding that it was disappointing to not have that replicated for the general public at the Oct. 3 forum. Foreman plans to attend the Oct. 13 Lafayette Homeowners Council forum at 7 p.m. on Zoom (<https://lafayettehomeownerscouncil.org/>). "I want to share my message with as many people as possible," Foreman said, "and I want to answer the questions of voters."

## Orinda rejects electrification ordinance, for now

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When Vice Mayor Inga Miller asked why the county did not include restaurants, Hardman-Saldana explained that the state of California does not yet have a cost efficiency study for restaurants, and also that the city of

Berkeley is being sued by restaurants over their electrification ordinance.

Several members of the community submitted written comments opposing adoption of the ordinance. Nick Waranoff urged the city not to put all of its energy "eggs" into one "basket." He referred to public safety power shutoffs, suggesting that the electric grid does not yet have sufficient capacity to support electrification, and may be hampered in the future to the extent that hydraulic power production may be affected by drought conditions in the state. He also noted that the national power grid is susceptible to terrorist attacks and hackers. Melanie Light also suggested that the proposed ordinance might have unintended consequences. She, like Waranoff, pointed out that during power outages, it is convenient to have gas to cook with and heat homes, if necessary. The California Restaurant Association also

opposed the proposed ordinance.

In council discussion, Council Member Nick Kosla pointed out that there is currently a delay of months for electric installation for new homes. "This needs to be marinated a little longer," he said. "Climate change is a world issue. California has done a great job, with a massive population we can make a difference," he added. Council Member Amy Worth agreed that the goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions is important, and that the city is doing it in places that they can. Council Member Darlene Gee also agreed that it is clear that the state is heading this way, but added, "We don't have a lot going on right now that is going to benefit from us taking action right now. At this point," she said, "I am not interested in changing ordinances just for the city of Orinda." Miller asked staff to keep an eye on developments in the area of electrification.



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