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Neighbors rejoice after Linda Vista eyesore removed



Neighbors were overjoyed when the partially deconstructed building at 6 Linda Vista in Orinda was finally demolished after a seven-year struggle. A small home had been left when its owner died, and was bought by a developer who wished to build a singlefamily home for his family. Neighbors objected to the size of the project, and the property was then sold. The remodeling project began, but went disastrously wrong. The building was left as an eyesore, taken down to the

Photo Sora O'Doherty

studs. Eventually the property was repossessed, but the saga continued as the new owner, a Los Angeles company, investigated ways to recoup its investment. Now the property has been cleared of the building and the lot will be sold. In the meantime, neighbors held a party on March 24 with pets in tow, temporarily declaring the property The Linda Vista Dog Park.

– Sora O'Doherty

Orinda Watch sponsors town hall to protest CASA Compact and SB 50

By Sora O'Doherty

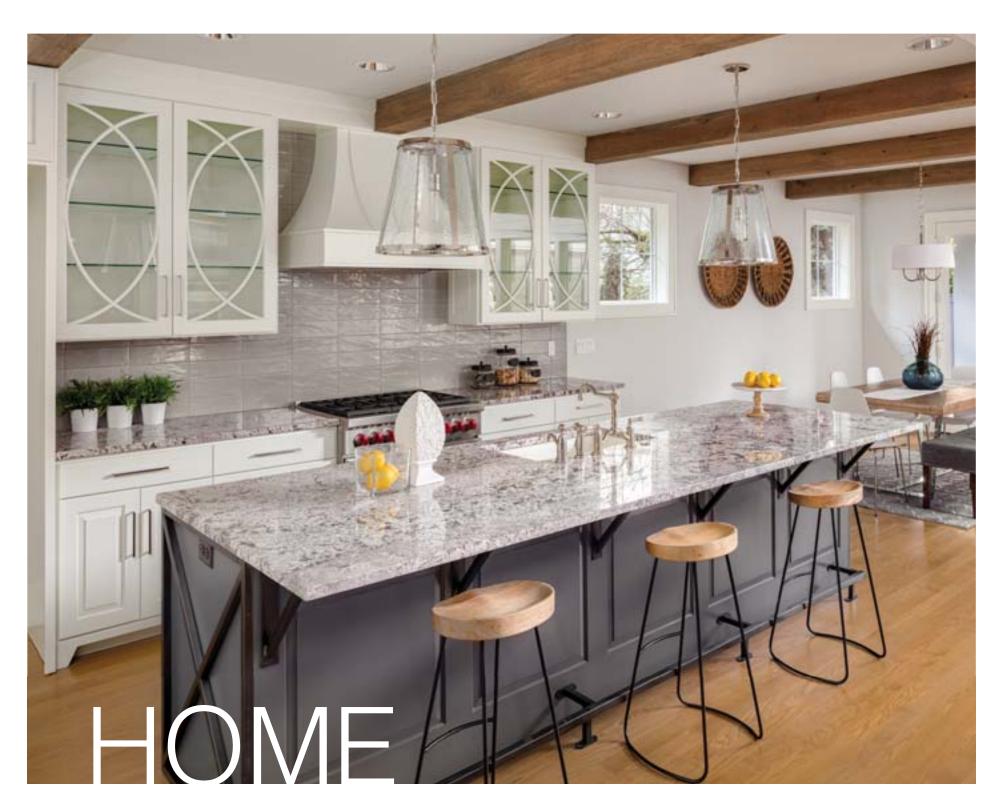
Master of Ceremonies Dr. Scott Zeller introduced three speakers at a crowded town hall meeting March 28 sponsored by Orinda Watch to present information about the controversial CASA Compact and California Senate Bill 50. The speakers – Zelda Bronstein, a freelance journalist and a former chair of the Berkeley Planning Commission; Susan Kirsch, the founder of Livable California; and Dennis Richards, a former Salesforce vice president and a member of the San Francisco Planning Commission who offered his comments as an individual, not as a San Francisco city official - and most public commenters were vehemently opposed to both, with the general feeling that the state of California was taking over housing issues for the nine-county Bay Area.

CASA stands for the Committee to House the Bay Area and is a project of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), which is the regional organization that channels federal transportation dollars to the Bay Area, said Bronstein. MTC administers more than \$2 billion annually for the Bay Area's surface transportation network, including more than \$600 million in bridge tolls.

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is the regional land use planning agency, she explained. According to Bronstein, a 2008 state law forced ABAG and the MTC to collaborate on regional planning, and partly as a result, she added, "in 2016 the MTC engineered a hostile takeover of ABAG." She explained, "MTC intended to be a one-stop transportation and land use planning agency for the Bay Area."

Bronstein holds that "CASA was secretly convened in June 2017 by Steve Heminger, the recently departed ex-Director of MTC." She continued to state that the 53-person group was dominated by "big players in the Bay Area's real estate industry," as well as 12 local officials, two "token" environmentalist groups, "big tech," "big philanthropy," three equity advocates, the representatives of organized labor, two "vehement opponents of the California Environmental Quality Act," and one "genuine tenants advocate."

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