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Letters to the editor

Carl Anduri endorsement

I have lived in the town of Lafayette for almost twenty-two years. When I first moved here in 1998 from Los Altos on the Peninsula, I was impressed how well the town was run as it evolved from a sleepy suburban community to much more cosmopolitan mecca for the commuters from San Francisco. The town was beginning to face the challenges of growth even back then, but the City Council and city staff seemed to meet that challenge. Growing pains existed, particularly in regards to land use and limited financial resources, but the council was diligent in sorting out options and strategies. It had then and continues to have one of the best fiscal reputations in the state.

Carl Anduri was a leader and source of stability and wisdom through this challenging process. He served as mayor on more than one occasion where his legal experience and negotiating skills were invaluable in sorting through many knotty meetings between citizens with different perspectives. He handled these situations with tact and firmness necessary to make forward progress and ultimately to reach decisions.

Lafayette again is facing challenges from growth, and the Council will benefit from Carl's previous experience. He is well known by the present Council and will pick-up where left off. His reputation speaks for itself.

Donn Walklet
Lafayette

Orinda Measure R

When we moved to Orinda in 1973, it was not long after the county had completed restoring Camino Sobrante around the north side of Lake Cascade. That piece of road was neglected for the next 40 years! From a smooth roadway, it became something to avoid. And, that's the history of just one of the nearby roads that declined during those 40 years. Because we really cannot let Orinda's infrastructure decline like this for the next 40 years, I'm supporting Measure R this November.

Ronald W. Phelon
Orinda

Vote yes on Measure R

I will never forget frantically packing the car with my one year old and a diaper bag to flee the approaching flames of the Oakland fire

in 1991. After we moved over the hill from Oakland to Orinda nearly 20 years ago, I was struck by the magnitude of fire hazards I saw here --from piles of dry branches to the lack of defensible space around most houses.

While our family was spared that time, the situation now in Orinda is dire with decades of fuel that is ready to burn with the next freakish lightning storm or a spark from a lawn mower. Orinda is clearly not ready.

Efforts such as the chipper program are a big help, but need to be greatly expanded to make a substantial dent in fuel reduction. Dead trees and branches need to be removed before they potentially block major escape routes, trapping people in their cars as they did in Paradise.

For these and many other reasons, I strongly support Measure R, the half-cent sales tax measure on the November ballot. For people who say now is not the time, the next firestorm is not going to wait. We cannot rely on existing city funds as only 7% of property tax actually stays in Orinda. The money generated from a very small tax increase (50 cents per \$100 spent in Orinda - not including food at Safeway) can pay for programs that directly help homeowners do large scale brush and branch removal to protect their home and their neighbor's.

The city has pledged that a majority of the funds from Measure R will go to fire prevention, just as the current sales tax has vastly improved Orinda roads. This is our chance to save our town from the devastation we have seen from wildfires all over Northern California.

Please join me in voting YES on Measure R.

Elisabeth Jewel

Orinda

Gina Dawson for City Council

We are writing to express our enthusiastic support for Gina Dawson for Lafayette City Council. We have known and worked with Gina on various community projects since she and her husband moved here in 2008, first as part of Sustainable Lafayette and more recently as active supporters of Save Lafayette Trees. We have found her to be hard-working, balanced and fair, passionate, and always digs into the details and does her homework on every important matter she gets involved in. Watching Gina and her husband Michael take a stand against PG&E's misguided effort to cut down 272 trees has been truly inspiring. They started out trying to protect the trees and beauty of our community and ended up spending hundreds and hundreds of hours talking to experts and learning what PG&E could actually do to increase the safety of our gas pipelines. Throughout that ordeal Gina has exhibited an incredible ability to engage community leaders, to patiently pursue what's in the best interest of the community, an openness to learn, and a willingness to compromise. In short, she has exactly the skill set and passion that our City Council needs and deserves right now. We couldn't

recommend her more highly, and encourage you to visit her web site (www.ginadawson2020.com) and learn more.

Steve & Sharon Richard (Co-Founder of Sustainable Lafayette)

Vote for Gina and Farshad

"Maintain Lafayette's semi-rural atmosphere!" Did you know words to that effect actually are a part of Lafayette's mission statement? Has the City's recent glut of approvals of multi-unit housing (twice as many as have been required by the City's State-mandated RHNA) improved Lafayette's semi-rural atmosphere? Fortunately, perhaps, several of those in City government who may have been responsible for this violation of our City's vision have recently moved on, or soon will, leaving Lafayette voters with a chance to elect City Council members who care about the concerns of most Lafayette residents. In this regard, I have heard many positive things about City Council candidate Regina Dawson. Also, candidate Farshad Farzan has been described as an independent thinker who advocates for the environment and diversity, and was one of the few Planning Commissioners who voted against The Terraces. Come November, I encourage you to vote for Gina and Farshad.

William Gilbert
Lafayette

Elect Carl Anduri to Lafayette City Council

Carl and I served together on the Lafayette City Council from 2002 through 2004. Prior to that, Carl served on our Planning Commission for five years, where he studied and focused on complex, land-use laws, regulations and policies. He took this commitment to detail and applied it to the many issues faced by the City Council. Carl's other committee work, which focused on housing, roads and hillside development, gave him further insight into community concerns.

At public meetings, I witnessed Carl's ability to explain complex policies and laws and how they applied to issues at hand. His insights made it easier for the public to understand the City's position. A careful listener, Carl always showed respect for all speakers' viewpoints.

As a re-elected Lafayette City Council member, Carl will bring experience, proven leadership, fiscal prudence, competent judgment, integrity and an open mind that will consider all points of view. I urge you to vote for Carl Anduri, who was once a fifth grade public school teacher.

Erling Horn
Lafayette

Renata Sos for Moraga Town Council

We've endorsed Renata Sos for Moraga Town Council and encourage you to vote for her on Nov. 3.

Since the early 2000s, we have watched Renata work hard to protect our community's semi-rural feel and natural resources: first, as a concerned citizen, when she and other community members successfully advocated for a significant reduction in size of a development in the Rheem Valley open space; next, as a Planning Commissioner, where she carefully considered the impacts of proposed developments on scenic corridors, open space, and sensitive habitats; and, most recently, as a member of the Moraga Town Council, where she voted to deny an application for an outsized development in Bollinger Valley.

This is not to suggest that Renata is a single-issue candidate. To the contrary, Renata is a well-rounded leader who has devoted significant time and energy over the years to many aspects of our community, including our schools and youth sports. But her commitment to Moraga's physical environment are of particular importance to us.

We both feel fortunate to live and raise our sons in a community that is surrounded by undeveloped hills and that still has abundant open space and park lands. To us, those things make this Town special and unique. We know that Renata shares in that view, and that she is committed to preserving what's best about this community for future generations.

Please join us in supporting Renata Sos for Moraga Town Council. Renatasos2020.com.

Serina and Tim Culleton

Moraga

Re-Elect John Jex to MOFD Board

John Jex, a 40+ year Moraga resident, strongly supports fire prevention and the best interests of our community. He has demonstrated by his actions that his number one priority is fire prevention and town safety. He fought to keep in place and continue funding the Chipper Program, aimed at eradicating vegetative fuels that ignite wildfires, but was outvoted by the board majority whose campaigns were over 90% funded by outside interests. This is a program that our Firewise Neighborhood in Moraga, the Bluffs, used this past spring to eliminate much of our fire fuel. We are safer in our neighborhood because of this program, and John saw the wisdom and benefit in continuing it while others did not.

John has also championed the effort for fiscal prudence to protect local taxpayers by insisting on transparency and acumen in the use of MOFD funds. Similarly he successfully urged the establishment of a reserve account to preclude the prior Board habit of deficit spending. Our firefighters deserve their pay and their benefits. Moraga residents deserve both exceptional fire protection as well as wise fiscal management. It's not one or the other. Both are possible.

Join me to Re-Elect John Jex to the MOFD Board, who votes to protect Moraga's citizens, not outside interests. He has earned and

deserves your vote.
Anne Obsitnik
Moraga

Re-elect Jex to Reduce Fire District Financial Risks

Having an accounting and financial background I read with interest the recent Lamorinda Weekly article about the MOFD directors 3-2 split vote on the adequacy of minimum general fund balance of 17% of revenue. As a resident of Moraga, I am shocked that three of our directors thought this was all that was needed for MOFD to securely maintain or expand needed fire protection services such as the year-round chipper services (which was discontinued during a critical period this summer again by 3-2 vote). Anyone familiar with public service entities financing knows that a minimum reserve of 50% is needed, enough to cover six months of operating costs. These reserves are our only way to ensure our critical emergency services are maintained throughout tough economic times like COVID-19, when revenues go down and expenses go up. I admire Jex and Jorgens for voting against a policy which continues to leave MOFD at risk of declaring a fiscal emergency like Moraga did in 2019 after the sink hole and bridge failure, dropping its reserves to 19%, far below their 50% policy. This resulted in the city having to cut public services. I would encourage fellow community members to support the reelection of John Jex and Craig Jorgens to ensure the financial safety of the fire district.

Julius L. Helvey
Moraga

Measure R endorsement

I am writing in support of Measure R on the November ballot. We are blessed with a wonderful community in a beautiful environment. We have worked hard to maintain what we have been given and must keep the efforts up. A major concern and responsibility is, as it should be, protection and enhancement of our infrastructure that includes fire prevention, roads, and storm drains.

Why city involvement in fire prevention when we have a fire department? There has always been a cooperative effort between the city and MOFD to address the shared concern for fire prevention. The fire department is allocating increased resources to fuel management, but more needs to be done. Remember we are citizens and taxpayers of both agencies and we all need to work together. This measure will allow the city to do more on this front as well as address other important infrastructure needs such as road maintenance and storm drains. While the measure does not restrict the city's allocation of the funds, knowing this community's involvement in Orinda's operations, there will be accountability including a citizens' oversight committee and audits.

As a founding director of MOFD, serving from 1997 to 2014, I have

seen the community engage when needed. We brought paramedics to Orinda and the community rallied to bring our roads up to the level we have now. It is time to commit to maintaining that standard and bring our fire prevention efforts to that same level. Measure R will do that.

John Wyro
Orinda

Split MOFD board declines to change reserve balance policy

Director Jex appears to have failed Leadership/Management 101. His use of Ad hominem attacks focused on MOFD Board members closes out any thoughtful discussions or deliberations. Director Jex describing board members who disagree on policy as "incompetent" does not lead to clear and cogent discussions on policy matters. During Director Jex's almost four years as a MOFD Board member he has made a significant contribution in the auditing of MOFD's Financials. His skill as an auditor are more than adequate; however, Director Jex has demonstrated repeatedly a lack of understanding of the mission of MOFD and conflates MOFD's life-saving mission with the administrative operations of a private sector company. In an executive role, Director Jex notably demonstrates a lack of understating of public sector financing, local government organizational requirements, and the key role of Contra Costa County's Teeter Plan. His executive thinking is reflective of a commodity-based private enterprise not an organization dedicated to saving property and lives. Further, Director Jex does not understand the fiscal history of MOFD. Over the last decade, the MOFD board, acting with fiscal prudence, has raised the reserve balance three (3) times to its current level of 17%. With multi-million dollar balances in various District funds, Director Jex has forgotten the cardinal rule of governmental accounting; all dollars are fungible.

Director Jex's statement of Board incompetence blocks any meaningful discussion on policy differences. His Ad hominem attacks simply demonstrate a need for less "deep dives" into accounting and more training in executive/enterprise management.
Stephen Anderson
Orinda

Carl Anduri for Lafayette City Council

As a former Planning Commissioner and City Councilperson, Carl has been a highly respected member of our community for years. In brief, he sets the standard for the ethics, attention, knowledge, and outlook required to be effective.

Carl was co-chair of our Senior Housing Task Force. The task, facilitating the development of low income senior housing in Lafayette, involved researching potential sites downtown, selection of a nonprofit senior housing development partner, and meeting the City's ordinances. Efficiently completed, it was the ONLY 100%

affordable housing project to be built in Lafayette in the last 30 years. Carl's leadership was critical in that process as we successfully blended planning requirements with design, costs and financing.

Lafayette faces continuing planning challenges to meet local and external requirements. Carl's knowledge and experience in Planning and on the Council are needed.

For more information: www.anduri2020.com

Will Lovitt

Lafayette

Support for Inga Miller

Inga Miller, running for re-election to Orinda's City Council deserves our unqualified support.

I agree with Steve Glazer, State Senate Representative (and former Mayor of Orinda), who has endorsed Ms. Miller (as well as Darlene Gee!).

She is a strong supporter of completing Orinda's road repairs. As Mayor, Ms. Miller helped guide the City, in 2019, through a shocking, difficult time when the Halloween shootings occurred. Starting in 2019, she began working with the Police Chief Cook on wildfire preparedness. Ms. Miller operates her small business right here in Orinda; that is, her law practice focusing on real estate issues. She finds time to be a volunteer driver helping Orinda non-driving seniors to get to important appointments.

Ms. Miller helped bring to the November 2020 ballot the much needed - and timely - measure to beef up fire safety (on City and private road rights of way), flood prevention and road repair. She works to keep Orinda road maintenance/repair costs in check.

Ms. Miller supports our downtown Orinda Library, a long-time center for students seniors and avid readers. She worked with the Council and The Friends of the Library to place a measure on the ballot, and advocated passage vigorously in the press, to maintain library hours and services; continue programs for children, families, and seniors; undertake building maintenance and repairs. The measure passed by 75% Yes (June 2018), providing \$500,000 annually for 7 years. The measure included an independent resident oversight committee, reflecting her commitment to fiscal prudence.

Ms. Miller addresses social issues that resonate in this City. On June 7, she marched, as a City Council member (with 3 other council members), in support of Black Lives Matter, a gathering which drew a large, dedicated crowd.

Inga Miller grew up here in Orinda. She has the temperament for public service, and the experience, having worked as Mayor, Vice Mayor and council member, during a challenging, stressful 4-year period.

She knows our City. She has my vote, and I hope, that of my fellow Orindans as well.

David Anderson

Orinda

Let's Make This Happen

As a resident of Lamorinda since 1972 living in Orinda for the past 21 years, I was an early proponent for refreshing a very tired-looking downtown with a Downtown Plan to guide efforts to renew Orinda. It is now thrilling to know that a plan is finally in place and is being further refined with input from Orinda residents. Yahoo! We are on our way!

The many letters to the editors of the Orinda News and Lamorinda Weekly in favor of the still-in-process Orinda Downtown Precise Plan give me great hope that someday Orinda will be more welcoming, beautiful, walkable, functional, with more restaurants, shops, residential choices, and a more cohesive appearance and feel. The DPP will provide the changes needed to accomplish these goals. When I lived in Lafayette and Moraga, I used to come to Orinda to shop at Blacks and Phairs or enjoy a meal at The Vintage House, now that I live in Orinda we drive to Lafayette and Moraga to shop and dine out; it's not a happy situation.

Bravo to the Orinda City Council and everyone who has participated in bringing the DPP this far. It is not too late to let the Orinda City Council know what elements you would like to see in this new plan or give your support to the effort. Attending Council zoom meetings is an easy way to stay abreast of the exciting things that are happening in Orinda as well as providing a way to make your ideas and support known. To learn the date and time of the next meeting go to the city's website, click on Meeting Calendar and drop down to Council Downtown Subcommittee Meetings. Together we have the ability to make Orinda a very special and especially charming city that will attract new businesses, shoppers, and diners from near and far. Let's make this happen!

Laurie Renny Reich
Orinda

Onoda endorsement

Please elect Teresa Onoda to Moraga's Town Council. She has proven herself to be an advocate for the safety of children in Moraga. She served on the town council from 2014-2018. During that time, she was instrumental in passing a town ordinance intended to protect children from accidental firearm shootings. When Teresa heard the concerns of citizens regarding the possibility of accidental shootings in homes where firearms are not secure, she truly listened with an open mind. She did not make her decision immediately, but she did take the time and energy to educate our group on how to engage with the town council on this topic. After listening to all of her constituents, she voted in support of the safe storage of firearms, so that small children are protected from accidental shootings, teens and adults are protected from

impulsive suicides, and firearms are not easily accessible to burglars.

Her commitment to the safety of children stretches back to her first introduction to local politics, when she worked towards getting a sidewalk for elementary children to use so that they could safely walk to and from school.

During my discussions with Teresa, it became clear to me that she cares deeply about the citizens and the town of Moraga and she consistently engages with people in a constructive and respectful manner. She is running for the right reasons: to give back and to make our community even more vibrant. She knows how to get things done. Her ability to listen to a variety of stakeholders and apply her creativity and knowledge of how town government works makes her the ideal candidate for Moraga Town Council. Please cast your vote for Teresa Onoda.

Stephanie Dickerson
Moraga

Safer Orinda - Vote Yes on Measure R

Measure R will address urgent fire safety issues, repair critical storm drains and protect our hard fought investment in our roads. When I was campaigning for City Council in 2018, I talked with a couple that has lived in Orinda for a very long time. At one point they asked me to come into their house and showed me a picture of Orinda from the 1940 or 50s. The picture showed hills with a few oaks and not much else. If you look at that same location now, it is covered with trees and other vegetation. We need to make up for years of growth that was not abated, and we need to do it quickly because climate change is increasing the risk of wildfires.

Last year, Fire Chief Winnacker received a grant (around \$4 million) for the North Orinda Fuel Break. This was very helpful, but he believes we need to do more. We rely on the Fire Chief's frank assessment of fire related issues, and when he says we need to do more to protect our residents, the City Council listens.

Measure R will allow Orinda to start immediately on urgently needed fire fuels reduction, followed by repair of failing storm drains. After the critical storm drains have been repaired and wildfire fuels have been mitigated, which is about the time roads will need additional resources, sales tax revenue will then be available for road maintenance and to maintain the progress made in fire fuels reduction.

After spending the last decade implementing a plan to improve our roads, we need to protect our investment and provide funds to keep the roads in good condition.

Please join me in voting Yes on Measure R for a safer, better Orinda.

Dennis Fay

Orinda

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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