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## Letters to the editor

... continued from Page A11

### Gee for Council

When Darlene Gee called me four years ago to ask if I'd endorse her candidacy for Orinda City Council, my immediate response was "of course." It was such an obvious choice on her part and for the voters. Having known Darlene for over 20 years, I have no hesitation in throwing my full support behind her. Her professional experience as a civil engineer coupled with her civic service on behalf of all Orindans make her the logical choice then and now. Her work on the council these past four years has shown what her friends have known all along. Darlene is a smart, hard-working, and thoughtful decision maker; she does her homework, asks the right questions, and seeks to find common ground, all of which are the very attributes we need in civic leadership today. Please join me in voting to re-elect Darlene Gee to the Orinda City Council.  
Pat Rudebusch  
Orinda

### Measure R: What's the Plan?

The City Council says that because the Measure R Sales Tax is a "general" tax which the City can spend any way it wants to, that it cannot say how it "plans" to spend our \$60 million over the next 20 years. That we have to trust this Council and the next ten generations of councils (changing every two years) to do the right thing.

I believe that accepting this level of trust, at this time, would be misplaced so I am voting NO on Measure R and am asking you to do the same.

The City says it is going to spend the money on a combination of fire prevention, road maintenance and storm drains. But it will not say how much it will spend on each or if it has other funds available to do the job (which it does; over \$3 million per year plus \$10 million in reserves).

One of the reasons it cannot / will not say what it will spend the \$60 million on is that it either has no plan (fire prevention) or incomplete plans (road and storm drain maintenance). What it is asking for is a twenty year blank check so it can develop plans for these tasks.

The City does not need this "new" tax right now in the middle of the worst pandemic in a century along with its unknown economic repercussions. The existing tax, generating \$1.2 million per year for two more years, can be used for anything, including fire prevention. Why is the City Council not spending any of that money on fire prevention now? Why should we believe they will start doing it if we double the tax? Why would they threaten to spend nothing on fire prevention unless we do double the tax to \$2.4 million when they only plan to spend \$500-750,000 on fire prevention?

This is the wrong tax at the wrong time. Let the Council come back when it has a plan and use existing funds until then.

Vote NO on Measure R.  
Steve Cohn  
Orinda

### Yes on Measure R

Orinda, we have just had the driest winter in at least 12 years in Orinda. And it looks like we are facing many more years of hotter and drier weather. We are also witnessing the devastating effects of this on communities across California and the entire West Coast. We need to take action NOW and start to fix a problem that has grown (literally) over the last 50 years in Orinda--too many dangerous trees and shrubs. The Measure R sales tax will begin to make a significant dent in this problem immediately. The first years of the tax will be primarily dedicated to fire fuel reduction, which is our biggest hazard right now. This mitigation work will include All residents (including those who live on private roads). When we've tackled that, the money will be available for maintenance (trees grow back) as well as fixing collapsing storm drains and keeping up road maintenance. Property taxes in Orinda do not provide sufficient funding (due to Prop 13) to do this necessary work. Measure R will ensure that we protect our community. Let's all support Measure R on the November 3rd ballot.  
Abe Mintz  
Member Orinda Finance Advisory Committee

### Vote yes on Measure R

Driving through the streets of Orinda I am always thankful to be in such a beautiful place surrounded by lush trees and rolling hills. We need to protect this great environment by taking responsibility for its management. Measure R is designed to do just that. It will help reduce the fire risk by providing funds to reduce overgrown vegetation and overhanging branches and trees and will help keep evacuation routes clear. It will allow Orinda to expand the chipper program to help residents clear their lots of brush and overgrown shrubbery. Long term it will also provide money to replace failing storm drains and keep the roads in good condition.

This tax money stays in Orinda and will be used only for Orinda. It will provide much needed support for the current and ongoing maintenance of the city. I urge you to vote yes on Measure R.

Nancy Booth  
Orinda

### Please join us: Vote Renata Sos for Moraga Town Council

Since Renata and her family inspired us to move Moraga in 2004, we have witnessed the many ways in which she demonstrates her commitment to our community: coaching youth sports, and serving on the Moraga Planning Commission, Community Foundation and Town Council.

Renata is a truthful and open-minded leader. She plays well with others and brings out the best in them to establish and achieve shared goals. Renata understands the functions of different governance structures that affect our community -- the town, its school dis-

tricts, the county, and the state. She knows "what is ours to do" as a town and how to engage representatives of the other jurisdictions to seek win-win solutions. She is committed to fiscally responsible and transparent governance, and exercised that commitment on state, local, business, and nonprofit boards and on the Town Council. Renata always does her homework. She has high aspirations for our town and is also a realist who works to craft consensus. She will work to preserve the town's strengths, which include its semi-rural character; and, to effectively address its needs, which include a more vibrant, varied, inclusive, and sustainable business climate. Please join us in voting for Renata on Nov. 3. Sonja Schoenwald and Keller Strother Moraga

### Vote yes on Measure R

There seems to be some misunderstanding regarding Measure R on your ballot in the upcoming election; what it is and is not, what it does and does not do plus why we need it. Approving it will remove the existing 1/2 cent sales tax measure previously approved by the voters and replaces it with a 1 cent sales tax. It is neither a parcel tax nor a bond measure. When you make a taxable purchase in Orinda the tax you pay will increase by 1/2 cent. That does not seem like will generate much funding to use except that when you buy a "big ticket" item in another city [like a new car] the tax paid comes back Orinda for our use. The previous 1/2 sales tax increase generated about a million dollars plus per year and is how we had the funds to start fixing our public roads. Then two bond measures passed and repairs began in earnest.

The repair Plan/program is a success and by the end of this [2020] construction season will have taken the roads from "failed/poor" to "very good" with some "excellent". By this time next year all the bond money will have been spent doing what was promised; fixing roads and the shallow drains under them. Why do we need another tax even one as modest as R? During the review of the Plan two problems became apparent; first, there was no funding for maintenance of the work done and second, no funding to repair/replace the deep drains under the main roads [like Miner Road] add to these the need to fund for fire fuels mitigation to help prevent the kind disaster that has become too common in CA the last two years.

Measure R provides a stable source of funds [about \$3 million plus] to address all three of the above needs. We have made a significant investment [over \$53 million] in the infrastructure and quality of life of our City and now it is time to protect our investment. Vote yes on Measure R!  
Terry Murphy  
Orinda

### Alternative to Measure R

Background: Eight years ago Orinda voters approved a General Sales Tax which the City can use for what it deems im-

portant. Measure R doubles that tax, and extends it 20 years, which ultimately would total \$60 million (including inflation). A July Staff report recommends spending between \$40,000 to \$60,000/month for Fire Prevention. Orinda currently has \$10 million (of which \$3 million is Unspent Sales Tax revenue) in reserves (of which a fraction could be used for Fire Prevention, until a March ballot measure for a \$150/year Parcel Tax for 5 years could be put in place).

Advantages of a 5-year Parcel Tax versus Doubling and Extending Sales Tax for 20 years: 1) A parcel tax would commit households to a total of \$750 for a 5-year period, compared to the total of \$9,000 (over 20 years- including inflation) that doubling and extending the sales tax would; 2) Most importantly, Measure R includes NO Requirement that any of taxes be spent on Fire Prevention, while the Parcel Tax would be dedicated Solely to Fire Prevention; 3) Parcel Tax would raise more money, and do so more quickly, to address Fire Prevention; and 4) Reduce the risk of future City Councils using additional sales tax receipts for other purpose(s) than being dedicated to Fire Prevention.

Conclusion: A parcel tax requires the extra effort of a 2/3's vote, rather than a simple majority. Orinda has consistently supported 2/3's tax initiatives. Examples being the Library Parcel Tax, the current sales tax, and the 2012 and 2016 Road Bonds. Voting No on R, and proceeding with a 5-year parcel tax initiative would raise more money, do it faster, and assure that the monies would be used solely for Fire Prevention.

Bill Cosden  
Orinda

### Cam for Council

I write in support of Cam Burks, who is running for the Lafayette City Council. Cam is the only incumbent amongst the four candidates seeking election. Cam has worked tirelessly on behalf of the city, and all residents. He is not afraid to make his opinion known, and he does not duck controversial issues. I admire his work ethic, his willingness to seek out the opinions of residents and his tenacity in representing us. I know many who have contributed to this community over the years who feel the same way.

We very much admire that Cam is raising his family, holding down a demanding full-time job, and devoting much time to our city. We should all be so fortunate as to have him elected to another term, and he has my whole-hearted support. Please join me in voting Cam Burks for another term on the city council.  
Bill Fraser  
Lafayette

... continued on Page A13

## Re-Elect John JEX Fire Board (MOFD)



### My Promise to the Moraga Community:

- 1) Focus more on Fire Prevention while still providing State-of-the-art Fire and Emergency Medical Services.
- 2) Be a Budget Watchdog to ensure transparency and responsible use of MOFD funds to maximize community benefit.
- 3) Utilize Advanced Technology to leverage MOFD's physical assets and well-trained personnel.

*John JEX*

### Community Leaders and Hundreds of Residents support John JEX for MOFD!

(Titles for identification only. Partial list of supporters.)

**Steven Glazer** - CA State Senator  
**Candace Anderson** - President, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors  
**Brad Barber** - Former Moraga Orinda Fire District Board President  
**Chris Conrad** - Chair, Ascot Highlands Firewise Committee  
**Darlene Gee** - Mayor, City of Orinda  
**Marna Eyring** - Moraga Education Foundation, Founding Boardmember  
**Dennis Fay** - City of Orinda Councilmember, MOFD liaison

**Gene Gottfried** - Former Moraga Orinda Fire District Board President  
**Craig Jorgens** - Moraga Orinda Fire District Board  
**Chuck Larsen** - Chair, Rheem Valley Firewise Neighborhood  
**Melanie Light** - Chair, Orinda Firewise Council and Founder, Lamorinda Firewise Neighborhoods  
**Mike Metcalf** - Former Moraga Town Mayor  
**Brent Meyers** - Smart Moraga  
**Anne Obsitnik** - Co-Chair, The Bluffs Firewise Neighborhood

**Dick Olsen** - Former Director of MOFD Board, Moraga Citizen of the Year, Former President of the County Fire Commissioners Association  
**Chris Severson** - Acalanes High School District Board  
**Dave Trotter** - President, Moraga Community Foundation and Former Moraga Town Mayor  
**Steve Woehleke** - Moraga Town Council  
**Peggy Woehleke** - Moraga Park Foundation

**VoteJEX.com**

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"I greatly value the accounting expertise and financial conservatism that John Jex has brought to the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and its Board. I strongly support Jex's re-election to the MOFD Board."

Richard J. "Dick" Olsen  
Former Director of MOFD Board, Moraga Citizen of the Year, Former President of the County Fire Commissioners Association

"John Jex strongly supports fire prevention and the best interests of our community. Join me to Re-Elect John Jex to the Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board (MOFD), who votes to protect Moraga's citizens, not outside special interests."

Anne Obsitnik, Co-Chair The Bluffs Firewise Neighborhood

"I value John Jex's experience and focus on fiscal responsibility, which is one of the key responsibilities for the MOFD Board. Join me in voting for John Jex."

Steve Woehleke, Moraga Town Council