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Letters to the Editor

Editor:

All five candidates for the Moraga Town Council support the proposal for a one percent local sales tax to be voted on in November. However, many Moragans are not aware of it. Those of us who recognize how important it is should take every opportunity to explain it to others. We should point out that our streets and storm drains naturally deteriorate and that the Town needs an ongoing stream of revenue to keep up with maintenance. Unlike the state sales tax, this is a local tax and the money will stay in Moraga. Technically, the Town isn't required to spend the money for this pressing need, but realistically it will. After all, for the past three years we have been trying to figure out how to finance the infrastructure maintenance required to avoid getting into a deep hole of unaffordable costs. This little tax is the least painful way to generate much-needed funding. Please talk it up. And don't forget to point out that sales taxes are not charged on groceries or medications.

Dale Walwark
Moraga

Editor:

I'm always inspired and impressed by the many people who so selflessly give of their time to serve our community. And no area in our community is in greater need of good people than our educational system. So it is with great pleasure that I endorse Jean Follmer for the Lafayette School Board.

I have served with Jean in many capacities over the years and I am always struck by her thoughtful approach, her depth of knowledge, and her ability to tackle the difficult issues with integrity and conviction. Serving on the school board is not an easy task - it is a job that requires a thorough knowledge of our district's inner workings, a keen understanding of local and state funding issues, a willingness and openness to listen to the community whose interests are represented and above all, a deep desire to fundamentally improve our children's quality of education. Jean's extensive experience in many areas across our school district makes her uniquely qualified for just such a job. We face challenging times ahead and this will require a highly-qualified and competent candidate - I can think of no better person to help lead our school district forward than Jean Follmer. I hope you will join me in voting for Jean this November.

Sincerely,
Shannon Tague
Lafayette

Editor:

There is a major hazard in the proposed Moraga Adobe development which has not been addressed.

The previous owners of the Adobe property proposed a development. The City of Orinda rejected the proposal because the property consists of slide-prone land with underground springs.

The current proposed development has only one access road which starts at the bottom of the development. This road will fail in a moderate earthquake. If a fire breaks out from a broken gas line, the residents can't escape and the fire trucks can't get in.

Not only will wind-blown embers from the fire ignite the neighborhood, but also they will ignite the adjacent wild lands which have never had the brush cut and which can't be accessed by fire trucks. A firestorm will develop and, as the Great Oakland Fire showed, it will jump over Highway 24 and both south and north Orinda will burn.

It is essential that a second access road be required, and the road must access the top of the development. One such route can connect to nearby Dolores Way.

It should be an emergency access road.

The absence of this second access road endangers all of Orinda.

If you are interested in the Moraga Adobe development and its hazards to Orinda, plan to attend the Orinda Planning Commission review of the development plans on Tuesday, October 9. The meeting starts at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium of the New City Library in Orinda. I urge you to speak and to applaud other speakers with whom you agree.

Clyde Vaughn
Orinda

Editor:

In June of 2011 Orinda City Council Member Amy Worth advised the Council that they should create an emergency services task force to review how Orinda is being served by Moraga Orinda Fire Dept. fourteen years after its formation. The majority of the Council disagreed, even after being presented with a petition requesting the task force signed by 220 residents. Despite numerous fruitless efforts of the past, the City Council continued to instruct citizens with concerns to deal with MOFD directly.

In response, some of the petitioners formed their own Task Force and have spent the past year collecting data . the

operations and finances of MOFD, specifically how they affect Orinda's residents and taxpayers. The report is ready for release (www.OrindaTaskForce.org) and some of its findings are worthy of the public's attention:

- 40% of all time critical incidents in Orinda are not responded to within the 6-minute industry standard.
- the District has accrued \$700 million in deferred employee benefit liabilities and currently only has \$110 million in assets to offset them.
- to fully fund the employees' future benefits could cost between 40 and 50 percent of MOFD's total revenue for a couple of decades.

Service cuts or realignment may be necessary to ensure MOFD's future financial stability and City officials need to be involved in the process to advocate for Orinda's taxpayers. The City needs to assure its citizens' safety by fully understanding the issues and working with MOFD and Moraga to provide for the community's emergency services needs.

We have an upcoming election with three candidates running for Orinda City Council. The voters should understand where each candidate stands on this crucial issue.

Diana Stephens
Orinda

Editor:

Orinda needs a steady hand and strong vision to meet the challenges ahead. This is why I am actively supporting Victoria Smith for the Orinda City Council.

My personal experiences working with Victoria have always proven that she truly puts Orinda first and has been deliberate and conscientious in her decisions. There are so many hot button issues facing our small community, that affect our quality of life, and Victoria always sought to gather the facts and move forward based on them. Her proven leadership and experience making the tough decisions facing the city council are what give me the confidence that she is the right choice for Orinda!

Please join me in proudly voting for Victoria Smith!

Brook Mancinelli
Orinda

Editor:

Please do all residents of Orinda a favor and vote for Victoria Smith for re-election to the Orinda City Council. I have known Victoria for close to fifteen years, both personally and professionally. Whether volunteering at school and as a leader with Boy Scouts when her sons were younger, or serving as mayor of our city, Victoria is consistently hard-working, level-headed, practical, and efficient. Our City Council needs Victoria's respectful manner and considerable skills and intellect now more than ever as it continues to face the challenges of applying limited resources to the most pressing needs of our community in innovative ways to maximize their impact.

In addition to her extensive work with City commissions that benefits us all, including Citizens Infrastructure Oversight, Parks & Recreation, Traffic Safety Advisory, Planning, and Historic Landmarks, Victoria assists organizations dedicated to providing resources to meet the needs of special members of our community such as youth and seniors. She brings a thoughtful approach to the many issues that come before the Council, including her enthusiastic support for improvements to our downtown area which balance the advantages of additional housing, shops, and restaurants with preserving Orinda's small town atmosphere.

Please re-elect Victoria Smith so all citizens of Orinda will continue to receive the highest level of representation of our interests.

Dana Dumas Sankary
Orinda

Editor:

Measure K is a one percent sales tax to fund roadway repair in the Town of Moraga. If this measure is passed, our town council will vote to issue municipal bonds that will provide immediate funding for roadway repair, rehabilitation, and maintenance.

In preparation for this, our town hired Edric Kwan in July as Town Engineer and Public Works Director. Mr. Kwan is an experienced municipal engineer who is adept at pavement management. A few weeks ago Edric took the time to explain some of the technical aspects of pavement assessment and management to me and answer my questions. He utilizes the latest software tools to assist him making the best decisions -decisions that are objective, cost effective and timely.

Our meeting left me confident that our town is following the right path, at the right time with the right people. They are focused on delivering recognizable improvements to our roads in the short term and establishing a comprehensive maintenance program for the long term.

Good roads benefit all in our community and Measure K is the first step. I support Measure K.

William Faoro, PE Civil
Moraga

Editor:

Obama vs Romney isn't the only story come this November. There are many other stories that will make a huge impact here in Moraga for years to come. Our Town Council has three seats open, five candidates running and only

two of those, incumbents. Our Moraga School District Board has two seats open, three people running and only one of those, an incumbent. Also up for vote is Measure K for our roads and Propositions 30 and 38 that are vying for your votes and which will impact our local schools for years to come. Moragans have some very big decisions to make!

What can residents of Moraga do? First, make sure you and all those in your household 18+ are registered to vote. The deadline is October 22. Next, get informed! As a board member of the Moraga Citizens Network, whose goal is promote involvement in the Moraga community, I urge you to do just that - get involved and get informed. MCN is hosting its fourth Candidates Night on Thursday, October 4th at the Holy Trinity Serbian Church at 7:30 p.m. This year will be moderated by Tim Farley, Director of Community and Government Relations at St. Mary's College. All 5 candidates for Town Council will be present or represented. Residents are encouraged to bring their questions to be answered live. There is a lot to talk about with ridgeline development, winery regulations, budgets, roads, and let's not forget dogs and parks - all deserving more than a written sentence or two from candidates. The local PTAs are hosting two local forums for School Board candidates: Monday, October 1, 9:30-11am and Thursday, October 11, 7-8:30pm, both at the JM Library. They are also working to put together an event regarding the ever-confusing Education Funding propositions (30 and 38). Keep an eye out for that date and let your neighbors know too.

Life is pretty good here in Moraga. Let's keep it that way by making informed decisions for the right leaders and the right taxes.

Denise Duff
Moraga

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