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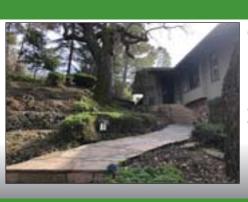
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Letters to the editor

MOFD power grab

I was disturbed by the report that the Board of MOFD has continued with its "unprecedented reorganization" by electing board member Steve Danziger President for the second year in a row, as opposed to tradition (shared by both the Orinda and Moraga Councils) of passing the gavel to a new "leader", each year.

Mr. Danziger was elected to the Board in November 2018 along with Michael Donner and Greg Baitx, all three heavily supported by the firefighters' union. Their first public act was to break tradition, by voting in freshman board member Danziger as president over the existing vice president John Jex even after Chief Winnacker explained historical rotation and all public comments were against the break from tradition. They have now continued this power grab for a second year. Is Mr. Danziger now president-for-life (or at least for his four year term)?

The Community needs to pay more attention to MOFD. We send them 26 million property tax dollars each year; over three times what Orinda and Moraga receive. Employee compensation, including the funding of the retirement plans, accounts for almost 90% of MOFD's expenses; with half of the compensation costs going to fund the retirement plans, which are \$70 million underfunded.

So who do we elect to oversee this effort? Three employee-sponsored board members who have decided not to play by the "rules" and grab the reins of power. What do they plan next?

In 2021 the firefighters' employment contract comes up. What will the board give them?

Right now we are served by 17 firefighters per shift; manning six response units. Last year they responded to 2,000 medical emergencies, 40 fires and 250 vehicle accidents; 2,300 emergencies in total. That averages to one incident per day per unit. But members of the board have been pushing for another two person unit, two more firefighters per shift. As opposed to concentrating on wildfire prevention.

The community needs to be aware of this.

Steve Cohn Orinda

Yes, Mike McCluer is the right choice for Moraga vice mayor

Articles in the Lamorinda Weekly Dec. 25, 2019 and Jan. 8 editions appear to question the rationale for electing Mike McCluer over Renata Sos to 2020 Moraga Vice Mayor. I believe the articles are based on incomplete information. First, I have great respect for Mike and Renata, and all Council Members, and we all have strengths and opportunities to improve in rep-

resenting Moraga's citizens.

Up until 2020, there would have been no question that Mike was the right choice. The historical norm was for the highest vote getter in the last election to be elected Vice Mayor, in line to become Mayor the following year. Mike received over 5000 votes in the November 2018 election, compared to Renata being appointed by four members of the Town Council, just before that election, to fill the seat vacated by Jeannette Fritzky's death.

There is rationale to using votes received as criteria for electing a Vice Mayor. The election process is lengthy, during which each candidate must demonstrate more-than-significant capabilities and dedication to the Town, and the citizens themselves get multiple opportu-

nities to interact with, and vet, the candidates. The Town's citizens make the selection.

The new Council Protocols, which were approved in 2019, give preference to the Council Member with the greatest seniority based on the last two elections. Mike, Renata and I were all sworn in within a two-month period. Assigning significance to the three additional regular meetings that Renata attended is "splitting hairs." Functionally, we all have equal time on the Council.

Based on the differentiator that Mike was elected by over 5000 Moraga residents, I lobbied for Mike McCluer for Vice Mayor.

I call on Mayor Korpus to follow through to ensure Mike gets the assignments and experiences, as she was given while Vice Mayor, to enable him to demonstrate that he is worthy to become Moraga's Mayor in 2021.

I am honored that Moraga's citizens have given me the opportunity to serve them, including through applying learning's from many years of service on multiple Moraga Town organizations.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss the above with any individual or group.

Steve Woehleke Moraga

Orinda Crossroads Mini-Park

My name is Irene Ingram Smith, formerly Irene Ingram Moylan. I am the Founder of the Orinda Crossroads Mini-Park begun in 1971 as an idea to beautify the entrance to the unincorporated town of Orinda. Many do not know that, before the freeway was built, Orinda was truly just a "crossroads". The commercial district fronted on Moraga "Highway", as it was called then. When the freeway was built, an east-bound offramp was built and traffic was routed to the "rear-end" of town with it's ignored building backsides, unkempt storage and garbage collection areas, parking lots, over-flowing dumpsters, cyclone fencing, and, at that time the "Eiffel Tower", a huge, towering PG&E power structure. Not a pretty sight! My idea to build a small park was a way to camouflage much of the unsightly views and provide a pretty, welcoming affect. The community stepped up to the plate to support the idea and a colorful park replaced the small, existing parking lot. Supported by every local civic organization, garden clubs, womans' club and even the Boy Scouts, the park became a

reality in 1974 when it was dedicated. I'm aware of the unfortunate tree cutting in the park and talks about renewing the park. I'm also aware that the new Mayor has given the park a priority for reconstruction and I thank her. A debt is owed to all those in the community who worked so hard to beautify Orinda at a time when there were no City funds. Crossroads Mini-park was made possible by PGE who agreed to lease the land to the community, Orinda Chamber of Commerce, who gave up their parking rights to the land, Contra Costa County who agreed to maintain the park and the donations of labor, money, services, talents and sweat of it's citizens and civic organizations coming together to show their love of Orinda.

Recognizing the importance of this location and its continuing need to provide a "welcoming" face to its residents and visitors, I hope the community will, once again, come together to make this happen and be proud!

Irene Smith Orinda native

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence — we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters must be factually accurate and be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. Visit www.lamorindaweekly.com for submission guidelines. Email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

Unfunded Needs Assessments survey results

... continued from Page A4

Additional comments included adding an additional police officer to focus on the schools, having developers pay more fees, and utilizing the talents of local residents on a volunteer basis to fix things like the flag pole, or interior lighting at library. "Many projects can be accomplished on this basis," one resident

said.

Town Manager Cynthia
Battenberg stressed, "People
can still provide feedback.
There is no deadline, but we
will consider input from the
community as part of the
budget preparation process, so
I would say we will incorporate
feedback received prior to
March 31.

"The Feedback Form was developed to obtain input from

the community regarding how the town should prioritize its resources," Battenberg said. "This is an opportunity for residents to let us know how they would like their tax-payer dollars spent and we hope to hear from them."

The survey is on the

The survey is on the landing page of the town's website www.moraga.ca.us in the article titled "Update on Unfunded Needs."