



Supervisor John Gioia's District 1 Newsletter

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A Message From Supervisor Gioia...

With the November elections behind us, I offer some thoughts on what the results mean for Contra Costa residents. Voter turnout was at record levels with 84% of registered voters casting ballots. As we all know, every vote counts. Some races were decided by just a few votes. In one race, a city council election was decided by just eight votes.

California and Contra Costa voters sent several clear messages.

First, they strongly support keeping local property tax revenues at the city and county level and preventing the state from raiding these funds. Proposition 1A, which protects local revenues, passed statewide by 83.7%, and in Contra Costa by 86.5%.

Second, voters strongly oppose the expansion of casino gambling in California. Propositions 68 and 70, which would have substantially expanded gaming, lost by 86% and 81%, respectively in California, and 83.8% and 76.3%, respectively in Contra Costa.

Third, voters strongly supported local tax measures for transportation improvements and city services. Measure J, which extends the County's ½% local transportation sales tax for an additional 25 years, passed with 71%. The funds will support increased public transit, I-80 interchange improvements at San Pablo Dam Rd. (in El Sobrante), and Central Ave. (in Richmond/El Cerrito), Richmond-S.F. ferry service, school bus transportation for low-income students, and local road maintenance.

Voters in El Cerrito, San Pablo, Hercules, and Pinole voted by 62% to 76% margins to ratify their utility users tax for city services. Richmond voters approved by 59.8% a new ½% city sales tax for services.

Congratulations to new council members elected in Richmond (John Marquez and Gayle McLaughlin), San Pablo (Leonard McNeil) and El Cerrito (Jan Bridges and Bill Jones), and to re-elected council members in Richmond (Tom Butt, Nat Bates and Mindell Penn), El Cerrito (Letitia Moore) and San Pablo (Sharon Brown and Joe Gomes).

I look forward to working with all council members to improve our communities. Many challenges lay ahead.

On a final note, I would like to say good-bye to long-time local resident and community leader Bob Sharp, who is greatly missed. Bob passed away this summer, losing his battle with cancer. For nearly the last 50 years, Bob led many El Sobrante community improvement efforts, working closely with residents, businesses, community groups, and County departments.

Flu Shot Update

The nation's flu vaccine shortage has substantially limited the supply here in Contra Costa County. While the County is still facing a flu vaccine shortage, health officials believe there should be enough vaccine available to protect at-risk populations. This includes the elderly, infants and people with chronic medical conditions. Private and County medical providers are now receiving additional supplies of vaccine from state and federal sources. For more information, contact your doctor or the Contra Costa Flu Hotline at (925) 313-6469. You can also visit www.cchealth.org/topics/flu/ for further information.

Breakfasts with John

Supervisor Gioia is pleased to announce that in January 2005 he is starting monthly community breakfast meetings. The breakfasts, to be held at rotating restaurants or cafes throughout West County, will give residents a chance to sit down with Supervisor Gioia in an informal setting and discuss any county issues on their mind. The breakfasts will be held on the third Friday of each month from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. Those attending are expected to pay for their own coffee or breakfast. However, no purchase is required to attend.

The first breakfast is scheduled for Friday, January 21 at the Hacienda Grill Restaurant, 1000 Nevin Ave. (Harbour Way at Nevin Ave.), Richmond. A schedule of future breakfasts is available on our website www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/dist1 or by contacting Kate Rauch at (510) 374-3231.

County Takes Lead Against Illegal Dumping

The County has launched a strong offense against illegal dumpers, through the formation of a Countywide Illegal Dumping Task Force. The Task Force, which involves the offices of Supervisors Gioia and Federal Glover, the Sheriff's Department, Environmental Health Division, Public Works, County Counsel, Building Inspection, District Attorney's office, and the County Administrator's Office, is examining a range of strategies to prevent illegal dumping.

Residents may now call 911 to report illegal dumping and fines have been increased. The Task Force is developing a new law which will allow the impoundment of vehicles caught in the act of illegal dumping and is working closely with the Sheriff's Department and District Attorney to promote the arrest and prosecution of illegal dumpers.

Five individuals have been caught dumping in the last four months due to increased enforcement efforts and the District Attorney has filed charges against three individuals.

Kensington Planning Ordinance

A new proposed Kensington Planning Ordinance was approved by the County Planning Commission on Nov. 30, and will go before the Board of Supervisors on December 14, 2004 for final enactment. The public is welcomed to comment at the meeting or to Ryan Hernandez, Senior Planner, at RAHern@cd.cccounty.us or Community Development Department, 651 Pine St., 4th Floor, Martinez, CA 94553.

For five years, Supervisor Gioia has worked with the Kensington community to develop a new planning ordinance which regulates room additions, remodels, and new construction. The new ordinance applies to all lots in Kensington and requires that development applications be reviewed on the basis of their impacts on neighbors' views, access to sunlight, and privacy as well as size and bulk.

Casino Proposals for West County

Confused about all the West County casino proposals you've been reading about? You're not alone. Here's a quick update on the pending proposals:

Lytton Rancheria, City of San Pablo – The Lytton Band of Pomo Indians was granted a reservation in the City of San Pablo by Congressional law in 2001. They propose a multi-story casino at the current site of the “Casino San Pablo” with 2,500 slot machines. The actual number of machines and other details depend on the terms of a State-Tribal Gaming Compact which is being negotiated between the Governor and the Tribe. The Compact must be approved by the State Legislature and will be decided in the 2005 legislative session. If the Compact is approved, Contra Costa County will aggressively negotiate with the tribe to request monetary compensation for the substantial regional impacts of a casino. These include impacts on traffic, fire service, Doctor's Hospital, schools, healthcare and social services, and the environment.

Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians, North Richmond – Investors representing the Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians have purchased 30 acres in North Richmond along the Richmond Parkway at Parr Blvd. They propose building a casino resort complex with 2,000 slot machines and other gaming activities. Before a casino can be built, the Federal Government must first grant the tribe a reservation in North Richmond, and the Governor and State Legislature must approve a Gaming Compact. The Tribe has submitted an application with the Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs to have the land placed into a reservation. The Federal Government is reviewing the application and is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The County has requested that all impacts be fully analyzed in the EIS.

Guidiville Band of Pomo Indians, Point Molate, City of Richmond – The Richmond City Council has voted to sell land on Pt. Molate (along San Francisco Bay) to Upstream Investments and Harrah's Entertainment. These investors want to build a casino resort and shopping complex with 2,500 slot machines on behalf of the Guidiville Band of Pomo Indians. Before a casino can be built, the Federal Government must designate the property as a reservation, and the Governor and the State Legislature must approve a Gaming Compact. The next step will most likely involve the tribe's filing of an application with the Bureau of Indian Affairs to have the land placed into a reservation. As with the North Richmond proposal, the County will request that all impacts be fully analyzed in the EIS prepared by the Federal Government.

Hilltop Mall, City of Richmond – According to recent media reports, a private investor (the Mills Corporation) has purchased a controlling interest in Hilltop Mall with the intention of building an Indian casino on 10 acres of undeveloped land next to the center. No notices have been published in the Federal Register regarding an application to put the land into trust as a reservation and no other details are known at this time.

What's the Approval Process for an Indian Casino?

Unlike other land use decisions, final authority over Indian casinos doesn't rest with local government (such as a City or County). Final decision-making over whether land is placed into a reservation on behalf of a tribe rests with the Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the U.S. Department of Interior. The Federal Government must assess the local impacts of granting reservation status through an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), before making its decision. This review covers everything from traffic to crime to air quality. The County's policy is to carefully follow the environmental review process, providing input on what should be included.

Casino Proposals for West County (continued)

If a reservation is granted, the Federal Government doesn't require the tribe to mitigate, or address impacts outlined in the EIS. However, this can be done on the state level. Once reservation status is granted, the Governor must negotiate a Gaming Compact with the tribe establishing the number of slot machines allowed and other details. The Compact is subject to the approval of the State Legislature. Governor Schwarzenegger's Gaming Compacts have, so far, required tribes to negotiate a Municipal Services Agreement (MSA) with the local City and County. These agreements require the tribe to help pay for the casino's impacts on local services, such as law enforcement, transportation, environmental and social costs.

Supervisor Gioia opposes urban gaming. He is the Chair of the Board of Supervisor's Ad Hoc Committee on Indian Gaming. The Committee is holding meetings to insure that the County is fully prepared to respond to all the issues raised by the various casino proposals.

Updates from El Sobrante

New Library Landscaping

The El Sobrante Library has a new look. On November 1st, a dedication ceremony was held to unveil the library's new landscaping. Additions include a memorial rose garden, arbor, community bulletin board, and a seat wall decorated with more than 200 art tiles created by community residents. The project was a collaboration between Supervisor Gioia, library staff, and the County General Services Department. Community volunteer and arborist Michael Baefsky graciously donated his time to help design the landscaping.



Supervisor John Gioia poses for a picture with Wendi Gosliner, Hope Scott, Don Bastin, Eleanor Loynd, Michael Baefsky (behind), Marie Carayanis, Reva Clark, Martha Bethelsen, and Sally Teagarden in front of the Memorial Rose Garden at the El Sobrante Library

The Friends of the Library building has been closed for renovation and is scheduled to reopen in January. Renovations include a new floor plan, roof, and paint, as well as seismic upgrades. The renovation is a combined effort of Supervisor Gioia, Friends of the Library President Sally Teagarden, the County's Administrator's Office, and the County General Service's Department.

San Pablo Dam Road/Appian Way Plans

Progress is steady on the San Pablo Dam Road/Appian Way plan, an updated development blueprint for improving this busy section of El Sobrante. The plan, which was developed through extensive community input, improves pedestrian and traffic circulation, and allows for mixed-use residential and commercial development. An Environmental Impact Report on the plan should be completed in early 2005. The plan is scheduled to be heard by the County's Planning in Spring 2005, and will be discussed at the Board of Supervisors shortly after.

Holiday Season Charities Ramp Up

Tis the season for giving, and many West County organizations are making it easier for all of us to contribute. Below are just a handful of great causes this holiday season:

West County Volunteer & Emergency Services " Toys for Tots"
1275 "A" Hall Ave
Richmond, Ca 94804
(510) 231-8330 Fax (510) 231-8472
Contact : Beverly Ware

Contra Costa County Food Bank
P.O. Box 71966
Concord, CA 94521
(925) 676-7543 ext. 204 Fax (925) 671-7933
Contact: Lindsey Johnson

Or leave Food Bank donations at the Office of Supervisor John Gioia
11780 San Pablo Avenue, Suite D
El Cerrito, CA 94530
(510) 374-3231 Fax (510) 374-3429
Contact: Erin Gabel

GRIP (Greater Richmond Interfaith Program)
165 22nd Street
Richmond, CA 94801
(510) 236-7614 Fax (510)231-6883
Contact: Connie Green

Richmond Food Pantry
P. O. Box 2598
El Cerrito, Ca 94530
(510) 527-2783 Fax (510) 215-4626
Contact: Robin Winton

Neighborhood House of North Richmond
305 Chesley Ave
Richmond, Ca 94801
(510) 235-9780 Fax (510) 235-3112
Contact: Barbara Barnett

Friends of Verde School Toy & Coat Drive
Office of County Supervisor John Gioia
11780 San Pablo Ave., Suite D
El Cerrito, CA 94530
(510) 374-3231 Fax (510) 374-3429
Contact: Erin Gabel

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e-mail: dist1@bos.co.contra-costa.ca.us

Our Website:

❖ <http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/depart/dis1>

Commission & Volunteer Opportunities

Interested in community issues? Want to get involved? The county has numerous citizen boards that advise the Supervisors on a range of issues. Most meet monthly and membership is voluntary. For a complete list of openings check the county's website at www.co.contra-costa.ca.us. Double-click on Board Advisory Body Information in the left column. Applications are available at the same site, or through our office. Supervisor Gioia appoints District 1 seats. At-Large are appointed by the Board itself. Some openings are listed here:

North Richmond Municipal Advisory Council

Business & Resident Seats Available

For more information contact Erin Gabel 510-374-3231

Fire Protection District's Fire Commissioners

District 1 Alternate Seat

Acts as a liaison between the Board and the community served by the Fire District. Advises the board on general Fire District operations, including the budget.

For more information: Keith Richter 925-941-3500

Commission for Women

At-Large Seats

Advises the board on issues related to women and girls.

For more information: Wilma Jamerson 925-370-5053

Regular Public Meetings

North Richmond Municipal Advisory Council

Meets at 5p.m. the second Tuesday of every month at 515 Silver Avenue in North Richmond

Kensington Municipal Advisory Council

Meets at 7 p.m. the last Tuesday of every month at the Kensington Community Center, 59 Arlington.

El Sobrante Municipal Advisory Council

Meets at 7 p.m. on the second Wednesday of every month at the El Sobrante Library, 4191 Appian Way.

El Sobrante R-9 Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

Meets at 6 p.m. on the third Thursday of every month at the El Sobrante Library, 4191 Appian Way.

Richmond City Council

Meets at 7 pm every Monday at Richmond City Hall, 1401 Marina Way South, Richmond.

El Cerrito City Council

Meets at 7 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of every month at the El Cerrito Community Center, 7007 Moser Lane, El Cerrito.

San Pablo City Council

Meets at 7 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of every month at City Hall, 13831 San Pablo Avenue, Building Two, San Pablo.