

EDITORIALS

Think Globally, Act Locally

On Mayor Jennifer Hosterman's initiative, the Pleasanton City Council will consider joining a nationwide global warming campaign sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Councilmembers Matt Sullivan and Jerry Thorne have joined her in supporting discussion of the issue.

The Bush Administration's refusal to sign the Kyoto Protocol — which sets forth a worldwide program to reduce global warming — has stirred other levels of government to act independently of Bush. The Conference of Mayors proposes action at all levels of government with the aim of meeting or beating the Kyoto Protocol's goals.

The slogan "Think Globally, Act Locally" applies here. Reducing sprawl, promoting bike lanes for commuter transit, adopting "green" building standards, planting trees, purchasing hybrid vehicles and not purchasing gas guzzlers, and more — these are things local government can do.

What city councils cannot do is look the other way, claiming this isn't a local issue. In making the City of Pleasanton responsible, Mayor Hosterman is showing leadership.

Late Meetings

The Livermore City Council is considering changing some of the rules by which it does its business.

One change would make it easier to discussions past the 11:30 p.m. deadline. At present such an extension must be approved by a four/fifths majority. The change would permit an issue under discussion as of 11 p.m. to be concluded without having to vote on an extension.

The change makes sense. No one likes late meetings, but the council should be able to finish an item already underway at 11 without having to stop and vote on an extension (causing the meeting to run even later).

The council is also considering requiring a majority of at least three votes to pass resolutions. Passage by 2-1 is currently permitted.

The change should be approved. A 2-1 majority undermines decision-making, in our opinion. Two votes are simply not an acceptable majority.

EASTSIDE

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ramping up to prepare a chain of lakes master plan. "It will be very specific to this area." The chain of lakes will be used for ground-water recharge and water storage. There may also be recreational opportunities. "We want to come up with uses that will work for everyone," she stated.

John Donnelly spoke for Hanson and Kiewit. He told the council there are plans to integrate the lakes into future development. Mixed use development in this area could provide a counterbalance to the more intense development in Pleasanton, he said. "Not exploring residential development at all at this time would be an opportunity lost," Donnelly stated.

Marion Howell, director of planning and permitting at Hanson, urged the council to keep an open mind when it comes to planning the area.

Representing the East Bay Regional Park District was Jay Townsend. He wanted to make sure that land was available for trail connections. He pointed out that the Kiewit property would provide a critical gap in the Iron Horse Trail.

One member of the public, Vaughn Wolfe suggested that the council considering establishing an ACE station on either the Kiewit or Hanson properties. The land is located along the railroad track. In his opinion, with the change in commute patterns, ACE could carry far more people than BART. A larger station than the one currently at the fairgrounds would be needed, he added.

Other residents were concerned about placing more homes in the area. They noted that there is already a major traf-

fic problem. New residents in the area would add to the problem.

Sherry Dennis reminded the council that the 1996 general plan recommendation was not to allow any rezoning of land until El Chorro was put through from I-580 to Stanley Blvd.

Councilmember Cindy McGovern commented, "One thousand acres gives us so many opportunities we don't have on the Bernal property. It is a very exciting piece of property. I don't see how we can move forward without some kind of study. Looking at little blocks of land doesn't make much sense. I believe we should designate it as a study area and look at uses that might be appropriate."

When it comes to residential development, McGovern favored smaller units.

Steve Brozosky did not want to rule out future residential development in the area. He too favored smaller homes aimed at new families. He wanted to know where the kids would go to school. Brozosky favored establishing a study area.

Matt Sullivan also supported a study area designation for the land. However, he pointed out that the proximity of the Livermore Airport would limit where housing could be built. He felt that it made more sense to put housing in the Hacienda Business Park where it would truly be transit oriented development.

Jerry Thorne was unsure as to whether all of the potential uses had been identified for the eastside lands. He liked the idea of an educational campus. Thorne declared, "I'm interested in doing something with the property. It's just not clear to me what that should be."

AWARD

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Rotary President Mike Morgan was very pleased with the ballroom. "The Cresta Blanca room is well-suited to both of these major Rotary events. The stage is large. The acoustics are good. It is a very nice facility, comfortable, modern and clean. It is an exceptional venue for most any significant event!"

In addition to parties for adults, the RLCC provides fun for little people, too. Livermore's Mary Johnson, who recently had a surprise birthday party for her 14 year old son, said, "The kids all had a great time and we (the parents) really got to enjoy ourselves. It was a great party for this age group. The kids are still talking about it."

The RLCC aquatics program has been extremely well-received and has exceeded revenue pro-

jections. There are two pools at the RLCC, a zero-depth family play pool with a water slide and interactive spray equipment, and a 33-meter x 25-yard pool. The 33-meter pool is used for lap swimming, water aerobics, swim lessons, water polo, the new LARPD Masters Swim Team, and recreational swimming for all ages.

From May to September of last year, 35,053 paying customers used the pools. LARPD has hosted several swim meets and water polo tournaments. In November, the LARPD Board of Directors voted to keep the large pool open year-round, in order to meet the needs voiced by local swim clubs and lap swimmers, many of whom used to exercise at the now-closed pool at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

TRAFFIC

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lition was Michael Clement. His focus was on the proposed widening of Foothill Road to four lanes between Stoneridge Drive and Muir Wood. He pointed out that the plan was developed when it was believed there was unlimited ability to build homes along Foothill. The reality is that some sites have become parkland and other development has taken place with little impact on the road. The area is nearly built-out. Little additional development seems likely, making the four lanes unnecessary.

Traffic was addressed by Mike Regan, as well. He said there is limited access to developable

land. To gain access, traffic would need to cut through existing development. That would disrupt the character of the neighborhood. Most ideas for circulation changes in the new general plan encourage cut-through traffic. They won't serve internal traffic.

Regan suggested that the EIR also needs to include the traffic impacts from developments to the east of Pleasanton.

Regan raised other points, as well. He was concerned that development plans coming to the city are using the remaining units, leaving few for housing for seniors and young people. He was

concerned about the development in the southeast hills. "The southeast hills are a vanishing part of our city. The EIR needs to look at the impacts on wildlife and the watershed. The EIR should also address the increased potential for fires and floods (watershed erosion) as development moves into wild areas."

A working draft plan for the circulation element was discussed by the city council in August. It includes a four lane Highway 84 and a new east-bound I-580 lane from Hacienda Drive to Vasco Road. It does not include a Stoneridge Drive ex-

tenion or the West Las Positas interchange. Potential changes in the city include Bernal Avenue widening, Foothill Road widening, Vineyard Avenue widening, West Las Positas Boulevard widening, El Chorro Road extension, Busch Road widening, and Hopyard Road widening. It is possible that some of the street widenings and extensions may be eliminated in the final plan.

ECONOMY

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tional electronics, software and internet industries have strong long-term futures. It's just that there was some overbuilding of capacity in the traditional electronics fields," he said.

Asked about Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposed infrastructure plans for the state, Fassinger replied that they would not have much impact in the next two years, if approved, but would have a significant impact further out. "Certainly infrastructure is important. What people identify as their key concerns are housing and traffic," he said.

"We (at ABAG) worked on getting more housing near transit, and for transit planning as well. The business community is behind it," said Fassinger. Solving the infrastructure problems will help attract people to the Bay Area for the "terrific quality of life here," Fassinger concluded.

AIRPORT

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event noise levels are used to determine whether an airport's operations are too loud.

In analyzing noise levels, SNELs would be weighted with events from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. multiplied by three, and 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. by ten. Buntin explained, "This recognizes that things happening at night are more annoying than day events."

He was asked how the system would screen out noises, such as a motorcycle revving up.

Buntin explained that monitors are set up in a line. If a noise were to be recorded by one, and then the second, it would be assumed the noise was from an airplane.

Monitors are proposed in Livermore at the end of Stealth Way

and in Al Caffodio Park. In Pleasanton, there are three options: one at the end of Stoneridge Drive, another at the end of Staples Ranch Road, and the third near Mohr Elementary School. Buntin noted that additional monitors could be added.

There was concern by some that four monitors would not cover all of the locations impacted by airplane noise.

Buntin said one option would be to have portable monitors that could be taken out to areas where complaints have been registered about noise at the airport.

Information collected by the monitors would be fed into a server. Depending on which company provides the service, the

information could be made available on line. If that were not part of the winning package, reports would go to the city web page for analysis.

Pilots have already begun a program to reduce noise. They have provided a brochure showing which areas planes should not fly over.

Wheeler said of the study, "Most of use would rather see the money go to a better use. I hope by this time next year we will have real data. Most pilots don't have an appreciation of what is occurring on the ground. There will be real data to see how we are doing. I hope this is a beginning to build together rather than continue fighting and bickering."

MAILBOX

(Opinions voiced in letters published in Mailbox are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Independent. Letter Policy: The Independent will not publish anonymous letters, nor will it publish letters without names. Frequent letter writers may have publication of their letters delayed.)

Look at ACE Mike Kujacich Livermore

Weighing in on the BART discussion of late, I am always strongly in favor of expanding mass transit, but I question the ridership in Livermore. Most people that I know who live in Livermore seem to either work at the Lab or commute to the south bay, as I do taking the ACE train.

For \$180 million, I don't know if it is very cost effective. I could see it as part of a big BART expansion into the Central Valley. Or spending less money to expand the ACE train system and to develop its own track (ACE now rents the track it runs on). These are ideas the governor needs to incorporate into his rebuilding California plan. Not the same old highway expansions.

BART Promise Erlene DeMarcus Former, Director BART

In recent years, BART representatives have claimed that BART was never promised to Livermore. I am a former BART Director and I can tell you that BART was promised to Livermore on several occasions. BART purchased the land for two station sites in Livermore, one at Isabel and 140 acres at Greenville and that represents a promise to build. When we broke ground for the Dublin/Pleasanton station, BART was promised to Livermore.

BART to Livermore was been written into the Measure B 1/2 cent sales tax measures. That is a promise to build. We have all been paying for that since 1969.

We all recognize that transportation funds are hard to come by, but a promise is a promise and where there is a political will, there is a way to do it. The first Dublin/Pleasanton station is a good example of that.

I admire Linda Jeffery Sailors for picking up the torch I was forced to abandon in 1992. If you want BART to hear your voice on this matter, call (925) 449-7274 and sign the petition asking BART to begin the preliminary engineering and environmental work to qualify the Livermore station for funding. The congestion of I-580 tells us that now is the time to act.

Board Decision Chris Rosendin Livermore Valley Charter School Parent

Clearly the termination of Mike Hazelhoffer's contract at Livermore Valley Charter School (LVCS) came as a shock to parents and teachers alike. The public board meeting following the board's action was emotional, as Mike's closest supporters lined up to trash the board for its "unfairness" and "rash actions." While I can certainly sympathize with Mike's personal friends and the teachers he hired being upset with the situation, the amount of bitter invective still being leveled at our board is, in a word, shameful. After all, who makes up our board? We do. We elected these folks to do a thankless, time consuming and, lately, risky job on our behalf — for free. I'm not arguing that they can do whatever they like, but they are due our respect and the benefit of the doubt.

The board knew that their decision would be unpopular, but chose to make it anyway for the good of our school. I choose to believe that their intentions were pure and their actions necessary. Do we want a board that only makes popular decisions? I think it's important for everyone to focus on moving past this unpleasant episode and to focus on our common goals.

The school owes its existence to several of our board members who were here long before Mr. Hazelhoffer and who have worked tirelessly to make this vision a reality. Truly, there would never have been a school but for the efforts of Mr. Goldstein in particular — no teachers, no building, no library, no science class. Zip. Bumps in the road notwithstanding, I can't say how impressed I am with every aspect of

the school. The teachers are incredible and the parents caring and involved.

We now have an Interim Principal, Tina Morris, who, by all accounts, exudes energy and competence. I hope every parent and teacher will help make her successful and welcome by being supportive and ceasing the sniping.

Pete McCloskey Herbert H. Marshall Pleasanton

So Pete McCloskey is running for congress again. I lived in Pete's district when the Endangered Species Law was passed and supported its enactment. My position since then has changed; its supporters have used every jot and tittle in the law to usurp the rights of property owners. Congressman Pombo has not proposed repealing the law. Rather he has proposed that the law be revised to reflect the rights of the property owners to just compensation for what has become the "taking of rights" by the government.

Those who are up in arms about the recent Supreme Court decision on "eminent domain" should recognize that what has been done to many property owners under this law. It is only different in that they receive no compensation for the "taking" (a reduction in the value of their property) that they have suffered. Unfortunately Pete McCloskey has failed to recognize that improvements can be made to his brain child. Even our Founding Fathers recognized that the Constitution might require changes. Pete in his omniscience fails to admit any faults in his baby and he wants it cast in stone, for perpetuity.

I support the re-election Congressman Pombo.

Livermore BART Vamsee Lakamsani Livermore

A website devoted to supporting the building of the Livermore BART station was recently formed. It gives information about the progress of the station and a way for interested people to sign the Petition. The Petition asks BART to begin the preliminary engineering and environ-

mental work which is necessary for the station to be funded.

The website is <http://www.LivermoreBART.org> Visit the website, sign the Petition and make your voice heard.

Global Warming Richard Metz Pleasanton

Your 1/28/06 front-page article on the Pleasanton City Council's decision to consider a Climate Protection Agreement was definitely worth reading. But I'm worried; from your reporting it sounds like all five of the council members believe that Global Warming is a real threat, even if they don't all feel Pleasanton should be taking action to minimize it. What struck me was Matt Sullivan's comment that "we can't pretend that global warming doesn't exist."

I say to Mr. Sullivan: "Of course we can..."

I refer you to Congressman Richard Pombo's 2002 Earth Day Press Release. That release takes the position that "there is no consensus, unanimous or otherwise, about long-term climate trends and what causes them" and that "Claims that scientific opinion is nearly unanimous on the subject of global warming are wrong." It goes on to say "There is no evidence of man-made global warming" and "there are many indications that carbon dioxide does not play a significant role in global warming."

If Mr. Pombo can pretend that man-made global warming does not exist, why can't the Pleasanton City Council? After all, Mr. Pombo represents a lot of us Pleasanton voters. We need Mr. Pombo and his supporters to present their position on whether the problem is real before we spend a lot of money trying to fix it.

After all, his press release concludes that "We should not take actions that may not be necessary but will certainly increase the level of poverty in this country" and cites economist Walter Williams of George Mason university that "As you look around the world, it is poverty, as opposed to dirty air, that has implications for health."

Cometary Dust Lands at Lab for Analysis

The Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory will be the recipient of a speck of dust smaller than the eye can see from a place where no humans have ventured. The material may reveal clues to the birth of the solar system.

The cometary dust was returned to Earth on board the Stardust spacecraft in mid-January. Stardust went on a seven-year mission to pick up cometary and interstellar dust.

John Bradley, director of Livermore's Institute for Geophysics and Planetary Sciences, is among nearly 150 scientists on an international team that will dissect the dust particles collected in tennis-racquet-shaped collector engulfed in aerogel. Aerogel was used to ensure the samples would stay intact as the capsule slammed into the Earth's atmosphere at 29,000 miles per hour.

Other Livermore team members include Giles Graham, Hope Ishii, Zurong Dai, Sasa Bajt, Patrick Grant, Ian Hutcheon, Jerome Aleon and Nick Teslich.

In the early 1990s, with funding from NASA and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Lab scientists from the Chemistry and Materials Science Directorate developed the chemistry and process methods subsequently used by JPL to produce the ultra-low-density silica aerogel for Stardust. The Laboratory also assisted JPL by teaching the process and contributing to the design of the equipment needed to produce the aerogels at JPL.

The analysis to be conducted of the cometary dust is a very detailed and precise exercise in which some tracks will be carved out of the aerogel with ultrasonic diamond blades. Scientists will then use microscopic needles to

extract the dust from the tracks.

Livermore researchers will use the Laboratory's transmission electron microscope and NanoSIMS — the nanometer-sized secondary-ion mass spectrometer — to analyze the mineralogy, chemical and isotopic composition of the dust particles.

This can help provide an understanding of where and when the particles formed.

Stardust launched in February 1999 and set off on three giant loops around the sun. It began collecting interstellar dust in 2000 and met Wild 2 (pronounced Vilt and named for its discoverer) in January 2004, when the spacecraft was slammed by millions of comet particles, nearly halting the mission.

Stardust is the first craft to safely make it back to Earth with interstellar dust particles intact.

In 2001, the Genesis spacecraft was launched and flew about one million miles from earth, collecting particles from solar winds for 850 days. On its return to Earth, however, the capsule spun out of control and its parachute never opened. The probe crashed into the Earth at 100 mph.

Scientists have collected thousands of meteorites and cosmic dust particles on Earth, but with few exceptions, the exact source of those materials cannot be positively identified. With the Stardust samples, scientists are starting a new chapter in astronomy.

Bradley stated, "The Stardust mission has been a stunning success, far exceeding even our most optimistic expectations. Now, we begin the arduous task of photo-documentation, followed by years of great science."