



License Plate Reader Program Moves Forward

Ekene Ikeme

At its Sept. 20 meeting, the Alameda City Council voted to execute an agreement with Flock Safety to purchase, maintain and install 35 fixed automated license plate readers (ALPR) at different Alameda locations.

The motion passed with a 3-2 vote with Councilmember John Knox White and Vice Mayor Malia Vella voting against the installation. Alameda Police Department (APD) Capt. Matt MacMullen gave a presentation to the council at the meeting. MacMullen told the council APD chose Flock Safety, an Atlanta, Ga.-based company that builds and maintains ALPR cameras, as its ALPR vendor because "they have a proven commitment and record of accomplishment of never selling of sharing data."

"Their solution provides short retention that complies with our policy," said MacMullen. "Flock Safety adheres to the stringent search audit trail safeguards and their system does not use facial recognition or predictive policing software. Nor does it collect or store any personal identifiers in the data."

After the council approved the city's ALPR policy at its April 5 meeting, ("Council Approves Automated License Plate Reader Policy," April 8), APD sent out a request for proposal for a vendor that will produce and maintain the cameras. APD received six proposals, with Flock Security being selected. "Flock ALPR cameras are currently used by over 1,000 law enforcement agencies nationwide

and 45 or more within California," said MacMullen. "Their proposal was the most inclusive response by exceeding the expectations outlined in the RFP."

The plan is for Flock and APD to install the 35 cameras at 14 locations in Alameda. The plan initially was to place the cameras at different entry and exit point in the city. However, APD said adding more ALPR locations would help APD solve crimes more efficiently.

"When we made this proposal, we thought that by design of the city of Alameda, that we could place these cameras at all the entry and exit points," said APD Police Chief Lt. Nishant Joshi. "However, as we gathered data, we noticed that the driver of our crime in Alameda is larceny. About 68 percent of our crime is larceny. Most of the crime is in or around our business districts. So, we looked for an opportunity for us to position our cameras in entry and exit points and also create an overlap in these vulnerable areas where crime is prevalent."

Many speakers at the meeting voiced concern with the city installing fixed ALPR cameras. One resident said she would feel more unsafe as a black woman with the police having access to watch her as she drove in business districts. Joshi assured the council that police officers will not access footage in real time and the cameras will only record still photos of vehicle's rear license plates. (He did say the still photos might be able to capture the back of a driver's

head.) Another speaker, Havana Cheer, found the Flock contract troublesome.

"Already this surveillance of our community has been slipped across," said Cheer. "It's a reversal of some of the guidance that was given by our community through the subcommittees on racial justice police reform. This was not their intent. The ACLU wrote a pretty significant paper around Flock as a company."

Among the concerns expressed against Flock in the ACLU paper, written by Jay Stanley, is that Flock does not have a system of checks and balances.

"For one thing, there are no checks and balances on the use of this database. The lack of proper checks on the behavior of law enforcement is well established — and studies suggest improper use of ALPR in particular may be widespread. Nor are there adequate checks on Flock," wrote Stanley.

Joshi said the department and Flock will produce a Personal Privacy impact report to the council that will detail APD's use of the system. All data will be stored in evidence.com's database for 60 days.

The total cost of the five-year contract will be \$499,427.13. MacMullen recommended that unspent General Funds, allocated for APD personnel costs, be used for the initial purchase price of \$111,802.13.

The council also approved a motion to update several APD policies 4-1, with Councilmember Tony Daysog casting the lone "no" vote.

Late Game Heroics Give Jets Sixth Straight Island Bowl Win

Joshua Linville

As Alameda High School (AHS) scored what looked to be the game-tying touchdown with about five minutes left in the game, Hornet head coach Robin Morris had only one thing on his mind, to go for the win. Trailing 19-18 late in the fourth quarter, the Hornets, who hadn't attempted an extra point the entire game, went for the two-point conversion and the lead. However, quarterback Eli Slez had his pass batted down by Encinal High School (EHS) senior Aiden Letson, giving the Jets their closest Island Bowl win in the past decade.

"Before the play all that was going through anyone's head was just make a play," said Letson. "My team was pumped and we wanted this win more than anything. Marques Singleton made a quick adjustment and we switched positions before the play started and, as a team, we were locked in."

Neither team scored after the failed two-point attempt. Encinal (1-4) defeated Alameda (2-2-1) 19-18 at Thompson Field on September 23 in the 67th Island Bowl. For the Jets, it was their 13th Island Bowl victory in the past 15 years. The Hornets last won the rivalry game in 2015.

"It was really important to not just me but to our team," said EHS freshman Sefanaia Auelua. "...brought our school spirit up. It was also a really crazy experience as me being a freshman on varsity and winning my first island bowl



Yongqian Li

Encinal players celebrate winning the 67th Island Bowl on September 23 at Thompson Field.

after generations before me. It was a collective effort on everybody's part."

The scoring started when running back turned quarterback Tristan Berena ran in a touchdown in the first quarter to make it 6-0.

"Very much needed win," said Berena. "I had to step up and play a position that was out of my comfort zone but got the job done."

The junior started under center for the first time this season. He threw one touchdown and rushed for another.

The Hornets struck right back, with junior A'Juan Parker catching a touchdown to tie the game at 6-6.

Both defenses stood firm for most of the half. But with 6



Arianna Zalder

Sefanaia Auelua and Kaleb Westbrooks receive instruction from their coach during the fourth quarter of the Island Bowl.

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Mayoral Candidate Election Forum Review

Ekene Ikeme

The League of Women Voters (LWV) Alameda held a virtual election forum for the Alameda mayoral candidates Tuesday, Sept. 20. The event was broadcast live via Zoom.

The forum began with the three candidates — Barack D. Obama Shaw, Trish Herrera Spencer and incumbent Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft — giving a brief introduction.

"It's been an honor and privilege to serve as Alameda's mayor these past four years including during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic," Ashcraft said. "I am grateful for the way our city weathered the storm, putting into place several protections for vulnerable residents and struggling local businesses."

Spencer discussed why she was running for mayor again.

"I'm running for mayor because I think our city is actually a city of crisis right now," said Spencer. "Many of my friends, and your neighbors, have left our city sadly because crime is rising [and] we have unfettered growth that isn't meeting the needs of our community members."

During the forum each candidate discussed their main priorities they will address if elected. Ashcraft's priorities include housing, transportation and addressing climate change and sea level rise. Spencer's top three priorities are safe neighborhoods, smart growth and commonsense traffic solutions. Obama Shaw wants to improve safety, especially for children, create better relations between the community and the police department and to reduce homelessness by getting to the root of why someone is homeless.

Questions were posed by LWV Alameda Treasurer Anna Crane. When Crane asked the candidates how they will ensure coordination and the resources to complete many of the projects in Alameda in the coming years (zoning for housing mandated by state law, addressing congestion and traffic safety, building resilience to address the problems caused by climate change, etc.), their

ALAMEDA MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

MAYOR CANDIDATES

Barack D. Obama Shaw

Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft: Incumbent Mayor

Trish Spencer: Incumbent City Councilmember

Vote on Nov. 8, 2022

File Photo

The three mayoral candidates took part in an election forum conducted by League of Women Voters Alameda on Sept. 20.

answers varied.

"I think we do need to add more staffing," said Ashcraft. "Especially in our Community Development Department (CDD) because that's the department that works directly with housing, addressing homelessness and we stretch those folks really thin."

Ashcraft said she would like more staffing in the Planning, Building and Transportation and Public Works departments. "This would impact our budget, but we can make room for it," she said.

Spencer said to ensure coordination, the city must hire a city manager that will stay long term.

"It is the city manager who hires all the other department heads and it will fall on that person to ensure coordination between departments," said Spencer. "We have a recruiting problem, a serious problem, and I attribute it to sadly, our current leadership, in regard to being unable to keep a city manager or interim city manager."

Later, Crane asked the can-

didates whether the city should lease or sell unused or underutilized properties at Alameda Point.

Obama Shaw believed the best course would be to lease the properties.

"If we did lease, it can provide resources for the city that is ongoing," he said. "If you outwardly sell it, you get some money, but if you lease it that would be a long-term income stream and we can allocate that money where there is a deficit."

Ashcraft was cautious about leasing the properties.

"If we're leasing, we're the landlord, but we don't want to be a slumlord," she said. "Some of our properties are in serious disrepair. Do we have the revenue to keep them up?"

Both Ashcraft and Spencer said the city should wait until they meet with an economic consultant on the pros and cons of selling or leasing the properties before making a decision.

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