

CITY PAGE

The Slauson Connection

Assm. Bonta's Republican rival paid for recall ad

Editorial

Dennis Evanosky

On Tuesday, June 19, an unsuspecting man visited the *Alameda Sun* office. He oversaw and then paid a tidy sum for the legal advertisement required for the potential recall of Vice Mayor Malia Vella and Councilmember Jim Oddie. In the midst of the hectic preparation of this technically complicated legal advertisement the man said, "Oh, by the way, I have this letter to the editor."

I usually telephone letter writers and verify that they, in fact, submitted their letters. I saw no need for that as the letter writer was sitting in my office. I saw his name, Stephen Slauson; it meant nothing to me. The missive called Assm. Rob Bonta's American citizenship into question. I hesitated as to whether we should run such a letter, but wanted to adhere to the *Alameda Sun's* policy of keeping its opinion page open to everyone.

After the *Sun* published the letter, I was dismayed to learn that Slauson was Bonta's Republican rival for the 18th Assembly District seat. Slauson chose not to reveal this to the *Sun* when he submitted the letter. Had I been aware of this I would not have considered publishing the letter at all. The *Sun* does not publish political campaign letters this early in the campaign.

It was my oversight and lack of proper research that prompted me to allow this letter to be published. I emailed Bonta and apologized and do so again here.

I thought this was information the readers of the *Alameda Sun* would like to know. Clearly this local candidate has chosen to use a tactic popularized by the current U.S. president in opposition to the previous president.

City: Has plans to put sales-tax increase on November ballot

Continued from page 1

the city's liabilities come from two sources, the report said:

■ Recent changes in the California Public Employees Retirement System's (CalPERS) to its longevity assumptions

■ The city's nearly \$300 million in infrastructure needs

The report points out that the city faces one of two difficult choices: potential reductions in service levels or an increase in revenues. The City Council has already explored revenue-producing measures to submit to the voters on Nov. 6. These include a cannabis tax, a one-half cent sales tax or an infrastructure bond.

According to city staff, a majority of the City Council has expressed an interest in placing either the infrastructure bond or half-cent sales tax on the ballot. Last month, the City Council provided direction to staff to prepare to place the tax on the ballot.

The staff report spells out the consequences of the proposed sales tax. If passed by a simple majority of the voters, the city's sales tax would increase from 9.25 to 9.75 percent and would add in the neighborhood of \$5 million to

the city's General Fund each year. Of the 9.75 percent tax, 1.5 percent would go directly into the General Fund, up from the current 1 percent.

Revenue from the current sales tax generates \$10.4 million, which is 11 percent of the General Fund revenue. The tax would become effective on April 1, 2019, and the city would begin receiving revenue from the tax two months later on June 1.

Alameda has placed only four revenue measures before the voters since 2000. During this same period, the cities of Berkeley has placed 19; Oakland, 14; and San Leandro, seven.

Alameda voters last considered a sales-tax increase in a special June 5, 2012, election. Voters turned Measure C down with 8,616 saying "no" and 8,426 giving a thumbs up. The measure needed a two-thirds majority to pass and fell far short. Former City Manager John Russo and his team put Measure C on the ballot as a special tax and opponents reminded Alameda voters that money generated by the measure would rebuild "unsafe facilities such as the Carnegie Library."

In 2012 the measure needed a two-thirds majority vote. Now,

thanks to changes in the law, approval by a simple majority (50 percent plus one) would put the measure on the books. Local blogger Robert Sullwold points out that structuring the 2018 proposals as a general tax — rather than a special tax for special purposes like 2012 — shows that the city has learned its lesson.

The staff report points out several benefits the increased revenue would bring. For example, if voters approve the new sales tax, its revenue would eliminate the \$4.7 million deficit projected for fiscal year 2021 to 2022. The money raised would also help maintain essential city services, such as public safety, 911 response times and park maintenance. It would also help reduce the mounting repairs necessary to bring the city's aging infrastructure into the 21st century.

The City Council is neither supporting nor opposing the sales tax with its July 10 vote. Councilmembers are voting whether to place the measure on the November ballot "so Alameda voters have the opportunity to consider it and decide" whether they want to pay the increased sales tax.

If approved by the City Council, this is how the measure might read

on the Nov. 6 ballot:

"City of Alameda Essential Services Protection Measure.

"Shall the measure maintaining the City of Alameda's financial stability and protecting services and infrastructure such as police response to violent crimes and burglaries; 911 emergency medical and fire response; maintaining neighborhood parks; repairing potholes, maintaining streets and protecting the Bay from pollution by enacting a 0.5 percent sales tax until repealed by voters, providing approximately \$5,000,000 annually in locally controlled revenues, requiring independent audits and public spending review, be adopted?"

Although it's a general tax, the city appears to be pushing police, parks, potholes and pollution.

The city hopes that Alamedans will bring the same attitude into the voting booth that they have when answering pollsters. Staff points

Money raised could help maintain services such as public safety, 911 response times and parks.

to a community survey taken last summer. That survey found that Alamedans "prioritized maintaining public safety services and financial stability." And when considering a measure similar to the one it hopes to put before them in November, the city found that 65 percent of those polled were in favor, up 2 percent from a 2015 survey.

Read Sullwold's complete sales-tax story at alamedamgr.wordpress.com/2018/07/01/a-half-sense-sales-tax-increase.

Contact Dennis Evanosky at editor@alamedasun.com.

City Meeting Calendar

All meetings are scheduled to take place at City Hall, 2263 Santa Clara Ave., Council Chambers, third floor unless otherwise noted. For more information see www.alamedaca.gov.

Monday, July 9

■ 7 p.m. Planning Board. Meetings held second and fourth Mondays of each month.

Tuesday, July 10

■ 6:30 p.m. Golf Commission. Meetings held second and Tuesday of every other month. 1 Clubhouse Memorial Road.

■ 7 p.m. City Council.

Meetings held the first and third Tuesdays of each month.

Wednesday, July 11

■ 5 p.m. Civil Service Board. Meetings held first Wednesday of each calendar quarter. Conference Room 360, City Hall.

■ 6 p.m. Library Board. Alameda Main Library, 1550 Oak St., Conference Room 224, second floor. Meetings held on the second Wednesday of every other month.

■ 6:30 p.m. Commission on Disability. Meetings held second Wednesday of every other month.

Thursday, July 12

■ 7 p.m. Recreation and Park Commission. Meetings held second Thursday of each month.

Monday, July 23

■ 7 p.m. Planning Board Meeting. Meetings held second and fourth Mondays of each month.

Tuesday, July 24

■ 7 p.m. City Council. Meetings held the first and third Tuesdays of each month.

Thursday, July 26

■ 7 p.m. Social Service Human Relations Board. Meetings held fourth Thursday of each month.

Saturday, July 30

■ 4:30 p.m. Pension Board. Conference Room 391. Meetings held the last Saturday of each calendar quarter.

--- PUBLIC NOTICE ---

Naval Air Station Alameda Alameda Point Restoration Advisory Board Meeting

* * *

10:00 A.M.

Saturday, July 7, 2018

Alameda Point - Building 1 Upstairs, Room 201*
City Hall West
950 West Mall Square
Alameda, California 94501

The Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) is composed of interested citizens and government representatives involved in the environmental cleanup program at Alameda Point. Community participation and input is important and appreciated.

The Alameda Point RAB meets to discuss the status and progress of the environmental program at Alameda Point. The next meeting will be Saturday, July 7, 2018.

*Note the meeting is in the same building, but UPSTAIRS. You may take the stairs or the elevator to Room 201.

Everyone is welcome!

* * *

For more information about this meeting and the Installation Restoration Program at Alameda Point, please contact: Ms. Cecily Sabedra, BRAC Environmental Coordinator, Department of the Navy Base Realignment and Closure
Cecily.sabedra@navy.mil
(619) 524-4569
www.bracpmo.navy.mil



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