

The School District Celebrates Ignorance

Posted by Brian Donahue on September 26, 2012 at 11:40am in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

The following post has been changed from its original posting at the Emeryville Tattler. This was done to get past the censors at this site.

\$5 Million Spent By School District To Inform But Ignorance Prevails

The Worst \$5 Million Spent In Emeryville History

Opinion

The Emery Unified School District has spent more than \$5 million on "community engagement", an effort to communicate the District's plans and get public buy-in on how to build the Center of Community Life. But after years of engaging the community, the stark reality is that the population is still mostly ignorant about major aspects of the school and community center rebuild, an outcome that the District now reluctantly admits.

The problem is that the \$5 million was likely never really meant to engage the community, rather the District intended to coerce the people of Emeryville with a campaign of deceptive propaganda to accept their plans for the school rebuild and to keep dissenters tamped down. At the center of the deception campaign has been the idea of closing the existing Anna Yates Elementary School on 41st Street and "co-locating" it with the to-be-built new high school on San Pablo Avenue, a prospect that most Emeryville residents even Anna Yates parents are still ruefully unaware. After \$5 million spent over the years, Melodi Dice, the president of the School Board told residents attending the September 10th School Board meeting the District has not done a good job with communicating the goals of the District with regards to the Center of Community Life and that they plan on rectifying the situation. If they are to be believed now they're going to start educating residents in earnest about closing the elementary school. But the District doesn't even know the extent of the ignorance among the population; they've never polled the residents.

Parents Are Ignorant

Average Emeryville residents can get an idea about the level of ignorance about closing the elementary school by simply asking parents if they are aware of the District's plans. To those who conduct such an informal poll, they find the majority of parents are not aware and those who are aware mostly are not supportive.

That large swaths of the population are ignorant of the District's plans to co-locate the schools and the majority of the people who are aware are against it, informs us that the District is not keen on actually engaging the public. This is further reinforced by the revelation, recently [reported by the Tattler](#) that the District will have to spend \$107 million to move the elementary school, a fact so far not

advertised by the District.

A Modest Proposal

It would be cheap and easy for this School District to let people know they intend on closing the elementary school and moving the children over to the high school site if they were of a mind to. Parents could be made aware simply by putting an easy to read notice in the children's home-bound "Wednesday Packet", the primary way the District communicates to parents. The District could also engage the parents by use of the telephone notification system they also already use to communicate with parents. Both these ideas would cost the District virtually no money and would be very effective but the District has balked at using them.

Instead the District has relied on a whole series of community meetings conducted over the last couple of years and attended by the same rotating tiny minority of Emeryville residents. These meetings have done little to let enough people know the things we should know about the District's plans, let alone introduce the fact that the people could have a different set of ideas about how to build the Center of Community Life that involved saving the elementary school.

Deception about closing the elementary school is really what this School District has been engaged in.

This School District is free to strongly advocate for the closure of the Anna Yates Elementary School in favor of co-locating it but the District is not free to deceive the public as it pursues that goal. Unfortunately for advocates of transparency in public policy, the District has decided to push the co-location idea forward by means of deception, the \$5 million spent on community engagement notwithstanding. It's past time for the Emery Unified School District to let the people, especially the parents know it intends on closing the elementary school. Further, in the spirit of real community engagement, they should let the people know they can change these plans if they so will it and finally the District should accommodate the people's collective will, even if it included saving Anna Yates Elementary School. It's kind of late in the game to start with transparency, but we should start regardless even though it may be anathema to this District.

Views: 5

School Board Unimpressed With Citizens' Letter

Posted by Brian Donahue on June 7, 2012 at 9:09am in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

Note: The following is an expurgated sample from an Emeryville Tattler. Some words have been changed to get past the Nexus Partners unexplained new rule prohibiting pasting material relevant to the ECCL. Here is the story-School Board To Citizens:

Take Your Letter & Stick It Where The Sun Don't Shine

Opinion

A large cohort of Emeryville citizens has notified the School Board; they want to press their concerns about the School District's plans to abandon Emeryville's Anna Yates Elementary School and the lack of transparency about operating expenses for the soon-to-be-built Center of Community Life. These citizens have signed a letter to the District and they want some answers. The School District was given more than a month to prepare; the regularly scheduled June 11th meeting is when the citizens wished to address their School Board. But more than 60 Emeryville residents, most of them parents with children at Emery Unified School District, was not enough to sway the School Board. In fact, the School Board scarcely could have been less impressed by the throng: NO they said, we will not hear the legitimate concerns of these citizens...maybe some other time.

It's the latest in a litany of anti-democratic proclamations and actions issuing from this School Board. The Schools Superintendent, Debbra Lindo put it succinctly in an e-mail to the group, "The item for sure cannot be on the June 11th agenda." Perhaps, she added, this request can be accommodated "before the end of the school year."

The Secret News picked up the story in two installments; first the ignoring of the agenda request by the School Board and then the shutting the door on the citizens' legitimate request.

A School District interested in transparency and accommodating legitimate citizens concerns would be keen to listen to a group representing more than 60 such citizens. Instead, citizens here are getting a 'talk to the hand' brush off, the modus operandi for this District. We can't help but think this is a tactic meant to take the wind out of the sails of the nascent citizen's group, especially since the District has historically shown open hostility to citizen dissent on the Anna Yates closure and other issues associated with the Center of Community Life.

School Board member Miguel Dwinn was adamant to the Tattler, he refused to comment on the snubbing of the citizens by the District but former School Board President Cheryl Webb offered a conjecture, "It seems to me the Board could have made accommodation to hear what these citizens have to say." She added, "The full discussion [of the closure of Anna Yates and the finances at the Center of Community Life] is long overdue." We wonder why, precisely, Ms Webb is a former School Board member.

This School District has been railroading the closure of Anna Yates School right from the beginning and the obfuscation about the finances surrounding the Center of Community Life is just that: it's meant to obscure. We cannot countenance such a public institution with the word "community" right in the title being so shamelessly non-community minded.

In fact, this is what anti-democracy looks like. This is how a recalcitrant anti-public, public institution behaves. These are the kinds of tactics, brimming with hubris,

that are employed by a cocksure Board with disdain for transparency and an 'our way or the highway' sense of entitlement.

We'd love to see a new culture take over the School District that reverses the one entrenched there now...but we're not going to hold our breath. It's pretty obvious, they're going to close Anna Yates Elementary School come hell or high water and they're going to continue their obfuscation on the finances of the Center of Community Life no matter what parents and other interested citizens say.

Views: 8

ECCL Loses \$21 Million In Redevelopment Funds

Posted by Brian Donahue on June 3, 2012 at 11:37am in ECCL Community

Ideas (Change)

Below is a expurgated text from The Secret News. I have changedt he wording a little to get past the censors at Nexus Partners who won't allow pasting of ECCL related stories for some unexplained reason.

Here's the (changed) story:

Emeryville Center of Community Life (ECCL) On Chopping Block

May 28, 2012

By Tracy Schroth

State Has No Obligation to Fund ECCL; Attorney for Emeryville's Oversight Board Says Agreement is Void

Two Days Too Late

An agreement by the state to pay \$21 million in redevelopment money toward the Emeryville Center of Community Life (ECCL) does not constitute an enforceable contract and the city should withdraw its request for funding, said the attorney for Emeryville's Oversight Board. The county-level Board was established to monitor the city's transition now that the Governor has eliminated state redevelopment funds.

Oversight Board attorney Paula Crow has submitted an analysis of ECCL and other pending city projects under a new state law (AB 26) which defines what is and is not an enforceable obligation. Crow's analysis, submitted to Oversight Board members Friday, said the agreement between the state and the city regarding ECCL was made two days too late. The contract was executed on July 1, 2011, two days after the effective date of the law eliminating redevelopment. Ms Crow said ECCL should be removed from the city's list of projects submitted to the state for continued funding under AB 26. Crow's recommendation will be discussed by the Oversight Board at its regular meeting 5:30 pm tomorrow (Tuesday, May 29) at Emeryville City Hall. "The Oversight Board has no discretion on this," said Greg Harper, an Emeryville attorney, former Emeryville mayor, and AC Transit representative on the Board. "It looks like the city moved fast to try to get it though, but not fast enough. It was two days too late."

Mr Harper added, "I am really happy we finally have a road map for evaluating these agreements. Paula has developed a template with which to analyze each and every project under AB 26 and determine which ones are enforceable obligations and which ones aren't. Apparently, ECCL is an example of one that isn't."

It is important to note that this will not affect the portion of ECCL funded by the Emeryville Unified School District (EUSD) through a bond sale. That portion, including an elementary school and high school, sports fields, and other amenities at a cost of \$48 million, will go forward. Plans for the other part of the project, to be paid with the \$21 million in redevelopment money, included a community center with playgrounds, a courtyard, "paths and plazas," and space for social service providers.

The elaborate and controversial plans for ECCL involve tearing down the high school this summer and moving those students to a location in Oakland that the EUSD is leasing for \$1.1 million. A new school will be built on the site and the high school students will move back to the new school along with the students from Anna Yates Elementary School, which will close permanently. A recent renovation of Anna Yates cost almost \$9 million. The school district hasn't divulged the future plans for the Anna Yates building. Some residents vehemently oppose the closing of Anna Yates and have sent a letter to the EUSD Board of Trustees. The letter will be formally presented to the Board at its June 11 meeting, according to an article in The Emeryville Tattler.

Views: 7

Community Identified Areas for Continued Improvement / Development

Posted by Nexus_1 on May 24, 2012 at 1:11pm in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)
Over the past year the Nexus Partners has conducted many Community Design Workshops (still more ahead...). In these workshops we have asked for your direct feedback on the design direction, and for your suggestions to improve the design. The series of images below summarize many of the highlights of how community involvement has shaped (and will continue to shape) the design.

Please continue to help us in any way you feel most comfortable by getting your ideas to us through participation in upcoming workshops or by posting ideas on this Idea Sharing Forum!

To understand the strength of agreement by the participants of the workshop the, table below was generated by community voting on areas for further development. The column labeled "Avg" indicates a number between 1 and 10 with 10 representing the highest level of agreement by the participants. In general, any value above 7.0 represents a very high level of consensus.

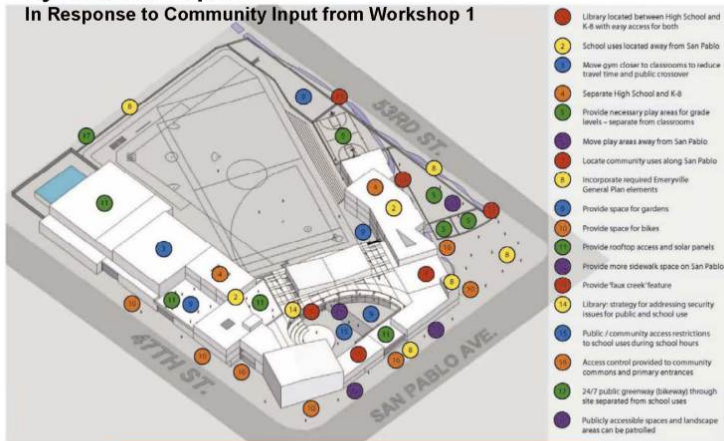
Views: 21

How Community Input Continues to Shape the Design

Posted by Nexus_1 on May 24, 2012 at 1:02pm in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)
Over the past year the Nexus Partners has conducted many Community Design Workshops (still more ahead...). In these workshops we have asked for your direct feedback on the design direction, and for your suggestions to improve the design. The series of images below summarize many of the highlights of how community involvement has shaped (and will continue to shape) the design.

Synthesized Option

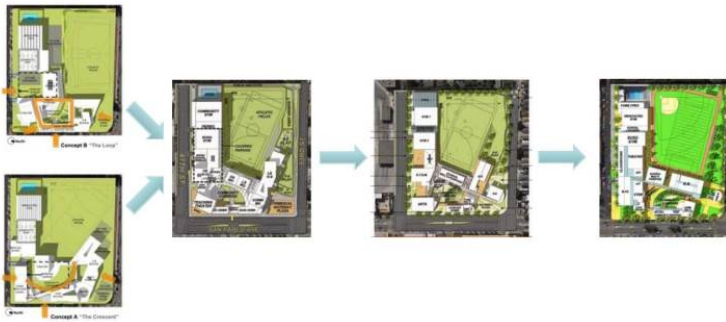
In Response to Community Input from Workshop 1



Responding to Community Input

ECCL Community Design Workshop 9
May 19, 2012

Conceptual Design Process



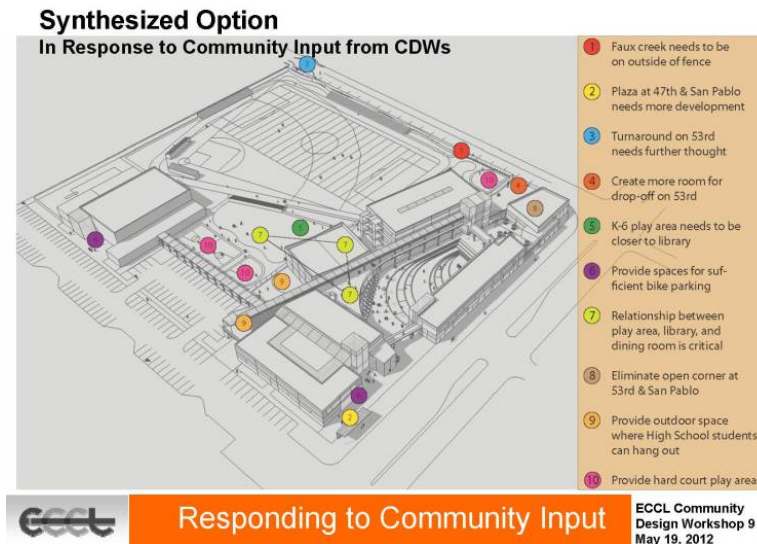
Aug
2011

May
2012



CDW Timeline

ECCL Community Design Workshop 9
May 19, 2012



Please continue to help us in any way you feel most comfortable by getting your ideas to us through participation in upcoming workshops or by posting ideas on this Idea Sharing Forum!

Views: 9

We need your input!

Posted by Nexus_1 on May 23, 2012 at 5:05pm in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

The Conceptual Design has evolved over the last several months thanks to your active participation at the last 9 Community Design Workshops. To those who have contributed your ideas we are very grateful - the ECCL design will continue to develop with your input. For those who have not or cannot participate in the Workshops, please contribute any way you feel comfortable. The image below represents the Board approved Conceptual Design. If you have constructive ideas, observations or any other suggestions please share your thoughts here. As we begin to consider a deeper look into the "look and feel" of the architecture and landscape please share with us ideas and images touching on materials, artwork, facade treatments and other opportunities you feel might be appropriate for the ECCL.



Views: 5

Rooftop viewing opportunities at the ECCL

Posted by Nexus_1 on May 23, 2012 at 3:00pm in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

Posting this idea from Kathryn. Please feel free to add to the discussion!

At 2:44pm on May 21, 2012, Kathryn Webb said...

At the #9 workshop I suggested that the ECCL have an elevated area for looking at the surrounding views. The suggestion didn't rate well when voted on. To support my suggestion, I would like to refer you to a Huell Howser episode on Stockton, CA. The historic renovated Stockton Hotel has a large rooftop plaza that looks out to the west over the end of the Stockton canal and across the central valley. (To the north and south you would see the vast valley, and to the east the Sierras.) That experience, looking out from that rooftop, seems like it would give a person a real sense of the special place where Stockton is. I think that standing on a similar plaza on the ECCL would inspire a sense of place that would be meaningful to students and anyone else who would welcome the reminder that where we are is very special. Look at the last third of the Huell Howser episode on youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EbIih3BgBJA&t=5m1s>

Thanks

Views: 5

Letter To The School Board & The Entire Emeryville Community

Posted by Brian Donahue on May 23, 2012 at 9:11am in ECCL Community

Ideas (Change)

The following letter has been mailed to all Emeryville households:

An Open Letter to the Emery Unified School District Board of Trustees and the Emeryville Community:

Since 1886, ten years before Emeryville incorporated as a city, there has been a school located on 41st Street at the current site of Anna Yates Elementary. This jewel of the Emery Unified School District has just been renovated at a cost of 8 million dollars and the Elementary students should remain in their present location and not be moved to the Secondary School site on San Pablo Avenue as part of the Emeryville Center of Community Life ("ECCL"). This would not only maintain an elementary school with a smaller scale more attractive to parents, it would also make available funds to properly complete the ECCL campus.

The ECCL campus, as presently proposed, is not financially feasible or sustainable. Having been able to issue only \$48 million of \$95 million in bonds, the School Board will build part of the school without adequate assurances that the additional funds will be available in a reasonable time frame. No detailed budget has ever been prepared and presented to the public for either the construction or the operation of the ECCL campus.

The fiscally responsible thing to do is build new only what we really need and can afford: a new high school, while utilizing as many of the existing facilities as possible. The people of Emeryville will spend decades repaying the \$95 million in bonds and for the District to adopt a plan that spends all the money on just one of our three school sites is irresponsible. We deserve to know how all of these sites will be used, maintained, and operated over the long term. Such a comprehensive plan could still include the community- facing services envisioned, such as a public library, recreation facilities, and space for other community services, but the District's insistence on combining all the grades, K-12, on one site is a mistake. We call on the Board of Trustees to adopt a new vision for our District that leaves the Elementary students in place and that clearly details both construction and operational budgets for all the school sites.

(signed)

- Richard Ambro Ph.D., Residents' United for a Livable Emeryville ("RULE") member
- April Atencio, RULE member
- Lei Bass, President, Anna Yates Parent Teacher Organization
- Steve Bass, PTO member
- Brian W. Carver, Former Chair Measure J Citizens' Oversight Committee & parent
- Brian Donahue, parent of Anna Yates student, RULE member
- Scott Donahue, 35-year Emeryville resident
- Ronald Henry, parent of Anna Yates students, PTO member
- Art Hoff, former President Emery Unified School District Board of Trustees
- Marcia Parham, Former President Anna Yates PTO
- Tracy Schroth, RULE member
- Joan Strasser Ph.D., RULE member

All affiliations are provided for identification purposes only and do not reflect the endorsement of any organization.

Please add your name to this letter by signing online at:<http://chn.ge/SaveAY>

or contact us via regular mail at:

Save Anna Yates Elementary

4333 Holden St. #51 Emeryville, CA 94608

or at (510) 654-0166 or (510) 717-1281

We hope to present this letter at the District Board Meeting on June 11, 2012, 6:00 p.m. at the ESS Theater.

To receive more information and future updates via e-mail, please join our mailing list at:

<http://groups.google.com/group/save-anna-yates>

Views: 11

'Pay To Play' Alleged By Lawmaker At Emery School District

Posted by Brian Donahue on May 14, 2012 at 1:56pm in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

The following is not copied from the Emeryville Tattler. A few words have been changed to get past the new rule that bars any copied material, however relevant to our school district, from the ECCL website.

Here then is the changed Tattler story:

Lawmaker Attempts To Curb Emery School District's Corrupt 'Pay To P...

Today's Bay Citizen features a story about California school bond corruption that conjures up abuses from the passage of Emeryville's 2010 Measure J school bond.

Emeryville's Measure J, like other recent school bonds statewide, was funded by firms that would benefit financially from passage of the measure. Measure J cleared \$95 million in Emeryville taxpayer funded bonds for the building of the Center of Community Life.

The Emeryville Measure J campaign was funded by:

- *\$3000 from Nexus Partners- the architectural design team hired after the election, by the School District to the tune of \$6 million*
- *\$10,500 from Caldwell Flores- the politically connected Emeryville bond writing firm who got the Measure J contract worth millions of dollars*
- *\$1000 from Greg Kato- the vice-president of Caldwell Flores*
- *\$5000 from Jones Hall- a bond counsel firm*
- *\$10,000 from Turner Construction- the contractor selected to build the project worth millions of dollars*

It should be noted all these campaign donations occurred before the election and subsequent passage of Measure J. Only two private citizens not expected to receive pay

back donated (a small amount) to the campaign, everyone else stood to benefit financially with passage of the measure.

The figures above illustrate the huge payout a small investment in a school bond can bring; the focus of the Bay Citizen story.

The Bay Citizen story highlights a San Jose School District and its recent school bond, coincidentally also a Measure J.

Here is the Bay Citizen story:

Critics struggle to end 'pay to play' in school bonds

Critics of the practice in which financial firms help pass school bonds that they profit from are continuing to push for reforms, but so far have faced resistance and failure. In California, underwriting companies hired by school districts to sell bonds often make campaign contributions to help convince voters to pass the bond measures. A California Watch investigation found that leading underwriters gave \$1.8 million over the last five years to successful bond measures, and in almost every case school districts gave underwriting contracts to those same firms.

Underwriters are essentially middlemen, buying bonds from districts and selling them to investors at a higher price. Underwriters say they generally only give campaign contributions after getting hired; school districts argue the money has no influence. But critics call it a "pay to play" system that potentially costs taxpayers more than a strictly competitive process would.

The California Association of County Treasurers and Tax Collectors has been pushing to end the practice for years. Last year, it sponsored a bill to prohibit financial firms from providing both underwriting and campaign services for bond measures. The bill failed in committee, but its author, Assemblyman Chris Norby, R-Fullerton, vows to bring it back next year and add limits on campaign donations. "It's a clear conflict of interest. Wall Street brokerage houses are buying local elections," Norby said. "The whole democratic process is being subverted and corrupted."

Norby acknowledged his efforts face determined opposition from school districts and some underwriting companies. Similar bills failed in 2010, 2009 and 2008.

"You have the public school establishment in an unholy alliance with Wall Street," Norby said. "It's hard to beat it."

School districts are worried that Norby's legislation would freeze underwriter campaign donations, which are needed to successfully pass bonds, said David Walrath, legislative advocate for the Small School Districts' Association.

"We believe this bill, if enacted, would make it less likely that we could pass bonds, which would mean we'd be less able to provide adequate facilities for our students," Walrath said.

Walrath said the proposal would especially harm small districts in rural areas, which are less able to raise money for bond campaigns from residents. He also takes issue with the bill for singling out financial firms, while architects, builders and unions also routinely give money to bond campaigns.

"What is it about the service (underwriters) provide that's so objectionable that they cannot have political free speech rights to assist in a campaign for something they believe in?" Walrath said.

Federal regulators have also expressed concern that restrictions on bond measure contributions wouldn't pass constitutional muster. The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld limits on contributions to individual candidates, but not for ballot initiatives. "It does touch on a person's ability to make constitutional speech," said Ernesto Lanza, deputy executive director and chief legal officer of the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board.

For years, some financial giants have been pushing the self-regulatory agency to adopt restrictions. In 2008, representatives of Morgan Stanley, JPMorgan Chase & Co. and Citigroup Inc. urged the board to limit bond measure contributions from financial firms because of "the perception that making such a contribution could cause an underwriter to be selected and to help ensure that the playing field is leveled for all underwriters."

Other underwriters, however, pushed back. School districts and other government entities "are in need of the public policy and campaign expertise of experienced regional investment banking firms," wrote an executive of George K. Baum & Company.

The Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board ended up requiring disclosure of campaign contributions and is still considering whether more regulations are necessary, Lanza said.

In California, the debate has focused on underwriters that provide election-related services along with their traditional underwriting business.

In 2010, for example, Franklin-McKinley School District in San Jose hired George K. Baum to help lay the groundwork for a bond measure campaign and to underwrite the bonds once they passed. The pre-election services included strategic planning, a public information program and a community opinion survey.

"George K. Baum & Company offers school districts a turnkey approach to facilities funding," the company advertised in its proposal. "Our school district bond election clients have been overwhelmingly successful."

The additional services are supposed to be free. School districts are prohibited from using public funds for bond campaigns. But county treasurers argue that school districts end up paying more under these arrangements.

"We feel that these prepackaged campaign and underwriting relationships result in higher fees to the taxpayers," said Jackie Denney, president of the California Association of County Treasurers and Tax Collectors.

Neither the district nor George K. Baum responded to requests for comment. But in its proposal to the school district, the company stated, "Our competitors would like you to believe that the District will pay a higher fee for our additional services, but this is patently untrue. The only differences in this regard between our firm and our competitors are our smaller profit margin and our dedication to specialization."

Under its contract with the district, George K. Baum stood to make 1.1 percent of the bonds sold.

The company gave \$8,500 to the campaign for Measure J, a \$50 million bond measure on the November 2010 ballot. It also provided \$10,000 worth of "Campaign Consulting Services," according to campaign filings. The measure passed with 70 percent of the vote, and George K. Baum has been selling the district's bonds since then.

Views: 28

Reply by Kathryn Webb on May 21, 2012 at 2:02pm

I think that those who will benefit financially from the passage of Measure J are the ones who should pay for the campaign costs.

Reply by Brian Donahue on May 21, 2012 at 5:49pm

Well, that's pretty cynical. How about the parents and other citizens? I guess they're just left out of the whole process since they don't have a lobbyist. Guess who's going to get screwed?

Reply by Kathryn Webb on May 21, 2012 at 8:59pm

Who doesn't want the ECCL? Who's going to get screwed? What are you talking about?

Reply by Brian Donahue on May 21, 2012 at 9:29pm

Those who's interests are not served by the building of the Center of Community Life (those who don't want the ECCL or wouldn't if they knew the score):

1. Parents of Emeryville public school children
2. Emeryville residents
3. Emery school teachers

Those who's interests are served by the building of ECCL:

1. Bond writers
2. Architects
3. Contractors, and Trade Unions
4. Retiring City Council members and School Board members
5. City Hall and School District employees

School Board President Resigns

Posted by Brian Donahue on May 14, 2012 at 1:49pm in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

The following is not copied from the Emeryville Tattler. A few words have been changed to get past the new rule that discounts copying any material, however relevant to our School District, here on the ECCL website.

Here then is the changed Tattler story:

President Resigns From School Board

Breaking News:

School Board's Cheryl Webb: "It's Time For Me To Move On"

School Board President, Cheryl Webb announced she stepped down as a Board

member effective last week the Tattler has learned. Ms Webb, appointed to the Board eleven years ago, notified Alameda County Schools Superintendent Sheila Jordan late yesterday and her colleagues on the City/Schools Committee by e-mail that her time is over.



*Former School Board President
Cheryl Webb*

Ms Webb seemed guarded in her responses to questions from the Tattler indicating curtly it's time for her to move on, "I see myself as a public servant but I feel it's time to pass the baton to someone else for them to have this opportunity" she said. She added she wants "nothing but the best" for the School District and for Emeryville as she steps down, and she indicated the Board should appoint someone "diligent to the multi-faceted work" to replace her. There is a year and a half left to Ms Webb's tenure, giving a replacement that much time before an election.

A long time Emeryville resident with children in Emery schools, Cheryl Webb noted she always "fully supported teachers" during her eleven year tenure on the Board and added, "My record speaks for itself in this regard."

Looking forward, Ms Webb found reasons for optimism for Emery Unified School District, "The Board has committed to a more open and transparent process for making key decisions. I look forward to that happening" she said.

Ms Webb will "still be an active citizen and part of the dialogue" in Emeryville but "not from the perspective of the School Board dais" she said as she stepped down.

Views: 11

School District Whistleblower Levels Charge

Posted by Brian Donahue on May 8, 2012 at 7:54am in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

Note:

The following is not an Emeryville Tattler story. A few of the words have been changed to get past the Nexus Partners new rule that dictates citizens may not paste information from other sources. So the story has been slightly changed.

Here then is the expurgated Tattler story:

Teacher Accuses Administration:

Emeryville School Cheats Students:

Minimum Phys Ed Standards Unmet

An Emeryville teacher informed the Tattler recently that the School District is cheating elementary school children out of State mandated minimum requirements for physical education. The teacher, who wished to remain unidentified due to fear of reprisals, told the Tattler that California law requires a minimum of 200 minutes of PE instruction per every 10 days of school for students in 1st through 6th grade however the school, Anna Yates Elementary, is only providing 60 minutes every 10 days for most children. A high level school administrator, who also spoke to the Tattler and also wished to remain anonymous, denied the charges but promised to "look into the matter".

Student Injured By Incompetence

The teacher noted a recent injury to a student came as a result of an unqualified instructor providing the "paltry amount" of PE students do get. The teacher alleges the "classified" or non-credentialed instructor, had students running backward on the asphalt, something any credentialed teacher would know not to do. One child fell backwards and fractured his arm during the dangerous exercise.

The teacher said in an e-mail that the School District was "very out of compliance" with State mandated minimums for PE and indicated the District may be trying to adjust the numbers as reported to the State to fit the requirements.

The teacher also said that the administration at the school has a lackadaisical attitude and doesn't take State mandates seriously. The attitude was summed up with a hubris filled paraphrase attributed to the administration by the teacher, "We're a small district and special and we don't have to follow the same rules as everybody else."

The administration rebuffed the charges of not meeting State law according to the complainant teacher who added the administration official played down calls to meet State minimum requirements. When the teacher informed the administrator that PE instruction was sub standard at the school, the response was, "We've always done it that way."

The State requires an accurate accounting of the number of minutes of instruction for public schools and the District risks fines or worse from Sacramento if these charges are substantiated. The Tattler will continue to investigate and report as this story unfolds.

The School Board Monday, promised to address the issue at a future meeting.
Views: 9

School District: Tie Teacher Pay To Student Test Scores

Posted by Brian Donahue on May 7, 2012 at 4:28pm in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

Note:

The following story is not pasted from the Emeryville Tattler. Some words have been changed to get past the Nexus Partners censors who now disallow pasting stories on this site.

Here then is the expurgated Tattler article:

School Consultants Say Link Teacher Pay To Student Performance

\$6 Million Nexus Partners Lets Their Bigotry Show

Opinion

It's official: the Emery Unified School District thinks we need to bust the Teacher's Union and strongly consider tying teacher's pay to student academic achievement. Oh, and never mind the fact that child poverty negatively effects their academic achievement.

The anti-teacher message can be found at the Emeryville Center of Community Life blog and an entry about Education Secretary Arne Duncan posted by Nexus Partners, the moderators of the website. Perhaps it should be further pointed out that we, the Emeryville taxpayers paid \$6 million for the Nexus Partners' expertise to, among other things, allow us to hear this missive about teacher pay and academic achievement.

The toxic message about busting the union and holding teachers responsible for their student's parent's income comes courtesy of this group the Nexus Partners, the architecture / city planning consortium of firms that the School Board hired several years ago to push forward the Center of Community Life. That in mind, the Emery Unified School District also, is responsible, by extension, for this outrageous anti-teacher message.

The Nexus Partners thinks Emeryville is best served by forwarding the anti-teacher message without any counter message in support of teachers, it should be noted. It's hard to know where to refute this absurdity, but a good place to start is the idea that tying teacher pay to academic performance will somehow work to improve academic performance. A good analogy is the idea that we should tie police pay to crime rates to bring down crime, something the Emeryville Chief of Police Ken James said would bring the opposite results.

The teacher pay thing is especially egregious for a School District to float since not only does it bear no allegiance to reality, one only needs to consider the downward spiral it would engender: As the pay rate goes down, down goes the ability to attract good teachers to the district, creating a negative feedback loop. Plus it runs roughshod over the truism that children raised in poverty, a high percentage of

Emery's demographic it must be noted, are scholastically disadvantaged from the start.

We are so tired of all the right wing attacks on teachers the last few years. Why, precisely should teachers be held accountable for their students' disadvantaged home life? Why is it teachers are expected now to solve the problems of poverty and student learning; that intractable problem of disadvantaged children's inherent disadvantaged academic achievement? Are there any other fields where the workers are expected to produce results for things outside their control? How about if we started blaming soldiers on the field of battle for how the war is going? Instead of looking to the top brass, let's blame the soldiers. How about if we dock their pay if the war starts going badly?

We have to ask, why would a school district, entrusted with children's educational welfare be enabling such an obviously false and disruptive narrative as tying teacher pay to academic performance? The district has known about their consultants, the Nexus Partner's posting of this anti-teacher, anti-student piece of nastiness since it's inception but they have done nothing to remove it. At this point we have to assume it meets with the District's approval.

This has not been a worthwhile spending of \$6 million of taxpayer's money, to put it mildly. How about if we get a little pro-teacher, pro-children message for that substantial sum of money?

Views: 11

Tattler Poll Reveals People Want To Save Anna Yates School

Posted by Brian Donahue on April 16, 2012 at 4:29pm in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

Below is an expurgated Emeryville Tattler article. Some of the words have been changed to get past the Nexus Partners censors who run this website.

Here then is the changed Tattler story:

**Tattler Poll On Anna Yates Elementary School Inverses Measure J
More Than 70% Flip Their Opinion?**

The Tattler recently conducted a two week reader's poll on the imminent closure of Emeryville's Anna Yates School. The question put to the readers was "Should Anna Yates Elementary School be closed?" The final vote was:

- No 46 (76%)
- YES 12 (20%)
- NO OPINION 2 (3%)

The total was 60 votes. The vote as it turns out, was almost a perfect inversion of the 2010 Measure J vote that mandated the building of a new Kindergarten-12th grade school on San Pablo Avenue that the School District says necessarily means the abandonment of Anna Yates. The Measure J vote was YES 74% and NO 26%.

Several parents of Anna Yates students have publicly noted a great deal of ignorance about the closure of the elementary school among their fellow parents despite

Measure J and a decade of work on the Center of Community Life, of which the new school is a part. Some have indicated the ignorance of the school closure on the part of some parents is due to a (possibly purposefully) inadequate community engagement and disclosure on the part of the School District.

Many citizens are calling on the School District to reconfigure the Center of Community Life to allow Anna Yates to be saved.

Views: 17

Pixar Cuts Funding For Emeryville Schools

Posted by Brian Donahue on April 5, 2012 at 8:42am in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

Below is an expurgated re-posting from the Emeryville Tattler. It is changed to get past the censors at Nexus Partners, the operators of this site.

Here then is the changed post:

Pixar Cuts School Funding

Pixar has severely curtailed its corporate support for Emeryville schools over the last couple of years according to officials at the Emery Education Fund. The Fund, a local non-profit tasked with shepherding donations to the schools, said Pixar has traditionally offered pre-screenings of its new movies as a fund raising devise for Emery Unified School District but they have balked for the last two years. Pixar has opted instead to pre-screen its movies for the benefit of other school districts and non-profits outside of Emeryville.



Brave New World?

Nothing for Emeryville's schools again this year.

Phillip Powell, Emery Ed Fund's Interim Executive Director told the Tattler the pre-screenings have historically been a large part of the Emery Ed Fund, netting over \$100,000 for Emeryville schools in 2010, the last time Pixar cooperated. "Normally

Pixar pre-releases happen in May" Mr Powell said after he acknowledged it appears Emery has been skipped again. For its part, this year Pixar has offered a charity pre-screening of its new film, Brave for the educational non-profit corporation College Track. It should be noted Emery's School Superintendent, Debbra Lindo, sits on the Board of Directors of College Track.

In addition to the stoppage of the charitable giving for Emeryville's Schools, Pixar has recently called back millions of dollars in a property tax reassessment appeal, a large amount of which would have gone to the schools. City council members have noted as well, Pixar has scaled back its business taxes paid to the city, last year paying only some \$8000. Against all this, Pixar enjoys the benefits of the Emeryville business tax cap, an unprecedented gift to Emeryville's largest corporations from City Hall that makes any receipts over the cap threshold tax free. It's a scheme that enables Pixar to pay Emeryville at a far lower rate than other businesses here. Another large Emeryville firm, Novartis has set up an annual \$5000 scholarship it pays for college tuition for science majors graduating from Emery High School. Novartis donated \$100,000 for the scholarship fund in 2006.

Emery was shut out of last year's Pixar film pre-screening, Cars 2. The Park Avenue corporation instead offered the film as a philanthropic fund raising device elsewhere.

The Walt Disney Corporation bought Pixar in 2006 in an all stock transaction worth \$7.4 billion and is said to be worth in excess of \$75 billion.

Views: 11

Vote On Closing Anna Yates

Posted by Brian Donahue on March 26, 2012 at 12:17pm in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

The Emeryville Tattler is hosting an informal poll about the impending closure of Anna Yates Elementary School. Close the school as the School District wants to do?

YES, NO or NO OPINION. Readers are invited to cast their vote and watch the results change live. The poll will be in effect for two weeks.

Please visit the Tattler and cast your vote. The Tattler is here.

Views: 4

Teacher Lay-Offs While We Build ECCL? What Kind Of Message Is That?

Posted by Brian Donahue on March 26, 2012 at 12:10pm in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

Note-

The following post is an edited repost from the Emeryville Tattler. Some of the wording has been changed to get past the Nexus Partner censorship rules. These no reposting rules were added after Tattler stories were posted in an attempt to stop news critical of the Center of Community Life from being disseminated.

Here then is the story, albeit changed, from the Emeryville Tattler:

WE'RE BUILDING A NEW SCHOOL WHILE WE LAY OFF TEACHERS

Opinion

Parents and Emeryville citizens have begun to agitate; the recent spate of Emery School District teacher lay-offs is causing a whisper campaign about how the lay-offs and the building of the new school and recreation center known as the Emeryville Center of Community Life are conflated. City Hall and the School District officials for their part, are showing signs they're worried about this kind of thinking taking hold.

They're trying to take the offensive on this issue, forwarding a new meme.

The way they're spinning it, the building of the new school /rec center is totally unrelated to the laying off of teachers. A March 22nd e-mail to concerned parents from Emeryville City Manager Pat O'Keeffe put it succinctly, "The Center of Community Life is not causing teacher lay offs" he categorically states.

Mr O'Keeffe and the School District are together in this meme.

They note that the Measure J bonds voters passed in 2010 explicitly forbids spending the money on school operational expenses, including paying teachers. It only authorizes the building of the facilities that will comprise the Center of Community Life. They are also explaining how \$25 million in city money the council voted to give to the project is also earmarked exclusively for the building of facilities. This is due to the arcane esoterica of Redevelopment Agency funding mandated by the State.

Even though they'd like to pay teachers more and stop the lay offs, their hands are tied they tell us.

False Narrative

All this is just a bunch of hooey. It's a false narrative meant to divert attention from an uncomfortable truth. What Mr O'Keeffe and the School District is not acknowledging is that in fact the building of the Center of Community Life is directly responsible for the teacher lay offs.

The only way the School District can increase the operating budget for the schools, including teacher pay, is if the voters of Emeryville vote themselves another tax increase in the form of a *parcel tax*. And there's the rub. The passage of the \$95 million Measure J bonding for the Center of Community Life has almost certainly tapped out the voters good will towards the schools.

"The Center of Community

*Life is responsible for
teacher lay offs."*

The last few years has seen the passage of two parcel taxes for the schools in Emeryville in addition to the Center of Community Life. The voters here have shown great generosity towards the schools; the Center of Community Life alone will cost taxpayers some \$400 million by the time the interest on the bonds has been paid (and that's only possible if the city starts to grow its assessed valuation like we did before the recession).

The voters have thus far been generous but their generosity is not infinite. The fact that we've come up hard against the market realities of Emeryville's plunging Assessed Valuation and its attendant reel back of Emeryville's bonding capacity will help sink any nascent drive to push another parcel tax.

The Center of Community Life is going to be it as far as any extra school spending from more taxes is concerned we're afraid to say. Perhaps voters will be in a more

giving mood after the economy picks up and the middle class in America is restored and the Measure J bonds are paid off..... In other words, it's going to be a while. And that leaves us facing teacher lay offs and other cut backs at our schools. It could actually get worse. Schools are funded by student enrollment and our enrollment at Emery Unified is dropping. The more it drops, the more funding dries up and the more cut backs and teacher lay offs we face causing more enrollment drop. It's a spiraling negative feedback loop and we're already in the loop so to speak.

Perhaps we can call back some of the \$95 million dollar Center of Community Life bonds, build a more modest facility by saving Anna Yates Elementary School and find some way to appeal to the voters that a new parcel tax could be swapped for the scaling back of the school building project. It could be couched in terms of being revenue neutral...perhaps voters could see the wisdom in this and vote themselves another parcel tax.

What's needed is a new path for our schools, a different approach, and it should start with real transparency coming from the School District and City Hall. We can't just obliviously build the whole Center of Community Life and hope for the best for its operating budget. Let's start by first spelling out where we really are and not just throwing up our hands as Mr O'Keeffe and the School District is doing.

Views: 9

Nexus Partners Should Be Fired

Posted by Brian Donahue on March 19, 2012 at 12:48pm in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

The Nexus Partners, the group that runs this site and facilitates the implementation of the Center of Community Life should be fired for censoring posts from stakeholders. Nexus Partners expost facto changed the rules of conduct without explanation and deleted many posts as a consequence. The only such posts that have been deleted have been those that were critical of the Center of Community Life.

This action is so egregious for a group charged with engaging the stakeholders, they should be fired. Credibility is at stake.

Views: 8

Teacher Lay-Offs: Phony "Discussion"

Posted by Brian Donahue on March 19, 2012 at 11:44am in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

Note: The following is NOT re-printed from the Emeryville Tattler. Some of the text has been changed to get around the Nexus Partners attempt to censor content by expost facto changing the rules regarding discussions on this site.

Here then is the (slightly) expurgated Tattler story:

Teacher Lay-Offs:

What Kind Of "Conversation" Is This?

Opinion

Facing angry parents and teachers at a regularly scheduled February 27th School Board meeting, School Board member Josh Simon tried to calm them; we're not laying off teachers, he said, "we're having a conversation" (about teacher lay-offs). The culmination of the "conversation" was that the Board, including Mr Simon, voted to lay-off the teachers regardless.

The parents that showed up at that fateful meeting may have known teacher lay offs were on the agenda or maybe not. The parents learned at the meeting that the Board saw fit to call the lay-offs "PKS Reductions" for the sake of the publicized agenda. The Board arrogantly noted the crowd wasn't very large that night, an obvious attempt to de-legitimize the pleas from the parents to not engage in the PKS Reductions.

This is how the Emery Unified School District and its Board has a "conversation" with the public.

The word "conversation" implies two way communication coupled with good faith action. That's certainly not what's been going on here.

Ever since the School Board glommed onto the ironically titled Center of Community Life, this is how it's been. And it's the Center of Community Life that's driving the teacher lay-offs...not that you'd know that from listening to the School District. The Center of Community Life, with it's former \$400 million price tag (including financing going to Wall Street, now something lower) has certainly used up Emeryville voters' good will towards the schools. To keep teachers at the District, Emeryville residents would need to vote themselves another *parcel tax*, now rendered an unlikely prospect. This expensive new school building project is forcing the laying off of teachers; not a part of the Board's "conversation" it should be noted.

Dissenting views about the Center of Community Life are scoffed at by this District. Citizens advocating for a real conversation are given their state mandated three minutes but the Board disinterestedly watches the seconds tick away, casts aside any critiques with blinders firmly intact and proceeds forthwith towards its Center of Community Life heedless of the dangers ahead.

The ignorance of parents over the impending closure of the popular Anna Yates Elementary School, necessitated by the Board's interpretation of the building of the Center of Community Life, is testament of the failure to have a proper conversation. Ask around, you'll notice that most parents don't know that the Board intends to close the newly remodeled Anna Yates School, the gem of the School District. The District, it would appear is content with the parental ignorance, all the well publicized "community engagement" notwithstanding.

The School Board effectively tricked the public with its "PKS Reductions" hokus-pokus on February 27th. The overflow angry crowd at the next meeting, last Monday, is further testament to that. There was no way the Board could play down the sheer number of citizens in the Emery Theater last Monday night. The people

were angry at having been deceived previously. The Board responded by quieting down the crush of peeved parents by holding back information about how they've already decided on teacher lay-offs, a further deception, even while parents pleaded to be appraised.

There's no way any of this can be construed as a "conversation". What it is, really, is deception.

Views: 10

C.O.C.: Brian Carver Resigns In Protest

Posted by Brian Donahue on March 3, 2012 at 1:27pm in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

The following story is NOT reprinted from the Emeryville Tattler. The text has been changed in subtle ways to get past the Nexus Partners censors who changed the rules to stop my posting articles critical of the Center of Community Life. The Nexus Partners changed the rules mid-stream, making it harder for people to hear criticism of the Center, with no explanation as to why.

Here's the (changed) Tattler story:

Citizen's Oversight Chairman Resigns In Protest

Crisis at center of Center of Community Life:

Second Resignation At Oversight Committee

At the City/School Committee meeting on Tuesday night, the Chair of the Measure J Citizens' Oversight Committee, Emeryville resident and parent Brian Carver, indicated that he does not intend to seek an additional term on the Committee due to his having "lost faith" in the Center of Community Life project and in the School Board's management of it. The action makes the second such resignation in less than a year for the embattled Oversight Committee.

Mr Carver, an attorney, professor at Cal Berkeley's School of Information, and Emeryville parent, gave his monthly report on Oversight Committee activities in which he described the Committee's continuing frustration with trying to work with the District Staff and Board on even mundane issues such as the structure of the Committee and member term lengths and also explained that his one-year term as Chair would be expiring making this his last report as Chair to the City School Committee.

Schools Superintendent Debbra Lindo and Council member Nora Davis followed his monthly report by praising Mr Carver's work on the Committee over the last year, acknowledging the difficulty of the task.

Mr Carver then told the Committee that he had also prepared a public comment to express his own personal view of the last year's work of the Oversight Committee.

At that point he told shocked attendees he would not be inclined to continue

serving on the Oversight Committee because he had lost faith in the Center of Community Life project and in the District's handling of it.

Mr Carver said he could not summarize a year's worth of issues but would highlight three:

First, he argued that the Board should have a clearly articulated long-term plan for all three of the School District properties, Emery High School, Anna Yates Elementary School, and the abandoned Ralph Hawley Middle School. He added that it was "irresponsible" for the School Board not to clearly communicate to the public such plans for all three properties, instead of focusing \$95 million of bond authorization that will take 20-40 years to pay off all on a single property. Secondly, Mr Carver argued that the Board should be open to alternatives to the Kindergarten through 12th grade co-location model that the Board favors. He explained that parents and a former school board president have repeatedly asked the District to seriously consider such alternatives but the District instead carries on blindly with a single-minded devotion to the K-12 silver bullet. Mr Carver argued that even if the K-12 model were educationally superior, which he disputed, he said that the finances and the space available "don't pencil out" and that the District would be better able to achieve its goals if they were not trying to cram everything onto the single High School site.

Thirdly, he said that it should not be so hard to contribute one's opinions on what one would like to see in a future school and community center. He said he has felt ostracized for expressing a different opinion than the District staff and Board. He concluded by highlighting for the public what he thinks is a looming mistake on the horizon. He said that the District will likely soon finalize its decision to enter into a "lease-leaseback" arrangement with Turner Construction for the construction of the Center of Community Life, likening it to writing Turner one big check and hoping for the best. Mr Carver argued that in this economy, the District should instead put the project out for competitive bidding, a process he said could save the District millions of dollars.

Later that same meeting the City/Schools Committee blithely approved the Center of Community Life's conceptual design, placing K-12 and Community Services all on the High School site, without so much as a word in response from a school board or city council member to the (former) chairman of the Citizen's Oversight Committee, Mr Carver's concerns.

Mr Carver's resignation in protest makes the second time for the Citizen's Oversight Committee; last September, committee member Shirley Enomoto resigned from her position in protest citing an unsupported and recalcitrant School Board. Ms Enomoto was serving as the State mandated taxpayer's representative to the Oversight Committee.

Brian Carver lives in the Triangle neighborhood with his wife, council member Jac Asher and their two children who both attend Emeryville public schools.

Views: 14

Save Anna Yates

Posted by Brian Donahue on February 27, 2012 at 8:25pm in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

Below is not a re-print from the Emeryville Tattler. The text has been changed in subtle ways to get around the new rule against pasting from other sites. Readers should know Nexus Partners did this rule change to censor negative comment about the Center of Community Life in the Tattler.

Here then is a changed version of the story from the Tattler:
Save Our Elementary School

A longtime Emeryville resident, business and community leader, Arthur Hoff is a former Planning Commissioner and former president of the School District Advisory Board of Trustees.

Mr Hoff has long been a major philanthropist to the school district, generously giving both his time and money for the betterment of our schools.

Mr Hoff is concerned that the decision makers adjust their planning properly and be open to new iterations as the Emeryville Center of Community Life school/community center is buffeted by large Measure J bond funding perturbations in the wake of Emeryville's skidding assessed valuation.

IF IT AIN'T BROKE DON'T FIX IT

Anna Yates Elementary, a jewel of a school, just renovated at a cost of \$8 Million Dollars, should remain in its present location and not be re-built as part of the Emery Center for Community Life (ECCL). This would not only provide a better elementary school, it would make available funds to properly complete the ECCL Campus.

Because of the sluggish economy, only \$70 Million of the authorized \$120 Million will be available for Phase I of the ECCL construction. Estimates vary, but it could take 10 years for the additional funds to be available.

As a result ECCL will not contain a teaching theatre, a second public gym, a K-3 building and landscaping on the north and south boundaries of the complex. K-3 classes will be held at Anna Yates effectively splitting the elementary school in two. The School Board is optimistic that they will find the additional money, but it depends on the assessed valuation of the District increasing at an annual rate of 7%.

Last year the assessment role decreased by 7%.

When the ECCL proposal came before the Planning Commission, a majority of the commissioners thought the site was too small for all the desired uses. Two telltale items pop up: 1) there is insufficient separation of outside play fields for the lower and upper grade students and 2) the running track which is traditionally a quarter mile oval is in the form of a trapezoid, not suitable for competitive races.

Anna Yates should be retained in its present location and the saved money used to complete the ECCL complex sooner rather than later. Time is of the essence. The School District's enrollment decreased from 802 in 2006 to 718 in 2011 (10%). And beginning next year the District will have a \$1,500,000 deficit (15%) in its annual operating budget.

Art Hoff
2/19/12
Views: 14

Nexus Partners Are Now Censoring Citizens Who Wish To Comment On ECCL

Posted by Brian Donahue on February 27, 2012 at 6:20pm in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

To All Emeryville Citizens-

The people that run this site, Nexus Partners, are now engaging in full on censorship of critical ideas on the Emeryville Center of Community Life (ECCL). Since the beginning, I've posted stories from the news blog the Emeryville Tattler whenever there is an item concerning ECCL. Often, these stories offer critical dissenting views.

The Nexus Partners just changed the Rules of Conduct here making it now illegal to post any stories (please check my previous two postings called Rules of Conduct 1&2). This change of the rules is arbitrary since they offer no reason for it. It's obvious they don't want any critical comment about ECCL allowed.

Remember this when you think about the Center of Community Life.

Views: 12

Rules of conduct 2

Posted by Brian Donahue on February 27, 2012 at 6:10pm in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

The Nexus Partners changed the rules today. Here are the new rules:

RULES OF CONDUCT:

We ask that you adhere to the following guidelines.

1. No selling of products or services. Let's keep this an ad-free zone.
2. Keep the conversation respectful and civil, even if you strongly disagree with another member of the community. Criticize ideas, not the people behind them.
3. We have no interest in censoring your voice and input, so please don't put us in that position.
 - Use appropriate language.
 - This site is "G" rated and intended for all ages.

No multimedia. If you want us to know about outside sources, please link to them, Don't paste them in.

Please do not post any images or links to images or content that might in any way be seen or be construed as offensive to anyone who might view your posts.

- No sexually suggestive or explicit references or graphics of any kind
- No racial, ethnic, religious or gender slurs
- Of course, nothing illegal.

If you upload a profile image (avatar) for yourself, please keep it clean and appropriate for all ages.

This is a place for dissenting views to be shared in a safe and constructive way.

- It is OK to be firm on your position.

- However, the best way to communicate with someone whom you may disagree with is to do so in a respectful manner.

By participating in this social network site you agree to these simple terms of use:

- Any violation of these terms will result in your offensive content being removed.
- Continued inappropriate online behavior will result in you being suspended from ongoing participation in this site.
- Please don't make us do that. We want to hear from you and we want your voice shared with others.
- Please DO NOT post here if you are uncomfortable with these simple guidelines.

So let's go.... Let's start the conversation!

Thank You,
The Nexus Partners
Views: 14

Rules of conduct 1

Posted by Brian Donahue on February 27, 2012 at 6:08pm in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

The Nexus Partners changed the original rules of conduct for this site today. Note there are six rules. Now go to my next discussion titled Rules of conduct 2.

Here are the original rules:

1. Keep the conversation respectful and civil, even if you strongly disagree with another member of the community.
2. We have no interest in censoring your voice and input, so please don't put us in that position.
 - Use appropriate language.
 - This site is "G" rated and intended for all ages.

Please do not post any images or links to images or content that might in any way be seen or be construed as offensive to anyone who might view your posts.

- No sexually suggestive or explicit references or graphics of any kind
- No racial, ethnic, religious or gender slurs
- Of course, nothing illegal.

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- Please don't make us do that. We want to hear from you and we want your voice shared with others.
- Please DO NOT post here if you are uncomfortable with these simple guidelines.

Views: 12

The people running this site don't want you to know

Posted by Brian Donahue on February 27, 2012 at 5:40pm in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

They don't want to let dissenting views about the Center of Community Life enter this site. They just took down all my posts. The people running this site are now in sympathy with the entire rest of the ECCL culture; namely if there is a criticism of the project, it's to be quashed.

Good luck getting a good project using these kinds of tactics.

Views: 11

Center Of Community Life Is Targeted By New Community Group

Posted by Brian Donahue on February 27, 2012 at 2:01am in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

The Center of Community Life and Measure J are targeted by new community group. Re-printed from the Emeryville Tattler:

Lack Of Transparency At City Hall: New Group Forms

Former city councilman Ken Bukowski recently announced the formation of the 'Emeryville Property Owners Association', a group risen up organically he says, in response to a lack of transparency at City Hall. The organization, meant to serve as a conduit of information between property owners, the School District and City Hall is so far made up of property owners in the north Hollis Street area and is concerning itself at the onset with the North Hollis Underground Utility District. The District is a new special tax assessment area set up by City Hall, effecting property owners there. Mr Bukowski explains the organization is attracting property owners, many of whom are business owners, who's interests have been under-represented by City Hall and the Chamber of Commerce.

The North Hollis Underground Utility District has been set up to get rid of unsightly power lines along Hollis Street primarily by Wareham Development, a well connected prime mover and shaker developer in that part of Emeryville.

Mr Bukowski noted that a special assessment district such as North Hollis must be initiated by property owners in a democratic fashion but a lack of transparency from City Hall combined with a desire to help Wareham has resulted in a steamroller project. Mr Bukowski claims the proposed undergrounding work will be a costly tax for a majority of property owners in the North Hollis area, some of

whom were caught unaware by the whole deal until the recently sent city notices of the amount each owner will owe.

Mr Bukowski also noted the interest to be charged the property owners for the undergrounding work is onerous: 6-8% and this is unwarranted.

In the case of North Hollis, Wareham's holdings are so vast that only one other property owner's OK was needed, combined with three holdings of the City of Emeryville, to greenlight the whole undergrounding project. The city's assessment to itself for the undergrounding work would amount to more than a million dollars, paid from the General Fund according to Mr Bukowski.

The former councilman said out of 21 owners, as few as two were aware the special assessment district was being created and that these affected property owners are clamoring for the collective representation that the Property Owners Association will bring.

At their first meeting, the Property Owners Association also discussed the Emeryville Center of Community Life and the *Measure J* bonds they must pay. Mr Bukowski told the Tattler that of the 16 property owners that attended, only three had even heard of the Center of Community Life and the tax they'll have to pay for the bonds. "This organization is going to be all about transparency" he said, "The people that pay the money should be appraised of the situation" he added.

The group will be open to all Emeryville property owners and will have a website opening soon.

Views: 25

Reply by ECCL Staff 1 on February 27, 2012 at 4:48pm

Thanks for contributing to the Community Idea Forum. However, as this is a re-post of an already existing media source/blog, please refrain from re-posting it here. See <http://emerycenter.ning.com/page/rules-of-conduct> for guidelines of participation on this site.

should Anna Yates be moved?

Posted by Arthur Hoff on September 17, 2011 at 11:01pm in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

Many people feel that Anna Yates should not be moved. What are the pro and cons of this idea?

Views: 41

Reply by William Michael Webber on October 7, 2011 at 4:23pm

There has been extensive discussion of this issue on the comments to an Emeryville Tattler article which reprinted your question and set forth some background paragraphs:

<http://emeryvillettattler.blogspot.com/2011/09/letter-from-planning-...>

How can we make this site better?

Posted by Nexus_1 on February 2, 2010 at 6:40pm in ECCL Other Topics (Change)
Pretty self explanatory - if you have suggestions on how to make this Web 2.0 social network site better or easier to use let us know. If there are particular Forum Topics you would like to see created let us know that too.

Views: 48

Reply by Cheryl Webb on July 7, 2011 at 1:31pm

I can't find a search engine. Is there one?

I'm looking for documents such as the MOU 1 and associated budget and the MOU2 and associated budget. These are public documents that have been approved so I'd think they would be here somewhere.

I'm also looking for a project at a glance chart so we can see where we've been, where we're at, and where we should be at any point in the future of the project. Scope and sequence if you will. I realize that we're at the conceptual planing phase but it seems like we've been there for a few years in re-writes.

How are decisions made about what get's posted and when?

How can I help with this online process? I think one way would be to get on it regularly.

Thanks!

Reply by Nexus_1 on July 7, 2011 at 5:33pm

The MOU documents are available for viewing on the City/School page of the City's official web page within the Agenda Packets. This link will take you to the April 2011 packet where the information you are looking for might be found. Here is the link:

<http://emeryville.org/archives/54/City-School%20Committee%20AGENDA%...>

For the At-A-Glance chart simply click on the At-A-Glance Calendar tab on the left page navigation panel on each page of emeryvillecenter.org site and then scroll down until you see the Calendar of Milestones. This will give you an overview of the entire project duration and the strands of activities that are underway and planned.

The search tool is a good idea - we'll see if we can add it to the site.

Thanks for the suggestions!

Reply by Brian Donahue on September 8, 2011 at 10:30am

You can make this site better by abiding by your "Rules of Conduct" for would be dissenters as presented below. Dissenters, historically are always shut down by the Power Elite in Emeryville. Talk about allowing dissent is cheap here in Emeryville; it's part of the deception. Since the people running this ECCL site are the same people that have shut out dissenters in the past, the talk of a new flowering of open debate are hollow. As soon as I or anyone else start to make the Power Elite feel uncomfortable, I will be shuttered, regardless of any "rules of conduct".

Here are the rules that will be circumvented:

1. Keep the conversation respectful and civil, even if you strongly disagree with another member of the community.
2. We have no interest in censoring your voice and input, so please don't put us in that position.
 - Use appropriate language.
 - This site is "G" rated and intended for all ages.
3. Please do not post any images or links to images or content that might in any way be seen or be construed as offensive to anyone who might view your posts.
 - No sexually suggestive or explicit references or graphics of any kind
 - No racial, ethnic, religious or gender slurs
 - Of course, nothing illegal.
4. If you upload a profile image (avatar) for yourself, please keep it clean and appropriate for all ages.
5. This is a place for dissenting views to be shared in a safe and constructive way.
 - It is OK to be firm on your position.
 - However, the best way to communicate with someone whom you may disagree with is to do so in a respectful manner.
6. By participating in this social network site you agree to these simple terms of use:
 - Any violation of these terms will result in your offensive content being removed.
 - Continued inappropriate online behavior will result in you being suspended from ongoing participation in this site.
 - Please don't make us do that. We want to hear from you and we want your voice shared with others.
 - Please DO NOT post here if you are uncomfortable with these simple guidelines.

Community Workshop 1 Summary

Posted by Nexus_1 on August 29, 2011 at 3:11pm in ECCL Other Topics (Change)

Thank you to all who joined the conversation at Anna Yates on Saturday August 27th to review the early site planning work prepared by Nexus Partners. For those

who were in attendance we sincerely appreciate the input. The Nexus Partners will take this input and develop the planning with your comments in mind. The next scheduled workshop is planned for September 17th, although the exact time and location are still being determined.

For all, including those who were not able to attend this workshop, the materials presented can be viewed here - please feel free to add your additional comments to this posting and continue the conversation.

1. Site Analysis Diagram
2. Concept Diagrams
3. Program Concepts & Inspiration
4. DRAFT - Project Schedule
5. Public Comments for Concepts A & B

Views: 53

Reply by Nexus_1 on August 30, 2011 at 6:20pm

A summary of all participant comments for both Concept A and Concept B has now been posted here and on the homepage of www.emeryvillecenter.org

Reply by Nexus_1 on September 1, 2011 at 11:25am

Tentative dates for the upcoming planned monthly Community Workshops for the remainder of calendar year 2011 have been now been added to the at-a-glance calendar

Community Center Inspiration/ideas! (originally posted as a Blog)

Posted by ECCL Staff 1 on August 29, 2011 at 5:06pm in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

i have some suggestions we can look into for new center one is community college ,fitness center,performing arts center ,aquater center.

Views: 9

Landscaping -- Let's Go Native! (originally posted as a Blog)

Posted by ECCL Staff 1 on August 29, 2011 at 5:02pm in ECCL Community Ideas (Change)

I'm not sure if this is the right place to post this... Let me know if there's a different spot! But I was at today's Community Workshop, and it was exciting to see plans and think about possibilities. Thank you!

I heard the Nexus Partners say that environmental conditions will factor into the design of buildings, as they strive to make them as energy-efficient as possible. I'm glad! I would ask for a similar approach to landscaping, through a commitment to using only native plants and "drip" irrigation.

As context, I teach biology and environmental science at the high school, and am the advisor of a new and enthusiastic student Green Team. We partner with lots of local

groups, including Save the Bay, EarthTeam and the East Bay Green Corridor. And yet it's relatively difficult for us to get out to do habitat work on our own campus.

I envision a campus that doubles as an educational native botanical garden, right in the City of Emeryville. Ideally, the very pathways through the school campus would be lined with small native habitats, with signs of species names. Maybe there could also be signs of ecological services provided by the space - or the students could work on developing that through the years. It could be designed in a such a way that it educates the community about how to create water-efficient beautiful spaces in their own yards. Lots of possibilities.

Given the projects I've seen Emeryville complete in recent years, I assume that this was already the intent for the park at the corner of San Pablo and 53rd (I hope!), but let's make it a theme that runs throughout campus as well.

In today's workshop one person shared a perspective of not wanting to scare away the geese that use the field, since it's one of the few places in the immediate area that you can see wildlife (not counting the shore, of course). This could be a way to bring in lots of local species, without focusing specifically on the geese.

Views: 11

Reply by ECCL Staff 1 on August 29, 2011 at 5:02pm

(originally posted as a blog comment and re-seeded here!)

Great idea! Landscaping using mostly if not all native plants for education and sustainability. I see these as finer grain developments that take local groups to flesh out but it's good to have them stated in the overall scheme for going forward. Or am I naive?

When you bring up the Geese, don't forget the Cooper's Hawks around the ESS field. Please share if you have any ideas on how to mitigate the Geese Droppings. Our first Football game is this next Saturday, Sept 3rd. at 1pm. Eweeeew!

Emeryville's annual Coastal Clean Up

Saturday, September 17th, 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

(I save up our otherwise landfill dogfood, catfood, and bulk rice bags over the year for this!)

I'll see you there!

Notes from Staff Workshops held at ESS on February 9 & 10, 2010

Posted by Nexus_1 on February 18, 2010 at 3:11pm in ECCL Other Topics (Change)

The Nexus Partners facilitated conversations between community services & EUSD staff on two consecutive days commencing on February 8th. The goal of these conversations was to better understand connections and disconnections, if any, from the perspectives of staff serving the community from both the city and school. Identifying specific staff needs and opportunities for closer interrelationships between departments and the community they serve is an important component of the program & operational streamlining process we are currently undertaking, with the goal to right size the ECCL to what the community needs and values. We also asked the groups to share their views

on several issues that the community has raised: 1) "What's in it for me?" 2) "What are the pros and cons of co-locating to the ESS site?" and 3) "How do we insure safety?"

The notes below were collected by the Nexus Partners and are the comments and viewpoints of the various City and School staff participants during these workshops. You can view all of the notes in the attached .pdf file - simply click the ATTACHMENTS icon below this post.

Views: 11

Partners for Community Life Guiding Principles - draft

Posted by Nexus_1 on February 3, 2010 at 4:19pm in ECCL Community

Ideas (Change)

The Partners for Community Life builds community, founded on these critical cornerstones.

We build a community of:

- Connections and partnerships to amplify individual strengths and ensures collective success.
- Wellness to champion healthy stewardship of ourselves, our neighbors, and our neighborhoods.
- Diversity to inspire individual responsibility for social justice by challenging inequality, and celebrating differences.
- Life-long learners to encourage curiosity and innovation which guide personalized pathways to opportunity and enrichment.
- Responsible action to regenerate and sustain our resources, our environment, and our relationships.

Views: 3