

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

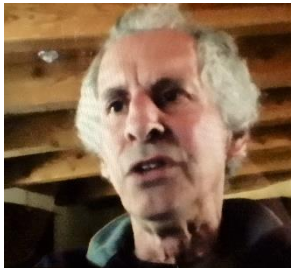
October 5, 2020

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Editor: LYLE CONNELL

President BEN THRELKELD began our October 5 meeting with a hearty, wholesale welcome for Visiting Rotarians and Guests....

JON STOUMEN explained that “O’Malley and I have been cooped up near Donner Creek.” Time in the Sierra is teaching him to “get outside and keep smiling.” Jon shared images of flora and fauna near his place in the mountains – bears, coyotes, a hummingbird, ducks in formation, poppies, fall colors and Donner Creek itself.



The recently named Executive Director of Youth Community Service, MORA OOMMEN, reviewed the work of YCS and celebrated its 20 years of partnership with the Rotary Club of Palo Alto.... YCS-Interact at Gunn High School connects YCS “service learning” with the international perspective of Interact within Rotary.



DIANA DIAMOND facilitated an exceptionally worthwhile program, directing questions to ten candidates for the Palo Alto City Council. Here are some of their more notable statements:



Pat Burt: I’m troubled that we have a record-setting capital budget.... We need more housing for all income levels. Adding ADU’s (Accessory Dwelling Units) has helped.... I’m running “again” in part because I’m concerned that the role of the City Manager has usurped that of the Council.

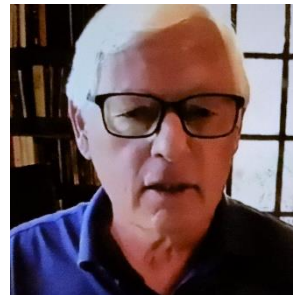


Rebecca Eisenberg: City government is beset by conflicts of interest and a lack of transparency.... Exclusionary zoning is real and entrenched.... It’s not important that I haven’t served on any city commissions. My service on the Council would provide an opportunity for the people to speak.

Lydia Kou: The city should invest in hiring an economic development specialist... Those old exclusionary clauses in property deeds are simply void; talking about them is irrelevant. The issue with housing is affordability... I’m among those who already have challenged the City Manager.



Ed Lauing: The City Manager can’t be allowed to “run the whole show....” We can’t ensure affordability on our own. If we allow three houses in place of one, the three new ones will be too expensive for most people to buy.... To move more quickly, we must get beyond polarization.



Greer Stone: Crisis can mean opportunity: Sheltering in place resulted in a 37% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.... The issue isn’t zoning but rather the growth of jobs and office space... We need more community involvement and collaboration in designing bicycle-friendly programs.



Steven Lee: Exclusionary zoning is the present-day successor to the overt racism of the past. We must not be afraid to get rid of unreasonable zoning limitations.... We had passionate debates on the Human Relations Commission, but having debates is not antithetical to productivity....



Raven Malone: We need holistic measures for emergency response.... We need both market rate housing and affordable housing; we should consider raising height limits in appropriate areas.... The question is not how long I've been in Palo Alto but what I bring to the table.



Greg Tanaka: Our response to COVID should include a time of sensible spending and streamlining red tape.... I've supported teacher housing.... Our way of getting things done can be "arbitrary and Byzantine...." I don't apologize for voting against spending \$1 million on public relations.



Cari Templeton: The environment for city government has been dysfunctional and toxic.... Exclusionary zoning (such as unreasonable lot size requirements) remains a problem.... Palo Alto wants to have a desirable suburban character, but we should think about more than single-family homes.



Ajit Varma: For many, the cost of living in the Bay Area has outrun the benefits of being here. We should encourage economic activity.... We need more density, more mixed-use development.... Google and Facebook have been willing to help create housing. We need to pursue public/private partnerships.



We'll have two speakers on October 12: Gregg Giusiana, our District Governor, and Tim Watson, chair of our World Community Service Committee.

On Oct. 19, we'll learn about the November ballot propositions from an expert from the League of Women Voters;

On Oct. 26, we'll hear from former EPA Chief and Obama Task Force Exec. Director on 21st Century Policing, Ron Davis: 21st Century Policing: What Should It Be – How Do We Get There?