A sunny blue sky, the bay shimmering in the distance, flowers blooming, birds chirping and crisp air for me to inhale. That was my wonderful experience as I stepped out of my front door to retrieve my newspaper. Yes, I am in that minority of people who still receive a printed newspaper. Something about the tactile nature and page turning that online viewing does not offer. My brief moment of communing with nature while getting the newspaper was certainly a far cry from the dark, dreary, apocalyptic smoke and ash laden days and nights that were recently upon us.

According to data from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, on some days we were literally experiencing unhealthy air quality. I have really grown to appreciate fact based information. In the midst of this pandemic, reliable science based data is critical in order for us make sound decisions which will hopefully lead us back to a state of normalcy.

So again, I can’t overemphasize the importance of sound data to guide and direct our decision making. Inasmuch as I am focused on data, I was heartened to see data come forth at the Tenant Protections Task Force meeting on September 22, 2020. As some of you may recall, this task force was established in August of 2019 primarily as a means to address concerns and make recommendations to the City Council on the issue of tenant protections. There are some community members as well as

**From the President**

JEFFREY WRIGHT

Among the many issues voters in El Cerrito and the rest of Contra Costa will have to decide in November is Measure X, a dedicated half-cent sales tax that would bring a projected $81 million annually to the county and touted as needed to bolster social services, health care and other essential needs.

If county polling is any indication, there is strong support for the 20-year measure even during the novel coronavirus pandemic, said Supervisor John Gioia, who represents El Cerrito and much of West Contra Costa.

The county polled voters in March, then conducted a second survey in June to see if opinions had changed since the onset of the statewide health shelter order.

“We did the second poll in late June because of the pandemic and support remained strong,” Gioia said, with those responding showing support for funding numerous county needs, including first-responders and emergency services, the hospital system, the social safety net, homelessness and housing, and preschool.

Economic hardship fueled by COVID-19 has only worsened since then, which critics of the measure, including the Contra Costa Taxpayers Association, note in their official ballot argument in opposition to the measure.

**Sales Tax Hike on November Ballot**

By Chris Treadway

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**Current El Cerrito Sales Tax Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tax Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State General Fund</td>
<td>3.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contra Costa County Transportation Authority</td>
<td>.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BART</td>
<td>.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County health, social services, public safety, transp.</td>
<td>1.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Safety (Prop. 172)</td>
<td>.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Cerrito General Fund (Bradley Burns)</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Cerrito Measure A (Streets)</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Cerrito Measure R (2015 Transactions &amp; Use Tax)</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total El Cerrito rate</td>
<td>9.75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: El Cerrito FY 2020-21 Budget Book, page 39

See From the President, page 4

See Sales Tax Measure X, page 7
IT’S TIME for some good news. There has been a severe lack of it in 2020 (aka: worst year ever). PennDel’s Bakehouse should be opening in November at 6491 Portola Drive, just off San Pablo behind Marshalls. This information comes directly from Pamela Braxton and Gayle Tule-Chen, co-owners.

The two women met 12 years ago at Harding Elementary when their kids were in first grade. PennDel’s is the union of Braxtons’ Boxes (Pamela and her late husband’s wildly popular, custom delivery bakery of 15 years), and Gayle’s 35+ years in the food industry (S.F. Culinary Academy graduate, Grace Baking, Mollie Stones and Solano Grill & Bar).

Gayle is originally from Pennsylvania and Pamela from Delaware; now you know how the PennDel’s name originated. The Byline will follow this new El Cerrito business and we’ll give you a website and more information as it develops. For now, the forecast calls for delicious, locally-sourced, scratched-baked cakes, cookies, cupcakes, scones, muffins and more.

Business opportunity. Cafe N’ne at the Bank of the West Plaza shut down last month with owners Cannon Abbey and Kita Baldock moving to British Columbia. The coffee shop can be yours for only $55,000, 50% down, with the seller carrying the note. They’ll train and assist the buyer in opening and all recipes and equipment, plus a great lease, are included. Contact Cannon at eccafine@gmail.com.

Delays. The modular apartment units built in Vallejo were to show up last month for the Mayfair project, at Cutting and San Pablo. Required PG&E utility work means the “mods” may start arriving this month. We’ll have photos.

Our ever busy utility company is also delaying the opening of Cerrito Vista apartments, at Jefferson and San Pablo. They need electricity first. The building will have significant ground floor commercial space; email the Byline for the leasing agent’s contact information.

Maya Williams, Assistant to the City Manager and my go-to person at City Hall, becomes a casualty of El Cerrito budget cuts at the end of this year. So helpful, so efficient, and I will miss her.

Help Wanted

The Chamber of Commerce is seeking a qualified applicant for the position of Manager. (See the Musings column on the next page.) In addition to maintaining the office and handling correspondence, the Manager is the face of the Chamber to every member.

Essential skills include computer literacy with both Word and Excel, along with extensive social media and website knowledge on all platforms.

It is not a desk job. A Manager will meet and get to know every member when visiting their places of business. Promoting member businesses is paramount. Recruiting new members into the Chamber is major responsibility for the position. Additional duties include ribbon cuttings, Zoom meetings, and lunches when they are allowed to resume again. The Manager is the sales person for the El Cerrito Marketing Program promotional mailers.

A Manager will understand the importance of a good relationship with the City of El Cerrito and work with our City partners on behalf of local business. A positive attitude and energy are essential qualities.

The Manager of the Chamber is an employee working under the direction of the elected President. Membership in the organization is not required.

To learn more or apply, contact Jeffrey Wright, President, at j.wright@elcerritochamber.org

Oh please. It’s election time so fabricate the truth for votes. An American tradition. But the guy running for regional park district director who writes in campaign material: “Led the Sierra Club campaign to have EBRPD purchase more land to double the size of the Point Isabel Dog Park” ought to recall that he fought the off leash dog area tooth and nail. I was then on the opposing side as a member of the Point Isabel Dog Owners board of directors. He won’t get many PIDO votes. How we remember.

On YouTube. Five of eight candidates running for El Cerrito City Council appeared on a forum moderated by KTVU’s Claudine Wong. Here’s the link: https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=2Www5Ext-QU

One year later. 12 months have passed since the California State Auditor put El Cerrito on a list of “fiscally challenged” cities. Late news: the Auditor just confirmed the City will get its audit in the near future.

While an audit has always been expected, there had been no communication at all from the state until September 25th. The pandemic obviously put audits on the back burner to protect the health and safety of both state and city staff.

City management said they will be ready immediately to cooperate with state auditors upon their arrival. When a report is issued, the Byline will cover it.

Open! Down Home Music, our city’s famous music store, finally got the green signal last month. Limited hours. Follow the mask and social distancing rules. But it is great to have them back in business. Likewise for the reopened Turnabout Thrift Shop on the theater block.

On the other hand, there is Albany Bowl, 514 Lounge, Contra Costa Civic Theatre, 24 Hour Fitness, and more, all closed since March. How much longer? No bets.

ICYMI. South American comfort food at its best! El Mono is now open seven days a week. Lunch: 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. all week. Dinner: 5-9 p.m. Monday through Saturday; 5-8 p.m. on Sundays. Located at 11720 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito. elmonofresh.com
Musings Is Moving On

This is the last of my Musings as I am stepping down from the El Cerrito Chamber Manager position. After being involved with the Chamber and its board for over seven years, I decided the time was right for new challenges. It wasn’t an easy decision seeing how the forced economic shutdown impacted El Cerrito’s little businesses and knowing I might continue to help in some way.

As the pandemic months have dragged on, and I’ve checked-in with members. We all have had many mixed feelings, from futility to determination, from anger to power, from sadness to satisfaction. Regardless of COVID-19, the time of getting to know and banter with local business and community people, was truly the best part of the job. Building lasting genuine relationships is the key to business success as well as the Chamber’s.

Due to the pandemic and future development projects, the El Cerrito business community will probably look very different in a couple of years. Though beyond this year’s hardships, I’m sure the Chamber will be continuing its work of local business support and promotion. However, it could use an infusion of help, itself. The organization gets by on a shoestring budget and I strongly encourage all readers of this newsletter to increase their active support of the Chamber by volunteering time, donating money, attending events, offering suggestions, all will be welcome. In case you didn’t know, there is an Associate category, for anyone who’d like to support without being involved in a business. Please see the website for more information: elcerritochamber.org/how-to-join.

The most important thing you can do is to spend your money within El Cerrito city limits, with a locally owned shop or service provider and forgo the online or big-box stores. The more you shop local and the more the city can incentivize the new developers to seek or attract locally owned businesses to open up here, the better El Cerrito’s quality of life becomes.

See you around town!

Zoom Mixer Visits The Practice Space

By Russell Doi

Who has fears when faced with the thought of public speaking? I admit, my palms get sweaty, my heart races faster, and I try not to lift my arms, worried that people will see the perspiration of self-doubt. Well, if you are like me and have these symptoms, I’ve just learned of a solution.

On September 23rd, the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce held a virtual mixer-tour of a non-profit business called The Practice Space. Executive Director AnnMarie Baines, Ph.D., made things interesting by having all virtual participants engage in various physical and vocal exercises, stretching us out of and into new comfort zones. Often, we learn best by engaging and challenging our old norms, while discovering who we can truly be. AnnMarie makes it fun and helps lower any barriers of inhibition.

AnnMarie is an accomplished speaking coach, currently teaching public speaking at UC Berkeley and performs with the San Francisco Symphony Chorus. She commands a highly talented and recognized staff of coaches and team members who care deeply for each student. The teaching is tailored to the needs and interests of youth and adults of all ages. For more information go to their website: practice-space.org. The Practice Space is located at 10261 San Pablo Avenue in El Cerrito. Their phone number is 510-708-0535. Please reach out to them and discover your true effective voice. I know I plan to and save myself from buying more shirts.

After the virtual tour 17 business people including our very own Councilman Gabriel Quinto divided up into “break out” rooms to network and make key connections. As you know, with this changed society we are living in, most business people have learned to adapt their networking strategies.

I highly recommend and invite all business people reading this article to join in the virtual opportunities available through the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber wants you to do more than just survive during these pandemic times. We want you to absolutely thrive!

Help the Cerrito

By John C. Stashik

Rialto Cinemas needs your help. Our beloved Cerrito Theater (and the Berkeley Elmwood theater) have been closed since March 17th. At this point, there is no known reopening date. Even when they allowed to open, capacity will be severely limited at 25%.

Expenses while closed are in excess of $20,000 per month. Survival has been by PPP and EIDL loans but more help is needed and soon.

Rialto principals Ky Boyd and Roxanne Goodfellow have created a Go Fund Me site. To donate, go to gofundme.com and search for Rialto.

Manager’s Musings

Lisa Martinengo

Help the Rialto

Thebyline
FROM THE PRESIDENT

Continued from page 1

outside tenant support organizations who believe that there is a great need for stringent rent control measures in El Cerrito just as there are local landlords and outside landlord support organizations who do not share that opinion. The proponents of stringent rent controls have made their arguments before the City Council just as those opposed to stringent rent controls have done the same. The missing component has been fact based data that applies directly to the El Cerrito rental property market.

City staff, via a City Council mandate, created a Rental Registry that all landlords are obliged to submit data to as well as pay the necessary fees to support that effort. Gathering this information has been a tremendous undertaking for city staff because much of the work has been by hand without the benefit of automated processes.

A thank you is in order to Melanie Mintz who directs the Community Development Department, the department assigned with the task, along with a big thank you to Aissia Ashoori and her colleagues who compiled the data and put it in great presentation format for the public, and more specifically the Tenant Protections Task Force where Ms. Ashoori also serves as the staff liaison.

The initial findings in their entirety are available on the City of El Cerrito website. For the sake of brevity I’ll share a few of the statistics. Thus far, among those obligated to report, the response rate has been 70%. A few statistics by category:

**Single family residence, condominium and townhouses**
- Rent increase amount for 2018–2019: 4.63%
- July 2017–June 2019: 53% had no rent increase

**2-4 unit rental properties**
- Rent increase amount for 2018–2019: 5.48%
- 2017–2019: 43% had no rent increase

**5-40 unit rental properties**
- Rent increase amount for 2018–2019: 4.10%
- 2017–2019: 37% had no rent increase

**41 or more units**
- Rent increase amount for 2018–2019: 1.56%
- 2017–2019: 34% had no rent increase

Assembly Bill 1482, the Tenant Protection Act, became effective on January 1, 2020. Among other things, this statewide legislation limits annual rent increases for applicable properties to 5% plus inflation or 10%, whichever is lower. Based on the data, El Cerrito landlords have already been operating below this threshold. Undoubtedly there will always be some “outlier situations” and anecdotal reports of someone who deems that they have been treated unfairly. However, thus far the overwhelming evidence supported by fact based data indicates that El Cerrito currently does not have a problem that warrants any further imposition of ordinances, regulations or controls on the operation of rental properties in this city.

As we move forward, it is my hope as a citizen, businessman and Chamber of Commerce president, that the existing City Council as well as those who are elected in November to serve on the City Council, will have a sincere and genuine interest in the well being of the city as a whole, and will resist succumbing to compelling arguments on any issue unless they have fact based data to support the decision. This is what our citizens and business community deserve and expect.

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El Cerrito City Budget Update

**By John C. Stashik**

Every City Council meeting of 2020 has had El Cerrito’s city budget on the agenda. The proposed amended budget will be presented at the October 6th meeting and if approved by City Council, that should wrap things up for fiscal 2020-21. But not quite.

COVID-19 has made forecasting City revenues a real guessing game. Therefore, monthly financial reports will be presented to the Council to keep them aware of income and expenses. Additional adjustments are possible if needed to stay on track with the financial sustainability plan.

The assumptions made by the City and Management Partners (a consultant) are conservative and put property taxes at the same level as in the prior year. Financial experts predict sales tax will take a 10% dive. (We know that already, some businesses are still shut down.) Recreation Department revenue will be reduced with a number of programs no longer being provided to the public due to the virus. Real property transfer tax revenue should increase as property is still changing hands.

Job #1 for City management now is to rebuild the general fund reserve. That is a process that will take several years.

City expenses have been cut through employee furloughs and COLA deferrals and, in addition, some positions will be eliminated at the end of this year.

Complete details are contained in a budget book which is available on the City’s website. The October 6th council meeting (at 7 p.m.) will be by video; login information can be found on the City website: elcerrito.org.

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Small Town, Big Past

The El Cerrito Historical Society is inviting one and all to an illustrated talk by author Karen Sorensen about Albany’s history. The event will be online via Zoom at 7 p.m. on Thursday, October 22nd.

Albany’s history is filled with interesting stories, many related to larger issues of the early 20th century, from notorious dynamite factory explosions to an early 1900s plague scare.

Sorensen will cover little known details about Charles MacGregor, the man who built many Albany homes; the history of Albany Hill and how extensive electric train systems linked residents to the rest of the Bay Area.

BY J. THORSNES

As an El Cerrito small businessperson engaged as a landlord, I, too, was heartened to see the El Cerrito Rental Registry data. It showed that average rents in virtually all unit sizes in all building types were significantly below the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) rent limits for affordable housing, and that eviction rates were a low one percent.

This is what I had hoped the data would show, that El Cerrito landlords are doing a pretty good job of keeping rents stable and reasonable for their tenants. I hope that this reality, coupled with the provisions of recent State legislation (AB 1482), means that El Cerrito tenants can feel secure in their homes.

I do, however, think there are some things the city could do to further improve the situations of El Cerrito tenants, landlords, and housing.

Some of these ideas have been mentioned by others, and some have been prompted by my recent experience with a friend up the street, whose landlord lacked the proper skills to deal with a vacant long-term tenant. Here are some ideas I and others have had:

Tenant-Landlord Issues
- Find ways to educate tenants about their rights under AB 1482 and the newer AB 3088, and provide access to assistance for tenants who need help with landlord-tenant issues. Even something as simple as a well-edited list of key information and available resources would help - something landlords or tenant advocates could provide to tenants.
- Find ways to elevate landlords’ understanding of AB 1482 and AB 3088 and other laws governing their business. Though tenant-landlord law is complex, there are no knowledge requirements for becoming a landlord, and some landlords have little idea about common issues such as the procedure for the move-out walkthrough or rules regarding the disposition of security deposits.
- Provide tenant-landlord dispute resolution, which could solve many landlord-tenant problems. The city could use ECHO Fair Housing Tenant/Landlord services for this, so that it doesn’t have to reinvent the wheel.

Data Suggestions
- Consider refining the Rental Registry data further, as this could be helpful in determining further actions by the city.

Some possibilities: Provide ranges and medians for rents instead of just means; disaggregate (separate) rent data for Medium and Large Multi-Family Properties, rather than lumping together data for 5-41+ unit buildings; report the causes for any evictions.

City Efforts
- Continue to prioritize increasing the housing pool in the city in any way possible, e.g., facilitating ADUs, somehow increasing the incentive for creating affordable housing, incentivizing landlords to place Section 8 tenants, or returning now redlined 25-foot wide lots to buildable status.
- Redirect (and rename) city housing protection efforts from tenants only toward something more inclusive, e.g., from Tenant Protection to something more like Housing Protection, or Secure Housing Protection, to broaden issues to include landlords and housing itself as part of the whole.

I am sure there are other ideas that could further the well-being and security of El Cerrito tenants, and it is these kinds of ideas that I had imagined the Tenant Protections Task Force would take up once the data from the Rental Registry showed that the city was not in the throes of sky-high rents and evictions. Alas, those kinds of discussions have not yet materialized in the task force, for whatever reasons.

Another wish I have long held is that city landlords begin to work together to uphold good ethics and a strong knowledge base in the practice of their business. I think of good landlords as a business. I think of good landlords as a business. I think of good landlords as a business. I think of good landlords as a business. I think of good landlords as a business.

I hope that the city establishes good tenant-landlord relationships as a priority, by which I mean that the city encourages, as a tenet of city policy, collaboration, unity, and good-will toward a common goal of security for all El Cerrito tenants and landlords.

About the Tenant Protections Task Force

On May 21, 2019, the City Council directed staff to form a Tenant Protections Task Force of eight members made up equally of landlords and tenants. The purpose of the Task Force is to bring together landlords and tenants to find common ground in order to make policy recommendations to the City Council for their consideration.

This Task Force does not regulate rents or rent increases. However, the City Council will use the data collected from the Rent Registry to inform themselves about rental market trends, including rent increases, to guide future City housing policy.

The Task Force originally was to meet a minimum of three times led by a professional facilitator/mediator and staffed by the City’s Housing Analyst as the staff liaison.

On July 31, 2019 the City Council modified the duties, responsibilities and duration for the Task Force to include Just Cause for Eviction with a limited duration of twelve months from appointment.

The City Council also took action to extend the duration of the Task Force on September 1, 2020. For more background information, please visit el-cerrito.org/tenantprotections.

Tenant Members
Buddy Akaci
Isis Bastet
Richard Bell
George Gager

Landlord Members
Norman LaForce
Peter Pan
Elizabeth B.J. Thorsnes
Tyra Wright

City Staff Liaison
Assia Ashoori, Housing Analyst

Facilitator: Gina Bartlett, Senior Mediator, Consensus Bldg. Institute

B.J. Thorsnes owns and operates rental property in El Cerrito.
New Protections for Small Landlords

IF YOU ARE a homeowner or landlord with four or fewer properties, whether they are owner occupied or not, and you have had difficulty making mortgage payments because of COVID-19, a new law offers you protections.

On August 31, 2020, the Governor signed a new evictions moratorium bill, AB 3088. This is the Tenant, Homeowner and Small Landlord Relief and Stabilization Act of 2020.

AB 3088 is a statewide eviction moratorium that applies to residential tenants and small property owners. The protections are in place for COVID-19 related financial hardships through January 31, 2021, and establishes guidelines for unpaid rent starting in March 2020. There are links below to a variety of resources for both tenants and property owners.

Federal Mortgages

If you have a federally backed mortgage, you can request forbearance pursuant to the federal CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) to help you avoid a foreclosure timeline. Please contact your mortgage servicer — the company you send your mortgage payment to — for more information.

If no forbearance is offered, your lender must provide you with a detailed description explaining why forbearance request was denied, stating the exact reasons for the denial.

Federally backed mortgages are mortgages backed by FHA, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, the Veterans Administration (VA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Non-Federal Mortgages

If you have a non-federally backed mortgage, you can contact your servicer requesting forbearance. If no forbearance is offered, your lender must provide you with a detailed description explaining why forbearance request was denied, stating the exact reasons for the denial.

Governor Signs Law for Small Business Hiring Tax Credits

FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS

WITH MILLIONS of people out of work in California, Gov. Gavin Newsom on September 9th signed a law giving tax breaks to small businesses that hire more workers over the next three months.

The law will offer businesses of 100 employees or less a credit of $1,000 on their state tax bills for each new employee hired by December 1st. It only applies to businesses that have lost at least half of their revenue from April to June this year compared to the same time period last year.

The credit is capped at $100 million statewide, or $100,000 for each business. Businesses get the credit only if they hire employees, not contractors. Small businesses that are owned by large companies are not eligible.

Newsom called it “one of the most significant tax credits in our state’s history” because of the provisions that restrict the benefits to small businesses impacted by the pandemic.

“So often these open-ended tax credits go to a handful of well resourced companies, not necessarily those small businesses that need them the most,” Newsom said.

California’s economy has been devastated by the coronavirus pandemic as the Newsom administration ordered many businesses to close for months to slow the spread of the disease. Californians lost 2.4 million jobs in April, more than all the jobs lost during the Great Recession a decade ago. The state has added back nearly a third of those jobs since then, but the unemployment rate is still 13.3% — higher than it ever got during the Great Recession.

As of Tuesday, the state lists 33 of the state’s 58 counties as the most at risk for the coronavirus, a designation that requires many businesses to halt indoor operations.

Unlike most tax breaks, businesses can also use the credit to lower the amount of sales taxes they have to send to the state. The goal is to help retailers what don’t pay much in income taxes but collect lots of sales taxes.

“There was a commitment among all of us to make sure that our small businesses come back,” said state Sen. Anna Caballero, a Democrat from Salinas who co-authored the bill along with Sen. Steven Bradford, a Democrat from Gardena. “We absolutely need to see them be successful and this is going to be one of the tools.”

Earlier this year, California allowed businesses with less than $5 million in taxable sales keep up to $50,000 of sales collections for the next year. It’s essentially a no-interest loan to these businesses. Newsom said the program has provided $106 million so far for these businesses.
Backers of the measure include the East Bay Leadership Council and Contra Costa Central Labor Council.

A working group that included business and labor representatives was formed last year to do a needs assessment and work on formulating a measure for the ballot.

“The property tax base in Contra Costa County is not as robust as it is in San Francisco, Alameda and Santa Clara,” Gioia said. “We’ve run the county responsibly,” he said. “It’s been last in line for dedicated funds.”

The text of the ballot measure and arguments for and against Measure X are online at cocovote.us/contra-costacounty-measure-x/.

Opponents maintain that sales tax is regressive, saying “they disproportionately burden our poorest and most vulnerable residents, who can least afford it.

Critics also say in their ballot argument that “Measure X would rocket part of the county to a 10.25% sales-tax rate, some other areas to 9.75% if their own tax increases also pass. Meanwhile, enlarging the County’s sales tax cap facilitates future new tax increase campaigns.”

Gioia noted that, unlike neighboring Alameda, Santa Clara and San Francisco counties, “Contra Costa is the only county that doesn’t have a local dedicated sales tax or revenue measure,” adding that in addition, “Many of the county’s cities have local sales taxes.”

El Cerrito, which already has two local sales tax additions totaling 1.5%, would be one of the cities with the top rate.

A 10.25% rate once existed in El Cerrito, approved by voters in 2011. Subsequent changes over time reduced it to the current 9.75%.

El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce President Jeffrey Wright stated: “Most of us understand the need for increased revenue and when tax increase measures are presented to fill a certain need, in the case of Measure X, health care, they have greater voter appeal. However, the funds will actually be going to the general fund and much too often funds are consumed in the abyss of the general fund.”

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Chamber Election

Terms for five directors will end on January 19, 2021. They are Aissia Ashoori, Russell Doi, Mark Figone, Sonja Givens-Thomas, and John C. Stashik. Directors serve two years.

President Wright will appoint a nominating committee at the October board meeting; the report from that body will be announced in November. Then ballots are mailed to all regular members in good standing if there multiple people running.

Participation is encouraged. Any member interested in serving on the board of directors is encouraged to contact President Jeffrey Wright. The best way to make contact is by email: j.wright@elcerritochamber.org.
Open for Business!

Al Fresco Dining
Here are El Cerrito restaurants offering outside table service. This list is not necessarily complete and listings are not in any particular order. El Mono, Fatapple’s, Los Moles Beer Garden, Mr. Pickle’s, Well Grounded Tea & Coffee, McBears Social Club (with food truck), Denny’s, IHOP, Macaroni Grill, Tashi Delek, Chipotle, Burger King, McDonald’s, Frannie Express, Zomsa, plus the weekly Off The Grid food trucks.

NEW: Kyoto Ramen, and The Junket at EC Plaza.

Get information about the above restaurants or any other business in El Cerrito by accessing the Open El Cerrito directory at the site shown below.

www.el-cerrito.org/whatsopenelcerrito

Outdoor Dining
As many local restaurants and retailers continue to adapt during these times, the City Council adopted a new program to further boost El Cerrito businesses. The Temporary Outdoor Dining and Retail Program allows outdoor private and/or public space adjacent to a business to be utilized for outdoor dining and retail.

Realizing that each business location is not identical, the guidelines allow use of outdoor private property, public sidewalks and public parking spaces. Businesses who are interested can learn more and apply for an expedited permit at no cost by visiting el-cerrito.org/outdoorseating. For more information, email community@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

VOTE!
Your official ballot for the November 3rd general election can be deposited into the ballot box located at El Cerrito City Hall next to the back door by the parking lot.