



El Cerrito Democratic Club

Newsletter – August 2023

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ECDC
PO Box 192
El Cerrito CA 94530

Newsletter Editor: William Ktsanes

1. El Cerrito Democratic Club General Information

The El Cerrito Democratic Club (“ECDC”) provides a forum for area residents to discuss and take action on issues and campaigns of local, national, and international importance. Our General Membership Meetings are open to all and held on the fourth Tuesday of each month except October and December, when we typically have our annual dinner and holiday party.

Our monthly General Membership Meetings are in a hybrid format generally accessible both in-person at Hana Gardens Senior Apartments (10860 San Pablo Ave, next to El Cerrito City Hall) and remotely via Zoom. For those of us who’ve been able to come to Hana Gardens, it’s been wonderful to be in community and gather in person. Whether you join us in person or by Zoom, I encourage you to come a few minutes early to mix-and-mingle with fellow ECDC members.

The El Cerrito Democratic Club and its activities are supported by volunteers and the annual dues of its members. Please see the “Membership Renewal Reminder and Instructions” section towards the end of this newsletter for directions on how to join the ECDC or renew your membership.

Officer elections for the El Cerrito Democratic Club occur annually and were last held during the General Membership Meeting in January. Special thanks to our volunteer officers:

El Cerrito Democratic Club Officers (2023)

- President – Champagne Brown
- Past President – Greg Lyman
- Executive Vice President – Carolyn Wysinger
- VP Media – Madeline Kronenberg
- VP Membership – Neil Tsutsui
- VP Programs – ***vacant***
- VP Publications – William Ktsanes
- VP Records – Leslie Reckler
- VP Treasurer – Ed Crowley

The specific duties of officer positions are described in section “VII. Officers” of the Bylaws posted on the ECDC website at <https://ecdclub.org/club-documents/>.

If you’re interested in participating more actively in the ECDC, please consider volunteering with the Club. **The ECDC Executive Board still has an opening for a Vice President of Programs who will help arrange guest presentations for our monthly membership meetings.** Please reach out to Champagne Brown or Carolyn Wysinger if you’re interested in joining.

Help is always greatly appreciated!

- William Ktsanes, VP Publications

2. Information and Zoom Link for the General Membership Meeting on Tuesday, August 22nd

Our General Membership Meetings are generally held in a hybrid format, accessible both in-person at Hana Gardens Senior Apartments (10860 San Pablo Ave, next to El Cerrito City Hall) and via Zoom.

Zoom Link to Join the ECDC Meeting: <http://tiny.cc/ECDCmemberMtg>

(<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87570578180?pwd=MWNoT2hVY0VXeEhubHNoaE9xZGpKUT09>)

Zoom Meeting ID: 875 7057 8180; Zoom Passcode: c5fQKR

Dial in by phone: +1 669 900 6833 or +1 408 638 0968

Meeting ID: 875 7057 8180; Phone Passcode: 468602

Please note that the Passcode is different if you dial in by phone rather than join the meeting through the Zoom link.

Agenda (Tentative)

6:20 pm – Assemble and Mingle

6:30 pm – Call to Order

6:35 pm – Approval of Minutes: July 2023 General Membership Meeting (**Action Item**)

6:39 pm – Officer Reports: Treasurer, Membership, Programs, Publications, Media, and Records

6:45 pm – Democratic Party of Contra Costa County (DPCCC) Report

6:50 pm – August Program: “Ballot Measure for a New El Cerrito Library,” Greg Lyman, Former El Cerrito Mayor/Councilmember, Friend of the El Cerrito Library (20-Minute Presentation Followed by a 15-minute Q&A Session)

7:25 pm – Announcements (Please Limit Announcements to Two Minutes Each)

7:50 pm – Good of the Order

7:55 pm – Adjourn

** Please send calendar events to the Executive Board in advance for possible discussion at the General Membership Meeting and publication in the newsletter.*

- Champagne Brown, ECDC President

3. Minutes from the July 25th ECDC General Membership Meeting

El Cerrito Democratic Club
General Membership Meeting Minutes
July 25, 2023

(in person at Hana Gardens, 10860 San Pablo Ave, El Cerrito; and via Zoom)

President Brown Called the Meeting to Order

Approval of the Agenda

On the motion of Nye and the second of Lyman, the agenda was approved with the addition of a moment of silence for a recently deceased club member with no nays nor abstentions.

Moment of Silence

A Moment of Silence is offered for Albert Sauer, his friends and family. Mr. Sauer attended ECDC meetings religiously, and recently passed away.

Approval of the Minutes

On the motion of Crowley and the second of Fadelli, the June, 2023 minutes were approved as presented with no nays nor abstentions.

Officer Reports

- **Treasurer** - all donations for the Roosevelt Dinner were received. The club's fee for the Roosevelt dinner is paid. PO box rental paid.
- **Membership** - two members joined. Total membership: 157
- **Programs** - Affordable Housing presentation this month. Work is being done to secure speakers for the Ballot Measure presentation.
- **President** ECDC Dinner - Maia Cohen will be the speaker. The date is October 7, 2023.
- **Publications** - The newsletter sent out. Please continue to send articles for submission and publication.
- **Media** - Facebook and Website are updated.
- **Records** - No report. Reckler absent

DPCCC Report (Brown and Nye)

- The last meeting began with a panel of electeds that ran for office and had been supported by DPCCC. They described what it was like to run for office, the assistance that was given and feedback about what else might support candidates.
- Carolyn Wysinger was elected as the new delegate for District 1, Mister Phillips' vacated seat. She will serve until January, 2025. A person will need to pull papers and be elected through a public election process to occupy that seat January, 2025 forward.
- (Nye District 1 Report). West County Dems followed ECDC and gave \$1,000 for the Roosevelt Dinner.

Election of Pre-Conference Delegates

- ECDC may be eligible for up to 7 delegates
- Tonight the club will elect 5 delegates + 2 alternates
 - Through a Zoom poll and an in-person election process, the pre-conference delegates are: Fadelli, Kronenberg, Kitsanes, Lyman, Reckler
 - Alternates Gloria Merrill, Dwight Merrill in that order
 - Date will be announced + location/hybrid option if offered

Roosevelt Dinner

- Cost = \$1,000 and entitles the ECDC to 10 seats. The dinner is to be held at Rossmoor Walnut Creek, August 24, 2023, 6:00 p.m. Reception, Dinner at 7:00 p.m.
- **Attending:** Neil Tsutsi, Cheryl Sudduth, Gabe Quinto, Buddy Akacic, William Ktsanes, Paul Fadelli, Greg Lyman, Al Miller
- On the motion of Ktsanes and the second of Akacic two seats will be donated to Young Dems so that they may attend. All are in favor with no abstentions nor nays.

Announcements

- East Bay Senior Stroll every Friday 10:00 a.m. in front of St. John's. "Senior Day" every Tuesday at St. John's 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- Attend the ECDC Dinner! State Controller Fiona Ma will speak!
- Education WorkForce Housing Forum Thursday, July 27, 2023. All are welcome. Excellent panel.

Good of the Order

- ECDC Needs a Sticker as Swag
- Request from Betty Brown to "step up" the ECDC Holiday Party
- Thanks to all that supported the Fourth of July booth

Presentation: Lisa Motoyama, El Cerrito Affordable Housing

State of El Cerrito Housing

- 71% of housing single family homes, 28% Multi Family homes
- Since 2010, home value has increased 183%
- Median Sale Price, March 2022, \$1,170,000
- Most building happened 1940-1959 and not keeping up with demand over the years.

RHNA Goals (Regional Housing Needs Assessment)

These goals are developed with data from across the state. They allocate fair shares of housing development goals every 8 years. According to RHINA data, the city should be able to develop 1391 units over the next 8 years. El Cerrito thinks they could actually provide 2800 units in the next period.

San Pablo Avenue Specific

City Website: <https://www.el-cerrito.org/396/San-Pablo-Avenue-Specific-Plan>

Objectives

- Economic Development

- Climate Action Goals
- Meeting RHINA goals - Housing
- Sense of Place
- Complete Streets

Progress

El Cerrito City Website Major Projects Map <https://www.el-cerrito.org/198/New-Development>

- 1464+ units approved +116,000 commercial space and more in the pipeline has been approved.
108 units

Results to Date since 2014

- Entitled 19 projects for 1300 units and 6,143 commercial sq. footage in the permitting pipeline.
- 204 units below market rate.
- 10 projects built or under construction including 635 units, 124 room hotel (Hampton Inn), public open space and more.
- Generating public fees and public benefit/school district, public transportation, Stege Sanitary and more.

Major Projects

City Website: <https://www.el-cerrito.org/198/New-Development>

Coming Up

- El Cerrito Plaza BART - Up to 800 housing units (53% market 32% below market 15% workforce) + potential for a library. First development has been entitled, Parcel A (Fairmount Ave).

Closing

- El Cerrito is doing pretty well providing affordable housing without a lot of resources. They really care, and have great staff that supports the work.
- They have done all of this work without a lot of resources. No redevelopment agency to market/attract developers.
- San Pablo specific plan has a clear pathway to entitlements and was very helpful to developers.
- Now, economic conditions have changed. Interest rates have gone up. Many developments are stalled because money is very expensive right now. Real estate is cyclical. When the market comes back, El Cerrito will be ready.
- The cost to build affordable housing is exactly the same as any other development.
- What makes it affordable is lower-cost dollars from the state, low-cost loans or equity through low-income housing tax credits.
- State money for low income housing, senior housing, transit housing, extremely low income, multi-family, etc. is at an all-time high. It time consuming to apply for and assemble, but it is there.
- \$10B bond for affordable and workforce housing development workforce housing is coming.
- Locally, El Cerrito has a Pro-Housing designation and received \$620k just to apply. The Pro-Housing designation gave EC 3 points, which can expand opportunities - potential to get \$20 million for BART station project.

– Leslie Reckler, VP Records

4. August Program: “Ballot Measure for a New El Cerrito Library,” Greg Lyman, Former El Cerrito Mayor/Councilmember, Friend of the El Cerrito Library

Please join us in welcoming our very own Greg Lyman as our guest and program speaker at the August 22nd El Cerrito Democratic Club General Membership Meeting.

Greg is a former El Cerrito Councilmember (2008-2020) and Mayor (2013, 2016, 2020), longtime friend of the El Cerrito library, and past president and current executive board member of the El Cerrito Democratic Club.



You may have heard talk of a new library possibly being part of the El Cerrito Plaza BART development. You may have also recently received in the mail a “Priorities for a New El Cerrito Library” survey from the City of El Cerrito.

[Friends of the El Cerrito Library](https://friendselcerritolibrary.org) (<https://friendselcerritolibrary.org>) along with the [Library Foundation](https://eclibraryfoundation.org) (<https://eclibraryfoundation.org>), city officials, councilmembers, and community supporters are hoping to build a new, larger, more modern public library to serve the growing community of El Cerrito.

Please join us Tuesday as Greg brings us up-to-date and answers your questions regarding the work being done towards building a new library and how the community can help with those efforts. (If you’d like to keep ongoing track of this project, you can visit and/or sign-up for updates and breaking news on the [Library Foundation](https://eclibraryfoundation.org) web site.)

- William Ktsanes, VP Publications

5. Member Op-Ed: “Neither Capitalism Nor Socialism but a Hybrid of Both,” Dwight Merrill

The El Cerrito Democratic Club provides a forum for area residents to discuss and take action on issues of local, national, and international importance. To this end, we encourage members, friends and supporters to submit newsletter articles regarding issues, events and topics of interest. Submissions should be emailed to me at wktsanes@gmail.com for review and editing.

Longtime ECDC member, friend and supporter Dwight Merrill submitted the following “Op-Ed,” a thoughtful, informative reflection on old debate that is particularly timely in this new era of polarized politics and ideologies. Thank you, Dwight!

- William Ktsanes, VP Publications

Neither Capitalism Nor Socialism but a Hybrid of Both

Often today people speak of “evil capitalism” or “evil socialism,” but these concepts, capitalism and socialism, are not evil and they are two halves of how society must handle capital and income management and allocation. We need both, and not too much of either.

We may define capitalism as private control of capital and socialism as social control (governmental control) of capital. Capital is land, goods (both physical and intellectual), means of production, etc. Sometimes we throw in “money” as part of capital, but we realize that money is just a medium of exchange, capital only in the sense that it can be used to purchase capital items.

Here in the US we have about 25% social control of capital (roads and highways, defense, police, public education, various administrative functions, etc.) generally supported by taxes. The large majority of capital here is controlled as “private property.” I believe a better split would be 50% - 50%. Private property has virtues and drawbacks. Social control of capital has a different set of virtues and drawbacks. With half and half the drawbacks tend to cancel out and the virtues remain. Private control of capital tends to highlight actual economic costs, resulting in (generally) less waste of economic resources. Social control of capital tends to overlook actual economic costs; all too often government will say “wouldn’t it be nice if we did X,” without thoroughly looking at the real costs. If a capitalist did something “nice” which was costly and did not generate real value, he would soon go broke. On the other hand, capitalism may tend to overlook “nice” things like parks, recreation, and historical preservation. If half of capital is under social control, there should be resources to pay for nice things.

In a larger sense, we recognize that most capital is a common heritage of our species. Social control of this heritage must not be given to the rich and powerful, but maintained as a common resource. Unfortunately, humans are a hierarchical species. We have genes for sharing and we have genes for hierarchy. We must balance one against the other. Government tends to gravitate toward hierarchical control, while private property gives power to each individual to exert some control of his/her private property. Obviously, concentration of wealth into the hands of a few negates the virtue of each person having control, so we must ensure that wealth is widely spread across society. We have succeeded as a species by sharing and cooperation, by sacrificing for the common good. No one person built an enormous dam, a great pyramid, or, alas, an atomic bomb. We have to recognize that progress depends on working cooperatively and sharing our common resources.

As humanity moves forward, let us embrace both capitalism and socialism as equal co-partners in our economic structure. But a 50 – 50 split alone will not ensure justice and prosperity. We need to manage all aspects of capitalism and socialism carefully. Private property needs to be respected, but regulated with reasonable laws and rules, and wealth cannot be concentrated in the hands of the few. Likewise, government must be monitored carefully by the electorate, to make sure it is distributing its share of the pie fairly and sensibly. To keep government fair and honest demands a continuing effort, and that effort is a mission of the El Cerrito Democratic Club.

- Dwight Miller, ECDC Member

6. El Cerrito Democratic Club Monthly Programs

Below are programs tentatively scheduled for the El Cerrito Democratic Club's remaining 2023 general membership meetings. Thank you to everyone who provided input and suggestions. *We've had an exciting year with many interesting and informative programs still to come!*

August: Development and the Proposed Library at the El Cerrito Plaza BART Station

September: Business Roundtable (with discussion of an expected 2024 ballot measure sponsored by various Chambers of Commerce and corporations seeking to make it more difficult for California cities and school districts to pass bond measures)

October: Annual ECDC Dinner

November: Election Outlook (in advance of the March 2024 Primary)

December: Annual ECDC Holiday Celebration

7. Future Events – *Mark Your Calendar!*

El Cerrito Democratic Club General Membership Meetings and Events

ECDC August General Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, August 22nd (4th Tuesday of the month); hybrid format, in-person at Hana Gardens Senior Apartments (10860 San Pablo Avenue, next to El Cerrito City Hall) and remote via Zoom link <http://tiny.cc/ECDCmemberMtg>

ECDC September General Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, September 26th (4th Tuesday of the month); hybrid format, in-person at Hana Gardens Senior Apartments (10860 San Pablo Avenue, next to El Cerrito City Hall) and remote via Zoom link <http://tiny.cc/ECDCmemberMtg>

ECDC Annual Dinner – Date, time and guest speaker TBD; most likely October 14th or 21st; in-person catered dinner by El Cerrito’s Larb Thai Food & Tapas restaurant; at Hana Gardens Senior Apartments (10860 San Pablo Avenue, next to El Cerrito City Hall) with a non-dinner Zoom option for those unable to attend in-person but wanting to hear the guest speaker’s presentation; no General Membership Meeting in October

ECDC Holiday Party – in-person at Hana Gardens Senior Apartments (10860 San Pablo Avenue, next to El Cerrito City Hall); date and time TBD; no General Membership Meeting in December

Other Community Events

California Democratic Party Executive Board Meeting – Friday-Sunday, August 18th-20th; Visalia Marriott at the Convention Center

Democratic Party of Contra Costa County Roosevelt Dinner Annual Fundraiser – 6:00 pm, Thursday, August 24th; <https://secure.actblue.com/donate/roosevelt2023>

Democratic Party of Contra Costa County Annual Summer BBQ – October 2023; <https://contracostadems.com/>; *Exact date and more information coming soon!*

Contra Costa County Labor Council’s 25th Annual “Labor-to-Labor” Fundraising Dinner – 5:30-8:30 pm, Friday, October 6th; St. Mary’s College, Chapel Lawn, Morago; tickets and registration through Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/25th-annual-labor-to-labor-dinner-unionize-contra-co-sta-tickets-616124062657>

California Democratic Party Region 3 Pre-Convention Meetings – 10 am-2 pm, Saturday, October 7th

California Democratic Party Pre-Endorsement Conference – Saturday and Sunday, October 21st-22nd; actual date TBD; Solano County; in-person and remote (hybrid option)

California Democratic Party State Endorsing Convention, Northern California –
Friday-Sunday, November 17th-19th; Sacramento Convention Center

2024 California Presidential Primary – Tuesday, March 5, 2024

- William Ktsanes, VP Publications

Please join
**Contra Costa Labor Council, AFL-CIO and
Contra Costa Building & Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO**
for our
**25th ANNUAL
Labor to Labor
Fundraiser**



**Democratic Party of Contra Costa
2023 Roosevelt Dinner**
Lift Up. Lift Off

Thursday, Aug 24
Dinner: 7 p.m.
Rossmoor Event Center
RSVP: bit.ly/LiftUpLiftOff

The poster features an illustration of a diverse group of people in a forest setting. Some individuals are shown in mid-air, appearing to be jumping or falling, while others are on the ground, some reaching out. The background shows green trees and mountains under a blue sky.

DEMOCRATIC PARTY
of CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

**SUMMER
BARBECUE**
Lift Up, Lift Off

**MUSIC
FOOD
DRINKS**

October 2023

CONTRA LOMA REGIONAL
1200 Frederickson Lane
Antioch, CA 94509

*Tickets
and
Sponsorships
coming
soon!*

*Let's enjoy it
together*

contracostadems.com

The poster has a tropical theme with palm trees and a wooden background. It features illustrations of a barbecue grill with food, a speaker, and a cocktail. The text is in various fonts and colors, including orange, white, and black.

8. Membership Renewal Reminder and Instructions

Big thanks to all who have renewed their membership this year. If you have not yet done so, then your membership lapsed on December 31, 2022.

Now is a great time to renew online at: <https://ecdclub.org/join/>

Or by mailing a check to:

ECDC Membership
PO Box 192
El Cerrito, CA 94530

Please note that our new dues are \$5 for students, \$15 for individual members, and \$23 for two adults at the same address. The added cost for a printed hard-copy newsletter is \$18 (in addition to dues). Please make checks payable to “El Cerrito Democratic Club” and provide an email address for all individual members.

If you have questions, please email Neil Tsutsui at membership.ecdc@gmail.com.

Thank you!

- Neil Tsutsui, VP Membership

9. Call for Newsletter Submissions

The El Cerrito Democratic Club Newsletter is published monthly in advance of the General Membership meetings. ECDC members, friends and supporters are invited to submit articles and announcements regarding local issues and events of interest. Submissions should be emailed to William Ktsanes at wktsanes@gmail.com for review and editing.

10. Link to the ECDC Website and Bylaws

Periodically the Club updates our Bylaws. The bylaws were changed in October 2018 to meet DPCCC requirements; revisions were proposed and adopted during the January 2021, August 2022 and March 2023 ECDC meetings. The ECDC Bylaws are posted on the ECDC website at <https://ecdclub.org/club-documents/>.