



El Cerrito Democratic Club

Newsletter – May 2023

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ECDC
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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 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.

Our next monthly General Membership Meeting will be at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, May 23rd. We encourage you to come to Hana Gardens or join the Zoom call 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 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.

We also need volunteers for tasks and projects that arise throughout the year, one of which is the City of El Cerrito’s “worldOne 4th of July Festival.”

Help is always greatly appreciated!

- William Ktsanes, VP Publications

2. Information and Zoom Link for the General Membership Meeting on Tuesday, May 23rd – In-Person and on Zoom!

Our General Membership Meetings are 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=MWN0T2hVY0VXeEhubHNoaE9xZGpKUT09>)

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 – Approve Minutes from the March 2023 Meeting (**Action Item**)

6:38 pm – Nominations: Preconference Delegates (**Action Item**)

6:50 pm – Program: “Where Are We Going?” - Transportation after COVID

Guest Speakers and Q&A:

6:50 pm - BART Director Rebecca Saltzman, District 3

7:10 pm - AC Transit Director H. E. Christian (“Chris”) Peeples, At-Large

7:30 pm - Q&A Session

7:50 pm – Call to Action: City of El Cerrito’s “worldOne 4th of July Festival” (**Volunteers Needed**)

7:55 pm – Announcements (Please Limit Announcements to One Minute Each)

7:58 pm – Good of the Order

8:00 pm – Adjourn

** The following reports will be tabled to allow more time for presentations from our guest speakers: Officer Reports (Treasurer, Membership, Programs, Publications, Media, and Records) and the Democratic Party of Contra Costa County (DPCCC) Report.*

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

- Champagne Brown, ECDC President

3. Minutes from the April 25th General Membership Meeting

El Cerrito Democratic Club
General Membership Meeting Minutes
April 25, 2023
Via Zoom and In-Person at Hana Gardens Senior Center

Call to Order

President Brown called the meeting to order at 6:37 pm

Approve Minutes from the March 2023 Meeting (Action Item)

On the motion of Nye and the second of Crowley the March 2023 Association meeting minutes were unanimously approved with no nays nor abstentions.

Officer Reports:

Treasurer (Crowley)

Balance \$11,556.25 + \$276.80 city refund for Hana Gardens rental.

\$1,116 Raised year-to-date from dues and contributions

Very little spent year-to-date. \$12 in office supplies and \$48.75 in Paypal fees

Membership (Tsutsui)

145 members in good standing. Small wave of renewals with perhaps a few more coming.

Publications (Ktsanes)

Absent. No report.

Media (Kronenberg)

Website and Facebook current.

Records (Reckler)

Nothing to report.

Programs (Brown)

May's program is Transportation Director Rebecca Saltzman, BART will join Director Peeples, AC Transit.

Democratic Party of Contra Costa County (DPCCC) Report (Brown)

[AB 1319](#) (Wicks) was returned to the Resolutions Committee to ask additional questions about the bill and make suggestions. ([Here is a summary from Association of Bay Area Governments](#) - secretary note)

Deadline for club membership is today. The club's roster needs to go to the state so that membership can be verified and delegates assigned.

District 1 Update (Nye) The above-mentioned bill AB 1319, was returned to committee because only one side was heard, and more viewpoints were requested.

New chair for the endorsement committee is Cesar Zepeda. Other counties are looking to duplicate what West County does. Need infrastructure early and not wait for the elections to build infrastructure.

Program: El Cerrito Mayor Lisa Motoyama Presents "The State of the City" (Introduced by Lyman) Mayor Motoyama served on the Planning Commission. Elected December 2020. Now Mayor. Liaison to Arts and Culture and Environmental Quality Committees. Professionally works in affordable housing.

Highlights on the Budget and Fiscal Solvency

Budget Town Hall - Annual budget process, what is a budget and how it is prepared. The budget is a roadmap and reflection of goals, priorities and strategies and is aligned with the strategic plan.

Accompanying Presentation: [BUDGET UPDATE COMMUNITY TOWN HALL MEETING APRIL 22, 2023](#)

Looking to restore as many services as possible while maintaining fiscal discipline. El Cerrito receives \$.22 of every dollar. Police and fire are the largest expenditures. 75% of the General Fund goes to staff.

Audit Going concerns were resolved. No material weaknesses were found in the last audit. The fund balance is \$16.6 million. The city is paid with income tax twice a year, and was taking out very expensive short-term loans called TRANS to bridge the gap between payments. There is no more borrowing. The city can now cover its expenses.

Reserves exceed 17%, which is the minimum recommended threshold for reserves.

El Cerrito is now off the “High Risk” List and has moved to “Moderate Risk.” They spent a lot of time on budget development. Budget materials are now presented differently and in a more accessible manner. The board is asking lots of questions.

[Budget Survey](#) There is a budget survey posted online to the city’s website. The survey is still open if you would like to give feedback on the budgeting process, and what you would like to see prioritized in the budget.

Pension Liability El Cerrito has significant pension liability, but makes its payments every year. (Most public entities have a significant unfunded pension liability -secretary. note.).

The [Financial Advisory Board](#) ("FAB") is a group of residents appointed to review the proposed annual (or biennial) budget and long-term financial plan for the City, in order to assist the City Council in making decisions on major expenditures and revenue sources. The FAB meets monthly and the public is welcome to attend.

OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits) El Cerrito no longer has an OPEB liability.

The fiscal outlook got better due to:

- Staffing positions were left vacant
- There were furlough days
- 10% reduction in pay
- No raises
- Real property transfer tax
- Charter City

The city pulled through, but the city’s shortfalls in staffing is not sustainable.

Current staffing vacancies: 18 full-time and 17 part-time

Looking at how to add back services, but still be fiscally accountable, as the city is still classified as “moderate risk.”

Quality of Life Issues

Preparing ballot measure for library at El Cerrito Plaza.

Wants to re-staff bike police for the Ohlone greenway to make it safer and more friendly.

Wants to see the return of the Fire and Safety CERT program. Residents can be trained for emergencies. Will have drills and train residents. Citywide drill.

El Cerrito is in California's [Prohousing Designation Program](#). This will allow El Cerrito access to specific housing funds.

Would like to see a Senior Center. City is in a better budget position, but doesn't have a lot to spend.

City is undergoing a classification and compensation study on jobs and salaries. This allows the city to compare jobs and compensation and will give guidance on how to structure salaries and positions to be competitive in the job and labor market.

Transparency and Accountability

In order for the public to hear more urgent matters earlier in the evening, the Council meeting start time is now 6:00 p.m., and the agenda and meeting structure are changing to prioritize the more urgent matters.

An AdHoc subcommittee will be formed to examine how to capture the talents of the people in the community, hear their recommendations and act meaningfully upon them.

Strategic Planning

Strategic plan will commence after budgeting. There will be community input meetings.

Resources

EC Budget Website

<http://el-cerrito.org/BudgetProcess>

EC Strategic Plan

<http://el-cerrito.org/747/Strategic-Plan>

EC Community Survey

<http://el-cerrito.org/730/Community-Survey>

ECDC Support of DPCCC's Resolution Requesting President Biden to Take Actions Required to Ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (Action Item) (Brown)

There is a request from the Central Committee to support the above resolution. Since the resolution was not attached to the agenda and published with a three day notice, the Association must first suspend its noticing rules prior to taking up the matter of the resolution.

On the motion of Lyman and the second of Sudduth the motion to suspend the noticing rules was unanimously passed with no nays nor abstentions.

President Brown read the Resolution.

On the motion of Merrill and the second of Kronenberg, ECDC Support of DPCCC's Resolution Requesting President Biden to Take Actions Required to Ratify the Equal Rights Amendment was approved unanimously with no nays nor abstentions.

Announcements

- **AC Transit gave an excellent presentation last Friday at CoBiz.** ECDC will learn a lot when they present. (Reckler)
- **The West Contra Costa Unified School District is looking for Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee (CBOC) members.** There are a few vacancies, but one seat by law is reserved for a person affiliated with a business association (Chamber or other), and this is the immediate priority for the committee. For more information: <https://www.wccusd.net/wccusd-bond-oversight-committee> Contact: President Lorraine Humes lorrainehumes@comcast.net . We'd love to have you! (Reckler)
- **Jam for the JMP** El Cerrito High PTSA and El Cerrito Student Activity Fund host "Jam for the JMP," a fundraiser for the James Morehouse Project Health Center. Student art, music, auction, food, libations. Saturday, May 6, 2023. <https://event.auctria.com/575468e7-9b92-48aa-9992-2350f66cbdda> (Reckler)
- Request for the ECDC Executive Board to be a sponsor of the World One July 4th event. (Miller)
- Thanks to Administrative Professionals (Smith)
- **EBMUD 100th Birthday Celebration** Sunday May 28, Lake Temescal Free 11:00 am-4:00p.m.<https://www.ebmud.com/about-us/who-we-are/centennial-celebration/100th-birthday-party-and-community-fair> (Smith)
- AC Transit Survey for users <https://www.actransit.org/press-release/ac-transit-realign-plan-survey-now-underway> (Sudduth)
- Racial Justice Oversight Body Thursday 1-4 p.m.in Martinez by Zoom and in-person Please attend. (Sudduth)
- Earth Month and Water Week 1.3 million people in CA without water. Sunday the 30th West County Wastewater Alvarado earth day cleanup.
- <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/west-county-wastewaters-community-cleanup-tickets-612563874037> (Sudduth)
- Kamala Harris at Howard University. Rally for reproductive freedom. What can we do on the west coast to help? Real concern that a clamp down on a lot of rights is around the corner. (Sudduth)

President Brown adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

– Leslie Reckler, VP Records

4. May Program: “Where Are We Going?” - Transportation after COVID, a Discussion with BART Director Rebecca Saltzman and AC Transit Director H. E. Christian (Chris) Peoples

Please join us in welcoming BART Director [Rebecca Saltzman](#) (District 3) and AC Transit Director [H. E. Christian \(Chris\) Peoples](#) (At-Large) as our guests and program speakers at the May 23rd El Cerrito Democratic Club General Membership Meeting.

Director Rebecca Saltzman

Rebecca Saltzman is the BART Director representing District 3, which includes both El Cerrito BART stations, and she has served twice as BART Board President. Saltzman is a Director on and former Chair of the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority and serves on the Alameda Transportation Commission. Outside of her BART service, Rebecca has spent the past two decades as a policy advocate, coalition builder, grassroots organizer, and manager with local, state, and national issue-based organizations.



Saltzman previously served as Vice-Chair of the Oakland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, where she advised the City of Oakland on pedestrian and bicycle policy and infrastructure. In 2011, Saltzman received the League of Women Voters of Oakland’s Making Democracy Work Award in recognition of her work and commitment to increasing citizen engagement in local government. Saltzman graduated with a BA in Sociology from the University of California, Berkeley. She lives in El Cerrito with her wife Caitlin and their daughter, and relies on BART, buses, and walking to get around.

Director H. E. Christian (Chris) Peeples

H. E. Christian (Chris) Peeples was appointed by the AC Transit Board of Directors in November 1997 to fill one of the District's two At-Large positions. Mr. Peeples was elected in 1998 and re-elected in 2000, 2008, 2012, 2016 and 2020. Mr. Peeples, a long time advocate for public transit, and AC Transit bus service in particular, has been actively involved in the AC Bus Riders Union, Alliance for AC Transit, Regional Alliance for Transit, Alliance for Sensible Transit, Coalition for A One Stop Terminal, and many other transit groups. He is also active in local community affairs, having served on



the Oakland Ethics Commission and community and political bodies. Mr. Peeples is a graduate of Crown College, University of California at Santa Cruz and Hastings College of the Law. Mr. Peeples is active in the meetings of the Transportation Research Board ("TRB"), the branch of the National Academies involved in transportation research, and the American Public Transportation Association ("APTA"), transit's national association.

Mr. Peeples has been a strong supporter of AC Transit's Hydrogen Fuel Cell Bus program since it began in 1999. He saw his first PEM (Proton Exchange Membrane) fuel cell in 1960 at his uncle's laboratory at General Electric in Schenectady, New York. His uncle, Dr. Robert T. Foley, was an investigator on the NASA grant for the fuel cell for Project Gemini. He has served as a session moderator at a National Hydrogen Association meeting in Sacramento.

(Biography profiles provided by our guest speakers.)

- Champagne Brown, ECDC President

5. 2023 Pre-Endorsement Conference Delegates Nominations

Every two years (odd years), the El Cerrito Democratic Club participates in the California Democratic Party's (CDP) Pre-Endorsement Conference. Each Pre-Endorsement Conference is hosted by a CDP Region(s) to consider the CDP endorsement recommendations for

US House (CD), State Senate (SD), and State Assembly (AD) election contests. The Pre-Endorsement Conference is a great way for ECDC to ensure our voices are heard during endorsements of our legislators.

Although final delegate numbers will not be awarded until July, the El Cerrito Democratic Club is poised to be awarded between 5 to 7 delegates for Pre-Endorsement.

During the May meeting, the Club will nominate members to represent ECDC at the Pre-Endorsement Conference which is slated to be held either October 21st or 22nd. We will then vote for 5 delegates and 2 alternates. This will ensure that the club will have full representation if we are awarded more than 5 delegates. During the June meeting, members of ECDC will vote for our Pre-Endorsement delegates and their names will be forwarded to the Regional Director at the appropriate time.

Eligibility requirements for representing ECDC at the Pre-Endorsement Conference are as follows:

- Must live in AD 14/ SD 7/ CD 8
- Must not be a delegate to CADEM through ADEM or DPCCC elections
- Must be able to attend Pre-Endorsement if proxy voting is not available

- Champagne Brown, ECDC President

6. El Cerrito Democratic Club Monthly Programs

Below is a list of remaining programs tentatively scheduled for the El Cerrito Democratic Club's remaining 2023 monthly general membership meetings. Thank you to all our members who provided input and suggestions. *We have exciting months ahead with many interesting and informative programs planned!*

May: Transit (AC Transit & BART)

June: Gun Violence Awareness Month

July: Affordable Housing in El Cerrito

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

ECDC May General Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, May 23rd

(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 June General Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, June 27th

(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 July General Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, July 25th

(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 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>

Other Events

California Democratic Party's Re-Organizing State Convention – May 26th-29th in Los Angeles

City of El Cerrito WorldOne 4th of July Festival – 11:00 am to 5:00 pm, Tuesday, July 4th;

Cerrito Vista Park, 950 Pomona Avenue, El Cerrito; ECDC needs volunteers to help staff our booth over four shifts: 10 am-12 pm (set up); 12 pm-2pm; 2 pm-4 pm; and 4 pm-6 pm (tear down); **volunteers needed!**

Contra Costa County Labor Council's "Labor-to-Labor" Dinner – Save the Date: August 2023

California Democratic State Endorsing Convention, Northern California –

November 17th-19th

2024 California Presidential Primary – Tuesday, March 5, 2024

- William Ktsanes, VP Publications

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/>.