



El Cerrito Democratic Club

March 2024 Newsletter

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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 generally in a hybrid format accessible both in person at Hana Gardens Senior Apartments (10860 San Pablo Avenue, next to El Cerrito City Hall) and remotely via Zoom (<http://tinyurl.com/ECDCMonthlyMembershipMeeting>).

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.

El Cerrito Democratic Club executive board officer elections occur annually each January. Special thanks to our 2024 volunteer officers:

El Cerrito Democratic Club Officers (2024)

- President – Champagne Brown
- Past President – Greg Lyman
- Executive Vice President – Carolyn Wysinger
- VP Media – Madeline Kronenberg
- VP Membership – Neil Tsutsui
- VP Programs – Ruthie Abelson Olivas
- 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 and joining the Executive Board.

Help is always greatly appreciated!

- William Ktsanes, VP Publications

2. Information and Zoom Link for the Tuesday, March 26th General Membership Meeting

Our General Membership Meetings are generally in a hybrid format, accessible both in person at Hana Gardens Senior Apartments (10860 San Pablo Avenue, next to El Cerrito City Hall) and via Zoom (<http://tinyurl.com/ECDCMonthlyMembershipMeeting>).

For monthly calendar invites and reminders for ECDC's General Membership Meetings, you are invited to download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZUpcOCvqDkpEtH10GiVZ7NcegZqDI_tJeMI/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGpqjwjHdKXsxGCRpwcBo_CXe3wpnpej7d1zU_CChZpNS31M-V4I5ZWL8z6

To join the monthly ECDC General Membership Meetings via Zoom, please use this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/ECDCMonthlyMembershipMeeting>

Zoom Meeting ID: 814 7976 2385; Zoom Passcode: c5fQKR

Dial In by Phone: +1 669 900 6833 or +1 408 638 0968

Meeting ID: 814 7976 2385; Phone Passcode: 920761

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

March Meeting Agenda (Tentative)

6:20 pm – Assemble and Mingle

6:30 pm – Call to Order

6:31 pm – Approve March 2024 Agenda (**Action Item**)

6:33 pm – Approve Minutes from the February 2024 Membership Meeting (**Action Item**)

6:35 pm – Officer Reports: Membership (Neil Tsutsui), Finance (Ed Crowley), Website (Madeline Kronenberg), Publications (William Ktsanes) and Records (Lesie Reckler)

6:40 pm – El Cerrito Democratic Club Philanthropy (**Action Item**)

7:00 pm – March Program: California Senate District 7 Primary Winners (**Action Item**)

- o Jovanka Beckles, Director, Ward 1, AC Transit (7:05-7:20 pm)

- o Jesse Arreguín, Mayor, Berkeley (7:20-7:35 pm)

- o Members Q&A (7:35-7:50 pm)

7:50 pm – Announcements (**please limit to 2 minutes**)

7:55 pm – Good of the Order

8:00 pm – Adjourn

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

- Champagne Brown, ECDC President

3. Minutes from the February 27th General Membership Meeting

El Cerrito Democratic Club
General Membership Meeting Minutes
February 27, 2024

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

Call to Order

President Brown called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Approve of February 2024 Agenda

On the motion of Crowley and the second of Smith, the agenda was approved as presented with two corrections to the month (February) changed with no nays nor abstentions.

Approve of Minutes: January 2024 General Membership Meeting

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

Officer Reports:

- Membership (Neil Tsutsui) membership = 93 members.
- Finance (Ed Crowley) = Balance \$8774.66. A few memberships came in. There were no outgoing transactions.
- Website (Madeline Kronenberg) - Website up to Date.
- Publications (William Ktsanes) two article ideas submitted. Please submit articles if you have them to William.
- Records (Lesie Reckler) No report.

Democratic Party of Contra Costa County (DPCCC) Report

- Kristin Connelly Clerk/Recorder came in and did a great report on the election. Perhaps she should come to talk to the club about elections in Contra Costa County.
- Reach out to people and tell them to return the Ballots. Contra Costa County on par with the state (8% of ballots being returned) mailed 700,000+ ballots. Only 59,996 ballots returned. Terrible turnout so far.
- DPCCC passed a resolution honoring Irma Anderson, Former Mayor of Richmond. First Black woman to be Richmond's mayor and first woman to be mayor of a major city.

- Celebration of Life for Irma Anderson February 29, 2024, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. Richmond Auditorium, Public Ceremony. In the future, there will be a documentary made and a Quilting Project honoring Mayor Anderson.
- Nye District 1 Report. Working on DEI matters on the central committee. Again echoes the importance of getting out the vote. This is how Democrats lose races and Republicans win.

Program: Selection of ECDC Monthly Programs for 2024

The following topics received the most votes:

- Local Electeds - 16 votes
- Topics Important to El Cerrito/Local Issues - 15 votes
- What’s on Deck for El Cerrito (Planning Commission) - 12 votes
- Economics of Climate Justice - 11 votes
- Climate Equity and Water Access - 10 votes
- Homelessness and how it relates to El Cerrito - 9 votes TIE
- Privatization of Medicare - 9 votes TIE
- **Recruit More Members** A recommendation is made that a subcommittee take up this topic over the year.

The following topics have already been selected for ECDC’s 2024 monthly programs:

- Tuesday, March 26th CA Senate District 7 Endorsement; ECDC will revisit the possible endorsement of the top 2 democratic candidates from the 2024 Primary Election.
- Tuesday, July 23rd November Ballot Measures:

SCA 2 (Allen) Public housing projects. (Res. Ch. 182, 2022)

ACA 5 (Low) Marriage equality. (Res. Ch. 125, 2023)

ACA 1 (Aguiar-Curry) Local government financing: affordable housing and public infrastructure: voter approval. (Res. Ch. 173, 2023)

ACA 13 (Ward) Voting thresholds. (Res. Ch. 176, 2023)

- Saturday, August 17th General Election Endorsements
- Saturday, October 12th 72nd ECDC Annual Dinner
- December 6th, ECDC Holiday Party

ECDC 2024 Philanthropy

The following list of potential recipient organizations was compiled:

- 1) Racial and Social Justice – George Floyd Foundation, Equity for Black Women and Girls, PAKFISC (Wysinger)
- 2) Environment and Climate Change – 350 Contra Costa, 350 Bay Area (Tsutsui)
- 3) Youth organizations – Food for Thought (Nye), Irma Anderson Foundation (Contra Costa College, Scholarship for Nursing Students) (Sudduth), APEN (Sudduth), Greenlining Institute(Sudduth), RYSE (Reckler), East Bay Center for the Performing Arts (Ktsanes), West Contra Costa Public Education Fund (any fund within the organization, but prefers R3F Richmond Rapid Response fund (R3F) emergency needs - rent, food, transportation (Reckler), Early Childhood Mental Health Foundation (Bashor)

Nominees will write short blurbs about their organizations for publication in the newsletter. Voting will follow.

Announcements

Buddy Akacic and Linda Cain are beginning the process to nominate Janet Abelson for the City Wall of Fame. Hoping that the club will support the effort. Also, rename A street as Abelson Street.

The ECDC Executive Board is gathering preliminary information to create a social media policy. If you know of a social media policy that you believe is a good example, or, if there is something that you would like to see in a social media policy, please submit it. (Reckler)

The Environmental Education Center in Tilden Park is being renovated. Community meetings are happening now. The second meeting is Wednesday, February 28, 2024, 6:30 p.m. Register on the website and a link will be sent. <https://www.ebparks.org/tilden-eec-project> (Tsutsui)

March 6 10-11:30 a.m. groundbreaking ceremony for the El Cerrito Del Norte Complete Streets Project (affordable housing). The event will take place at Mayfair Station , 11600 San Pablo, front entrance. Great idea to name a street after Janet Abelson. She will investigate.

Turn in your ballot and vote! Quinto, Brown and Wysinger are all on the ballot running for DPCCC. (Wysinger)

Celebration of Life for Irma Anderson February 29, 2024, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. Richmond Auditorium, Public Ceremony. (Brown)

The meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m. Closed in the memory of Irma Anderson.

– Leslie Reckler, VP Records

4. March Program: California Senate District “7” Endorsement Forum

For this month’s General Membership Meeting program, the El Cerrito Democratic Club will revisit the possibility of endorsing one of the two California Senate District “7” candidates advancing from the March 5th Primary to the November 5th General Election – **Jesse Arreguín** and **Jovanka Beckles**. Both candidates have been invited to address our March 26th membership meeting (or, if unable to attend, send a proxy).

Below are candidate statements submitted by Jesse Arreguín and Jovanka Beckles.

Jesse Arreguín (Mayor, City of Berkeley)

The East Bay needs a proven, progressive, problem-solver in the State Senate who will fight for more housing, safe neighborhoods, universal healthcare, and better schools.

The son of farmworkers, I was able to overcome the odds and achieve the California Dream, inspiring me to open the doors for others. As a council member and Mayor, I’ve fought for affordable housing, reducing homelessness, community safety, combating hate crimes, and raising the minimum wage.



We’ve invested in violence prevention to address root causes of crime, banned ghost guns, increased police oversight, and passed historic reforms to shift responses to mental health calls from police to trained social workers.

We’ve addressed homelessness in Berkeley through bold, effective action—launching new mental health and addiction services, shelters, and permanent housing.

I’m leading on housing affordability—building more housing than we’ve seen in decades, protecting renters, and developing a regional plan to build 440,000 new homes.

As your Senator, I’ll make the East Bay the best place to live, work, and raise a family, by addressing public safety comprehensively, hiring more officers who live in the communities they serve, building housing at all income levels, addressing homelessness through mental health and housing, improving public education, championing equal pay and the right to choose for women, and combating climate change.

Jovanka Beckles (AC Transit Director, Ward 1)

I'm a former 2-term Richmond City Councilmember; current AC Transit Director; Black Latina gay immigrant from Panama. I'm a community and labor activist; a rank and file Teamster working as a mental health professional for over 34 years. Because I live at the intersection of so many marginalized communities, I'm the best candidate to represent the East Bay. Representation matters. The East Bay has not had a Black woman - any person of color for that matter - representing us in the Senate in almost 30 years. Currently, of the 40 State Senators, only one's Black. Those who believe in justice & equity should do everything we can to remedy this injustice.



The many policies that I wrote and passed, are based on my lived and work experience and have received national attention for their boldness, and life-changing impacts. These include: banning the box for formerly incarcerated individuals; wrote and passed the first rent control policy in California in 30 years; raised the minimum wage for Richmond workers, taxed, sued and beat Chevron; significantly reduced crime in Richmond; provided appreciation pay to transit workers. I'm the only corporate-free candidate in the race and the only regionally elected official.

Voters are excited to see a candidate like me - a working class person who looks like them. This excitement will bring them out to vote! Our democracy, our freedom and civil rights are under attack. We win when we come together. I bring our communities together as demonstrated by the many grassroots organizations and local leaders that have endorsed me. See <https://jovanka4casenate.com/endorsements/>

I'll champion: Housing for all; free healthcare and childcare for all; quality and free education for all; LGBTQI protections; seamless transit, a full service hospital in west county; Reform Prop 13; environmental protections. I'd be honored to have your endorsement!

Best,

Jovanka

5. ECDC Endorsement Online Voting Instructions - State Senate District “7”

While ECDC General Members Meetings are open to all, only ECDC Members in Good Standing as of Saturday, February 10th will receive a ballot (by email, from OpaVote) and be eligible to vote for a State Senate District “7” candidate to receive an ECDC endorsement. Please read these instructions carefully.

Eligible voters will receive a ballot with three choices:

- a. Jesse Arreguín
- b. Jovanka Beckles
- c. No Endorsement

If we have a valid email address, you will get an email from noreply@opavote.com. This may show up as “OpaVote Voting Link” in your email. Please be sure to check your Junk or Spam folder, as your filter may block this from arriving in your Inbox. Inside the email will be a blue button with the word “Vote” in it. It will be a graphic, so you may need to allow images to be loaded in order to see the button.

Should you need technical assistance, our election coordinator will be Greg Lyman. Feel free to contact Greg at gblyman@comcast.net or 510-303-8833 if you need troubleshooting or are having problems voting. His contact information will also be in the automated email from OpaVote.

PLEASE DO NOT FORWARD YOUR OPAVOTE EMAIL. This ballot is linked to your specific email account and only you should use it to vote.

After you check off the boxes, you will be asked to review your ballot. When you click on the submit button at the bottom of the ballot, you will get a pop-up screen asking to confirm your vote. If you have your pop-up blocker turned on, this confirmation screen may not show up. Please turn off your pop-up blocker before proceeding with the vote. Once you click on the second submit button, you will not be able to change your vote. Replacement ballots will not be issued if you accidentally submitted an incomplete ballot. We have no way of invalidating a ballot that was submitted, even inadvertently.

Members who are the second person in a household and that do not have an email registered with the Vice President of Membership will need to rely on a link to the OpaVote website AND a unique code. The link and the code will be sent to the email that is registered with the VP of Membership for their partner at the same address. The email address that receives the website link and code may forward this email to the intended recipient. The voting experience will be similar to the description above. Again, Greg Lyman is your resource for any issues.

- There will be a single ballot for candidates.
- This Ballot will be made available for voting on Tuesday, March 26, after 7:00 pm.
- The voting deadline will be 7:00 pm on Wednesday, March 27, 2024.
- All technical support will end at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, March 27, 2024.

Please be sure to vote by the deadline of 7:00 pm on Wednesday, March 27, 2024.

The website for OpaVote is <https://www.opavote.com>. All votes are anonymous. Greg will be able to see if you cast your ballot but not how you voted. This is important to assist you with your voting experience.

6. ECDC Endorsement Ballot Explained

Members in Good Standing have the option of casting a vote for the ECDC to endorse a State Senate District “7” candidate. Additionally, a “No Endorsement” option will be available. It is also possible to not select any option in the race. The Club will have an official position only if a candidate or the “No Endorsement” option is selected on at least 60% of the ballots cast.

“No Endorsement” Explained. A selection of “No Endorsement” means you want the Club to officially take a position that no candidate deserves the Club’s endorsement. A “No Endorsement” vote is a very powerful statement and should not be used because you have no interest or knowledge about the candidates in a race. A “No Endorsement” vote should be cast when there is a clear reason to cast the vote. If you do not know enough about the candidates to have formed an opinion and you personally do not want your vote to influence the outcome, then **simply leave all options unchecked on that race.** A “No Endorsement” vote is used in the denominator to determine if a candidate reaches the 60% threshold.

Here are a few example calculations:

Favorite Color	Votes
Ballots Issued	110
Ballots Cast	90
Blue	54
Blue %	60%
Green	0
Green %	0%
Gold	46
Gold %	51.1%
No Endorsement	0
No Endorsement %	0%
Blue Endorsed	
Voter Turnout	81.8%

Favorite Day of Week	Votes
Ballots Issued	110
Ballots Cast	80
Monday	1
Monday %	1.2%
Wednesday	15
Wednesday %	18.7%
Friday	41
Friday %	51.2%
No Endorsement	20
No Endorsement %	25%
No Consensus	
Voter Turnout	72.7%

Favorite Berry	Votes
Ballots Issued	110
Ballots Cast	100
Blueberry	37
Blueberry %	37%
Raspberry	0
Raspberry %	0%
Strawberry	0
Strawberry %	0%
No Endorsement	63
No Endorsement %	63%
No Endorsement	
Voter Turnout	90.9%

In the Favorite Color race, 20 people decided not to cast a vote (left all choices blank). The denominator for determining if any color received 60% is 90. Blue received 54 of the 90 votes cast and was 'endorsed'. Although Gold received 46 votes, Gold did not get 60% of the votes cast.

In the Favorite Day of the Week race, 30 people did not like the choices and did not cast a vote. The denominator determining if any day received 60% is 80. Although Friday received the majority of the votes, neither Friday, any other individual day nor "No Endorsement" received enough votes to reach the 60% threshold. As no consensus was reached, the Club remains silent on Favorite Day of the Week.

In the Favorite Berry race, 10 people decided not to cast a vote. The denominator for determining if any berry received 60% is 100. Blueberry received all of the votes cast for a berry, however, No Endorsement received 63 of the 100 votes cast. The Club position would be published as "No Endorsement". In this case, "No Endorsement" would indicate that the Club, based on the information available, does not like the choices, despite the fact that all votes for a berry were for Blueberry.

Here is how our Endorsement would be published:

Favorites Color: Blue Endorsed
Favorite Day of the Week: No Consensus
Favorite Berry: No Endorsement

- Greg Lyman, ECDC Past President

7. Organizations Nominated for Donations from ECDC

This year, we have again approved funds to donate to worthy causes. At our February 27th membership meeting, we took nominations for potential recipient organizations in the general topic areas of 1) racial and social justice, 2) environment and climate change, and 3) youth advocacy. Several wonderful organizations were nominated by members who followed up by providing short descriptions (which were required for the nomination to be put before the membership for a vote).

An "Action Item" for our March General Membership Meeting is to select our final awardees. Below are the descriptions provided for four eligible organizations: 350 Contra Costa, RYSE Center, EdFund West Richmond Rapid Relief Fund (R3F)/Richmond Rapid Response, and the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts.

- Neil Tsutsui, VP Membership; and William Ktsanes, VP Publications

350 Contra Costa

(Environmental and Climate Change; nominated by Neil Trutsui)

350 Contra Costa is dedicated to tackling climate change through grassroots action. They champion renewable energy, sustainable living, and equitable climate policies, leveraging community education, advocacy, and direct action to make a difference. Importantly, 350 Contra Costa recognizes the crucial role of political action. They actively support environmental candidates by mobilizing volunteers to walk precincts, ensuring that environmental concerns are represented in local elections and that local elected officials are strong climate leaders. Working on both policy and political fronts, 350 Contra Costa plays a pivotal role in fostering a sustainable future and advocating for policies that safeguard our planet.

For more information, please visit <https://350contracosta.org/>.

RYSE Center

(Youth; Racial and Social Justice; nominated by Leslie Reckler)

RYSE is a Richmond, California nonprofit founded in 2008 to provide sanctuary for youth in a complex and dangerous city. RYSE never strayed from its mission, and is now a lively and bustling safe space grounded in social justice, empowering youth to love, learn, educate, heal and transform lives and communities.

RYSE offers varied programs and services. Youth may meet to explore characteristics of a healthy relationship, get homework/tutoring help, attend cooking classes, or use RYSE's more in-depth supports such as case management for those who have come in contact with the juvenile justice system.

They employ a staff committed to youth.

For more information, please visit <https://rysecenter.org/>.

EdFund West Richmond Rapid Relief Fund (R3F) and Richmond Rapid Response

(Youth; nominated by Leslie Reckler)

R3F is an emergency fund that provides immediate gift card/cash assistance to families in dire need. The fund has provided our most vulnerable families with immediate financial assistance for rent, car repairs, food and other dire needs and emergencies. Phase 2 has plans to expand services to rent assistance/homeless prevention and more. I recommend contributions to "Phase 1, COVID-19 Immediate Relief." Families are struggling. Many parents are working two

jobs just to keep up with inflation, and high school students are working to the detriment of their education to meet basic family needs. (Request contribution supports WCCUSD families).

For more information, please visit

<https://www.edfundwest.org/what-we-do/fund-development/city-partnerships/>

and <http://www.richmondrapidresponse.org/>

East Bay Center for the Performing Arts

(Youth; Racial and Social Justice; nominated by William Ktsanes)

The East Bay Center for the Performing Arts is social justice and youth empowerment in action. In the heart of Richmond's Iron Triangle neighborhood, for over 50 years the Center has engaged youth "in imagining and creating new worlds for themselves and new visions for their communities" through rigorous training in the arts.

Through the Center students develop creative skills that enable them to envision, build and lead a better world. They study a wide variety of artistic traditions including West African Music and Dance, Classical Music, Jazz, Hip-Hop/Contemporary Dance, Ballet, Regional Mexican Music and Dance, Trinidadian Steel Pans, Theater, and Voice. Students also create and perform original music, theater, dance and media-making that sparks their imagination, builds self-confidence, and inspires a calling in life.

For more information, please visit <https://eastbaycenter.org/>.

8. El Cerrito Library "Op-Ed" from ECDC Member Betsy Bashor

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.

At our August 2023 General Membership Meeting, former El Cerrito mayor, council member (and past president of the El Cerrito Democratic Club) Greg Lyman provided a presentation in support of financing and building a new El Cerrito Public Library as part of the development of the El Cerrito Plaza BART station. In response, ECDC member Elizabeth Basher submitted the following "Op-Ed" calling for other sites to be considered.

Thank you, Greg and Betsy! We welcome your differing perspectives.

- William Ktsanes, VP Publications

More Than One Site for a New Library

It's time to get more people talking about choices for a new El Cerrito library. What about building our new library on the current site at 6510 Stockton Avenue? And there could be other sites.

For years, city officials have been saying that the Plaza BART Transit Oriented Development is the only possible site where a new El Cerrito Library can be built. This is not true, but it has been the basis for a library planning process that focuses less on the library and more on the Transit Oriented Development. Instead of giving residents a role in important decisions about the library, like the location, the city has proceeded as if El Cerrito residents have already chosen this site. At the few public meetings held about the library so far, residents have been invited to list features they would like to see inside this pre-selected library location.

This has not been an engaging, transparent, or thorough approach. The city will ultimately need voter approval to fund any new library. Is it wise or fair to frame the issue as the Plaza BART library or no new library at all?

I would like to see a new library that is safe, energy-efficient, technologically up to date and provides welcoming spaces for programs, tutoring and community meetings. I would like it to be a community library that focuses first on residents' needs for books and information of all kinds. I don't think that Plaza BART is the best location.

Let's compare two options that do exist.

Location and Access

The Stockton Avenue site is easy to access, as shown by the high number of books being checked out from this library despite its small size. It is next door to Fairmont Elementary School, creating the opportunity for students and their families to walk over. It's next to the Ohlone Greenway, making it accessible for bicyclists, walkers and BART riders willing to take a short walk. It's in a central location that is safe and not very crowded except in the hour when school is dismissed. No new development projects are planned nearby. Street parking is available and usually easy to find. While the site has no dedicated library parking spaces, there is a parking lot behind the building where library patrons sometimes park and Friends of the Library book sales are held. The lot is owned by the school district, so its use is subject to negotiation.

The proposed Plaza BART library would occupy the ground floor of a multi-story apartment building at Fairmount Avenue and Liberty Street. The draft master plan displayed in January

shows that the Plaza BART area is going to become very congested. Developers plan to remove 750 BART rider parking spaces and build 743 apartments in six buildings. The plan calls for replacing only 150 BART rider parking spaces and providing 266 resident parking spaces in parking garages. Here also, there are no dedicated parking spaces for the library. There would be time-limited street parking on Liberty Street. The city's master plan for the area proposes narrowing Fairmount Avenue to support a goal of making the library a "destination" and a community gathering place. This site would offer easy access to people who live on the Plaza BART site or nearby and people who want to ride BART to the library. However, it would be very hard to access for El Cerrito residents and other library users who drive to the library.

Library Ownership and Management

The current library site is owned by the city.

The Plaza BART library would be in a leased space. The city would never own the land or building.

Under either option, the El Cerrito library would continue to be managed by Contra Costa County.

Size

The existing library is 6,500 square feet.

The Stockton Avenue site is appropriate for a two-story stand-alone building with an area of about 12,000 square feet. This would roughly double our current library size.

The proposed Plaza BART library would have an area of 20,000 square feet. This would more than triple our library's size.

Current Operating Cost vs. Proposed New Funding to Enhance a Bigger Library?

Currently, Contra Costa County covers the El Cerrito library's operating budget of about \$643,000/year, and makes decisions about staff, programs and materials. The city pays \$46,000/year for extra staff hours.

The parcel tax drafted by the city in fall 2023 proposed a \$22 million tax that would generate \$2.5 million per year in revenue forever. Of this amount, \$1.6 million is listed for construction and \$900,000/year is for "library hours/program enhancement."

Why would city taxpayers spend \$900,000/year for library staff hours and programs? This is 20 times the \$46,000/year the city spends now for expanded library hours, and the county

provides a turnkey operation that includes all materials and programs. Would the city be handing over extra money to the county, which would then make the decisions about this spending? Also, who would make decisions about allocating space in a new, much-larger library?

Fair Comparison?

The city states that building a Plaza BART library would “save \$10 million,” although no cost estimates were ever obtained for any other site.

My Google search indicates that construction of a free-standing library would probably cost \$1,000/square foot. If that is accurate, a 12,000 square foot library would cost \$12 million.

If the city paid \$22 million for a 20,000-square-foot space, the cost would also be roughly \$1,000/square foot.

The city should provide a proposed budget and revenue assumptions for the current Stockton Avenue site as compared to the Plaza BART site.

What is the best choice? Let’s give the community full information about both options and let El Cerrito voters decide.

- Betsy Bashor, ECDC Member

9. Call to Action from ECDC Member Joan Kuenz

Dear El Cerrito Democratic Club,

I have been a member for about 25 years. I appreciate and support the work of the Club.

When Trump was elected, I joined Berkely Indivisible because I needed to take more action to deal with the crisis our country was facing. Since that time my political time and energy has kept me working more directly as part of the Grass Roots.

For the past two years I have been working online with Indivisible Marin. They are not just about action. They reach out to all of us involved and make us feel part of a community of supportive individuals. I have been involved in many political groups over the years but this group’s values, creativity, communication, and support I feel is the best!

We have phone-banks on Saturday where we provide as much training and support that you might need and the program we use, Scale to Win, is quite user friendly. There are other opportunities to send postcards to voters to help increase turnout and canvassing. We also

have online presentations to keep us abreast of what is really happening “behind the scenes” regarding the status of the elections. Our focus is to keep and gain CA seats in the House of Representative. The CA districts are essential to the whole country in gaining back our majority in the House of Representatives. We will also be working for other races for the Senate later.

As we all embark on a critical time to protect our democracy, I hope you might consider joining us and or sharing this information with friends and family!

Here is a link to their website:

<https://www.indivisiblemarin.org>



- Joan Kuenz, ECDC Member

10. Invitation to “A Song for Cesar” from ECDC Member María Alegría

Dear Friends,

Please join me in Celebrating the Legacy of Cesar Chavez on Wednesday, March 27 for a film screening and Q & A with the film producers of “A Song for Cesar”. This event is FREE and open to the public.

“A Song for Cesar” tells the untold story of Cesar Chavez’s fight for equality and justice by the artists who dedicated their work to Cesar Chavez’s fight for equality and justice. Here is the link to watch a short preview. Feel free to share!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PDdxAk4aTg>

Sincerely,

María Alegría

Contra Costa College Alumna



Editor’s Note: “A Song for Cesar: The Music and the Movement” is a documentary film telling the story of Cesar Chavez’s remarkable journey through the reflections of great artists like Maya Angelou, Joan Baez and Carlos Santana. A free showing of the film will be at 5:30 pm on Wednesday, March 27th on-campus in Contra Costa College’s General Education Room GE-115. Filmmakers Abel Sanchez and Andres Alegria will be on hand to discuss their film.

RSVP here: <https://www.contracosta.edu/event/a-song-for-cesar-with-filmmaker-qa/>



**Hispanic Serving Institution
Social Justice Event**

**Film Screening and Q&A with
"A Song for Cesar" Film Makers -
Abel Sanchez and Andres Alegria**

Discover the enduring impact of Cesar Chavez, a champion for farmworkers' rights. Dive into the narrative of Chavez's remarkable journey, as told by iconic figures such as Maya Angelou, Joan Baez, and Carlos Santana. Explore the pivotal role that music and artistic expression played in propelling the farmworkers' movement to new heights.



bit.ly/CCCSong4Cesar

Help us able to keep providing free events available to anyone in our CCC and 4CD community by registering today!

**WEDNESDAY
MARCH 29**

**General Education Bldg. 225
Starting at 5:30PM**

We're proud to support the Multicultural Institute food drive. Bring any clothing or non-perishable food items to the event, and help us make a difference in our community.

Let's come together to enjoy the movie and contribute to a great cause!

Partners



**LA RAZA
STUDENT UNION**



**LA RAZA
STUDIES**



**CONTRA
COSTA
COLLEGE**

**LATINX FACULTY
AND STAFF ASSOCIATION**

2600 Mission Bell Dr. San Pablo, CA 94806
For Additional Information contact: mohernandez@contracosta.edu

The Contra Costa Community College District is committed to equal opportunity in educational programs, employment, and campus life. The District does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, marital status, national origin, parental status, race, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status in any access to and treatment in College programs, activities, and application for employment.

11. Future Events – *Mark Your Calendar!*

El Cerrito Democratic Club General Membership Meetings and Events

ECDC March General Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, March 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://tinyurl.com/ECDCMonthlyMembershipMeeting>

ECDC April General Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, April 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://tinyurl.com/ECDCMonthlyMembershipMeeting>

ECDC May General Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, May 28th

(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://tinyurl.com/ECDCMonthlyMembershipMeeting>

ECDC June General Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, June 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://tinyurl.com/ECDCMonthlyMembershipMeeting>

ECDC July General Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, July 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://tinyurl.com/ECDCMonthlyMembershipMeeting>

ECDC Candidates Forum – Time and Location TBD; Saturday, August 17th

ECDC August General Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, August 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://tinyurl.com/ECDCMonthlyMembershipMeeting>

ECDC Annual Dinner – 72nd Annual Dinner; Time and Location TBD; Saturday, October 12th

ECDC Holiday Party – Time and Location TBD; Friday, December 6th

Other Community Events

“A Song for Cesar: The Music and the Movement” – 5:30 pm, Wednesday, March 27th;
on-campus in Contra Costa College’s General Education Room GE-115; documentary film
telling the story of Cesar Chavez’s remarkable journey through the reflections of great
artists like Maya Angelou, Joan Baez and Carlos Santana; free showing with filmmakers
Abel Sanchez and Andres Alegria on hand to discuss their film; RSVP here:
<https://www.contracosta.edu/event/a-song-for-cesar-with-filmmaker-qa/>

2024 General Election – Tuesday, November 5, 2024

- William Ktsanes, VP Publications

12. Membership Renewal Reminder and Instructions

REMINDER! – ECDC memberships expired on September 30, 2023. If you have not already
renewed for 2024, **now is the time to renew!**

You can do so online at: <https://ecdclub.org/join/>

Or by mailing a check to: ECDC Membership
PO Box 192
El Cerrito, CA 94530

Dues are \$5 for students, \$20 for individual members, and \$30 for two adults at the same
address. The newsletter comes with membership and is delivered electronically by email.
The added cost for a printed, hard-copy, postal mailed 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

13. Call for Newsletter Submissions

The El Cerrito Democratic Club Newsletter is published eleven months a year (each month with the exception of a combined December-January issue) and 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.

Very Special Thanks to ECDC members Betsy Bashor, Joan Kuenz and María Alegría who submitted articles for this month's newsletter!

- William Ktsanes, VP Publications

14. 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/>.