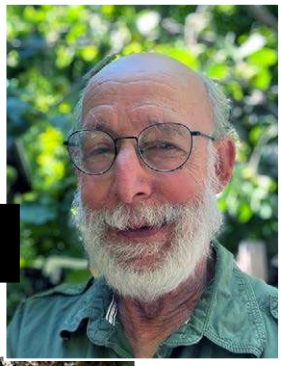
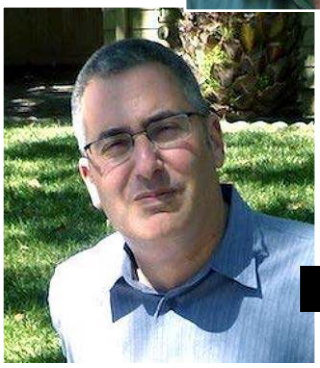
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RCPC Brings In New Board; New Directions; New Land Use Chair

by Annette Floystrup

April's Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) Board Election brought a new majority to the board and a change to the Land Use Committee (LUC) Chair position. In May 2022, Stu Flashman, who has served as LUC Chair since 2007, was succeeded by Ken Rich, RCPC Treasurer. Rich has served on the LUC since May 2021, when he was elected to the RCPC Board.


Stu Flashman


Ken Rich

Stu Flashman: Outgoing Chair

Stu Flashman was first appointed to the RCPC Board in 2007 to serve on its "merchant seat." He was subsequently appointed by the board to the LUC, and named committee chair the following year — a position he has held since then. He was elected to six separate two-year terms, serving as RCPC Board Chair for five of these years.

Flashman is one of America's top environmental lawyers and has been named a Northern California "Superlawyer" since 2011. During his 15 years on the LUC, he has guided Rockridge to several notably successful results on major land use issues affecting the Hwy 24 corridor.

Land Use Chair, see page 10

Home Providers: Meet Home Seekers

by Carol Kasparek and Gary Fine

Our Bay Area has many distinctions. Unfortunately, exorbitantly high rents are included among them. This reality has wide ramifications that did not go unnoticed by local resident **Jill Lindenbaum**. She became aware of one big effect of rising housing costs when her son's school couldn't replace his science teacher because none of the top candidates wanted to take on the rental market in the East Bay, much less the home prices. Lindenbaum's partner at the time, **Siggy Rubinson**, was experiencing a similar situation at her son's school.

Both women were aware of programs in England that focus on seniors with extra rooms to rent out. This well-known practice had become part of its public health program. The arrangement allows seniors to stay in

Home Sharing, see page 12

Alameda County Shares Report on Homelessness at Greater NCPC's June Meeting

by Anna L. Marks

What is Alameda County doing to address homelessness? The Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council's (NCPC) June meeting addressed this topic and provided details on how the county's services are currently being implemented and what the plan is moving forward. Although the meeting was only lightly attended, the information was useful, enlightening, and worth sharing with *Rockridge News* readers.

Colleen Budenholzer and **Lucy Kasdin** spoke to the group as representatives from the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency. They revealed the findings from a recent report, the 2022 Point-in-Time Count, delayed by over a year due to Covid, based on a one-day count of homeless and unsheltered residents conducted earlier this year.

While the 2022 data confirmed that the homeless population increased over 20 percent in three years, it did so at a much slower rate than during the previous report when the increase was around 40 percent. Kasdin, Director of Alameda County Health Care for the Homeless, noted that while this is no time for celebrating, it does speak to how well the interventions have been working.

"Oakland, of course, has the highest concentration of homelessness

NCPC Meeting, see page 4

RCPC August Town Hall: Oakland Housing Element

The Housing Element is part of Oakland's General Plan that serves as a blueprint for housing the City's residents, at all economic levels including low income and households. At the Town Hall, City of Oakland planning staff will share updates on the plan and solicit feedback from the public.

Under State law, every city and county in California must adopt a Housing Element or plan, as part of its General Plan. An updated Element allows the City to access critical local, state and federal funds.

The Housing Element presents an inventory of sites suitable for residential development in Oakland; an assessment of financial and programmatic resources; and an analyses of constraints, both governmental and non-governmental, to housing production in Oakland. These data and systematic analyses provide the basis for policies and actions to meet Oakland's housing needs for the future.

Thursday, August 18th
7:30-9pm, at the Rockridge Library
(Attendees will also be able to join by Zoom)
RSVP: chair@rockridge.org

Visit the City of Oakland's website at: https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/read-the-housing-element. ■



The RockridgeNews

The Rockridge News was founded in March 1986 by **Don Kinkead** and is published monthly (except August). It is sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), a nonprofit public benefit organization founded to: preserve and enhance the unique character of the Rockridge neighborhood; promote the health, safety and quality of life of its residents; furnish a forum for community involvement; and provide leadership and representation of neighborhood interests.

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Are there community issues you'd like to see covered in *The Rockridge News*? Have questions about newsletter distribution? Want to volunteer to be a *Rockridge News* block captain? Want to write a letter to the Editor? We'd love to hear from you.

All letters must be limited to 350 words and are published at the discretion of the Editor. Send them to: editor@rockridge.org. Please be sure to include your name, email address, and city and street of residence. **All submissions accepted for publication are subject to editing for clarity and brevity.**

The Rockridge News reserves the right to refuse any articles, letters, display ads, or classified ads.

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To subscribe to *The Rockridge News*, send your check for $20, payable to *RCPC* with "Rockridge News" noted on the memo line.

Mail payment to: **RCPC,** 4900 Shattuck Avenue, PO Box 22504, Oakland, CA, 94609

Display Advertising Deadline for SEPTEMBER: August 18, 2022

Advertising rates are $28/column inch. Six-month pre-pay rate available. For display ads, call Jo Ellis at 510-653-3210 (**after noon**), or email joellis1@hotmail.com. Email Susan Montauk at smontauk@gmail.com for information regarding classified ads.

Views expressed in published articles do not necessarily reflect those of The Rockridge News, its editor, or the board of directors of the Rockridge Community Planning Council.

RCPC Vendor Fair — ADUs & Brews

by Casey Farmer, RCPC Chair

You asked — we're answering. Earlier this year, The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) held a town hall meeting on Zoom to hear from residents about what priorities they'd like to see the RCPC address. Several of the attendees expressed interest in building Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) but did not know where to start. As a result, we've decided to bring some ADU experts to the neighborhood — and RCPC will be hosting an ADU Vendor Fair on **Sunday, July 24, from 3:30pm-5:30pm, at The Golden Squirrel, 5940 College Avenue**.

What is an ADU?

Accessory Dwelling Units are self-contained residential units on the same property as a single-family home or multifamily building. ADUs must have a kitchen (or efficiency unit), bathroom, a place to sleep, and a separate entrance from the main property. You can use an ADU to house friends or family, or lease to a rent-paying tenant. Single-family ADUs can take different forms, such as a first floor or basement that has been converted to an additional living unit; a freestanding backyard cottage; or a converted garage.

State law makes it easy to build an ADU that is:

- 800 square feet or less
- 16 feet in height or less
- Set back from side and rear property lines by 4 feet
- Other waived local regulations

The City of Oakland has many resources including free pre-approved plans, an ADU cost calculator, and a planning guide. See oaklandca.gov/topics/accessory-dwelling-units-adus-secondary-units.

Note: To view the previous RCPC meeting on ADUs (Zoom meeting, March 2021) visit the RCPC YouTube channel, or visit: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKKTaH1gkPI). ■

Rock-N-Stroll Returns to College Avenue with Art, Music, and Food on July 9th

by Jody Colley, Rockridge District Association Marketing Manager



Calle Ocho will be performing Cuban son, danzon, bolero and jazz at the BART plaza, July 9, from 2pm to 5pm. Visit rockridgedistrict.com for details.

Rock-N-Stroll resumes for the third time this season on **Saturday, July 9, from 11am-6pm**. Enjoy free outdoor live music, big sales, popup vendors, kids' crafts, art shows, and fun activities for the whole family up and down College Avenue — from Broadway to Alcatraz.

Featured musicians include **Kelly Keys**, **Calle Ocho** *(see photo above)*, **Gaby Castro**, **Arden Alexa**, **Blue Alley Cats**, and **Timothy Shestak**. Stop by to listen, say hello to your neighbors, and enjoy the shops, fine dining, savory sweets, and delicious drinks available in Oakland's Rockridge District.

See rockridgedistrict.com for details. ■

SCHEDULE: JULY 9TH	
Oakland Art Gallery	12pm-6pm: **Friends with Benefits**
Right Angle	11:30am-2pm: **Fleeting Trance**
Open Mind Music	**Live Music**
BART	11am-1:30pm: **Kelly Keys**
	2pm-5pm: **Calle Ocho**
	5pm to 7pm: **Gaby Castro**
Mignonne Décor	11am-1:45pm: **Jason Movirch**
	2:30pm-5pm: **Arden Alexa**
Arbor Preschool	1pm-4pm: **Dan do Mandolin**
Beer Baron	3pm-6pm: **Live Music**
CAPC Courtyard	11am-2pm: **Blue Alley Cats**
	2:30pm-5:30pm: **El Grato Dice**
VITA	2pm-5pm: **Timothy Shestak**
Cole Coffee	**DJ**

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NCPC Meeting, from front page

anywhere within our county," said Kasdin. Approximately 7,000 individuals are homeless on any given night; about 3,300 are in Oakland (about 47 percent of the total for Alameda County).

"When we think about homelessness, we think about large encampments, large concentrations. We think about tents. In Rockridge, you think about individuals maybe at the BART station or bus stops, except, what we have actually seen, and this is generally true across the county with a few exceptions, is that there actually has been a decrease in the number of tents and increasing numbers of individuals living in cars and RVs," said Kasdin.

Kasdin also discussed her agency's role in providing direct health care for the homeless population via "street teams" that go directly into encampments and other locations to provide services, like dental, optometry, mental health counseling, and even drug addiction and overdose prevention.

"We have spent a lot of time over the last two years working on the ground responding to Covid," said Kasdin. There are currently 14 teams serving the county; the size of the team is based upon the need and density of the area being served.

"I know there are a number of individuals with more significant behavioral health challenges who are on the streets around the Rockridge area. A number of them that we are working closely with have behavioral health issues. Progress is slow and our services are voluntary, so it is a process of engagement over time. This is really challenging us to make sure we are working with you all (in Rockridge) to make sure that our outreach is engaging with individuals, especially in settings that, historically, we haven't provided as robust outreach services," explained Kasdin.

Unsheltered Population by Location

	Tent	Car/Van	RV	Street/ Outside	Abandoned Building
Oakland 2022	1063 (32%)	1031 (31%)	907 (27%)	308 (9%)	28 (1%)
Oakland 2019	1320 (41%)	727 (23%)	703 (22%)	420 (13%)	40 (1%)
Alameda County 2022	*2216 (31%)*	*2318 (32%)*	*1600 (22%)*	*958 (13%)*	*43 (1%)*
Alameda County 2019	*2172 (34%)*	*1431 (23%)*	*1386 (22%)*	*1239 (20%)*	*84 (1%)*

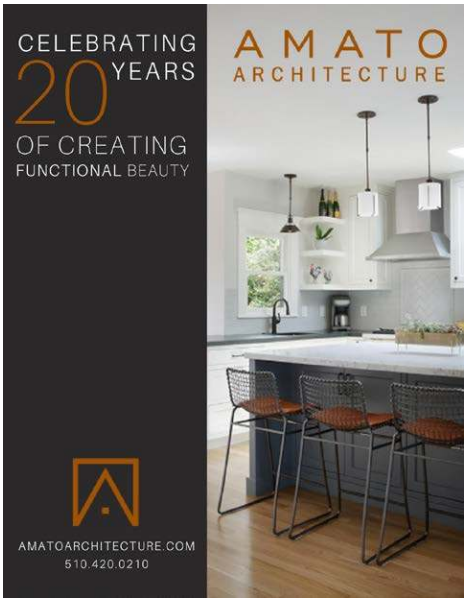
Regarding the sheltered population, Oakland has the most shelters in the county where there has been a large increase in need. Initiatives like Project Roomkey and Project Homekey have had a positive impact in reducing the number of unhoused individuals. A good local example is the opening of Clifton Hall (see *Rockridge News*, February 2021). Project Roomkey has served 2,574 people; of those, 2,068 people have exited the system and more than 1,400 individuals transitioned to permanent housing.

Colleen Budenholzer is the Coordinated Entry Program Director with Alameda County's Office of Homeless Care and Coordination, and a collaborative partner and lead on strategic planning for the agency. The Home Together 2026 Community Plan was released this May and serves as a "roadmap" for the next five years whose goals include preventing homelessness for those most at risk; resolving issues quickly; connecting people with safety net resources; increasing the availability of housing; and improving communication and outreach.

"It's really about bridging access to resources — matching people to the resources that they need — and prioritizing people to the resources that we don't have enough of. This is really about getting creative, having conversations with individuals, getting to know them, developing rapport, understanding what they want, understanding what resources they have, and what community resources they may need to be connected to," said Budenholzer.

Budenholzer also shared that two-thirds of the homeless population resolve their situation without long-term intervention with the assistance of bridge funding. This can include funding for security deposits, or providing tangible assistance like home furnishings that aid in offsetting moving expenses. These needs are determined after the assessment process, but, she emphasized, there is not enough affordable housing to meet the growing need. "In the pipeline, there are over 1,900 affordable housing units with 876 specifically set aside for people experiencing homelessness or exiting homelessness," said Budenholzer.

How do folks access these services? Start by calling 2-1-1 where you will have a "warm transfer" to a housing resource center. The centers also have drop-in hours and phone numbers. Alameda County Health Care for the Homeless can be reached at (510) 891-8950; achch@acgov.org. ■



LAND USE COMMITTEE Meeting Notice

RCPC Land Use Committee
meeting will be held on
Wednesday, July 27, 2022,
at 7:30pm, via Zoom.

The meeting is open to the public.
To attend, check rockridge.org
for Zoom link, or
email: landuse@rockridge.org.

CITY COUNCIL CORNER

Oakland City Council Meeting: Updates Relevant to Rockridge

by Aly Bonde, RCPC Board Member

Street Maintenance

On June 7, the City Council approved a resolution necessary to request almost $10 million from the State of California to fund local road maintenance during FY 2022-2023. These state dollars are part of the SB 1 Road Repair and Accountability Act (commonly referred to as the "Gas Tax") signed by former Governor Brown in 2017 to raise vehicle registration fees and charge an additional 12¢ per gallon of gasoline for transportation infrastructure and repairs. The City of Oakland has successfully obtained the full amount requested from the State for the past five years when the funds have been available.

SB 1 funds in Oakland are proposed to be used similarly to past years — funding ongoing road maintenance requests such as repair of potholes. Members of the public can submit road maintenance requests via OAK311 and the free SeeClickFix mobile app.

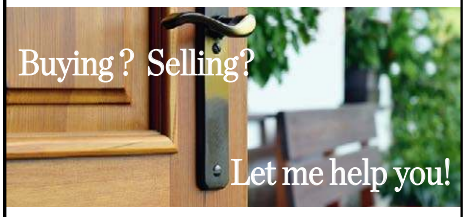
The $10 million in State funding is also proposed to continue supporting nearly 20 full-time equivalent staff positions within Public Works and OakDOT. Over the past several years, the City of Oakland has combined these SB 1 funds with local voter-approved taxes for transportation infrastructure like Measure B/BB and Measure KK to tackle decades of deferred maintenance of local roads while prioritizing locations based on equity indices such as priority neighborhoods and traffic safety.

Potential City Council Term Limits

Councilmember Loren Taylor proposed a ballot measure at the City Council's Rules Committee meeting on June 9 that would, if approved by the voters in the November 8, 2022 election, limit members of the Oakland City Council to three consecutive four-year terms in office. Councilmember Dan Kalb stated during the Rules Committee meeting that he is working on a similar ballot measure.

The City Council would need to finalize and pass any ballot measures by its final meeting in July in order for them to appear on the November ballot. The Rules Committee chose not to schedule Councilmember Taylor's measure for a vote until it could also schedule Councilmember Kalb's measure. ■

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NCPC MEETING

The Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council

will hold its next virtual Zoom meeting on:

August 11, 2022, at 7pm,
(pending further notice)

For Zoom link, visit:
https://rockridgencpc.com

To suggest meeting topics, send an email to:
chair@rockridgencpc.com.

A Celebration of *Rockridge News* Volunteers

SAVE THE DATE

The Rockridge Community Planning Council thinks it's high time to thank our *Rockridge News* volunteers.

We are planning a picnic for: **Sunday, August 21, noon to 4pm.**

Invitations, with an RSVP for the event, will be sent out toward the end of July to those who are currently delivering, bundling and hosting the newsletter (and, hopefully to those who have retired in recent years).

We are missing email addresses for a few individuals, so please contact Susan at smontauk@gmail.com or (510) 547-3855 if you notice that your contact email is not printed on your July cover sheet.

Musicians Wanted!



Help RCPC recognize the 140+ volunteers who support *The Rockridge News* by performing at their outdoor celebration.

Event to be held on **Sunday, August 21, from noon to 4pm.**

Email chair@rockridge.org for more detailed information.

Taft Avenue Route Available for Rockridge News Delivery

Thanks to **Gary Lipmann** for his many years of service as *Rockridge News* Block Captain for his block of Taft Avenue. He is ready to retire and needs someone in his neighborhood to take over his route beginning in September. Please let us know if you will be able to sign up for the route below:

Route 11B: From 5546 Taft along both sides to 5669 Broadway.

Block Captains deliver newsletters door-to-door. Their bundles are delivered to their front porch the first weekend of each month (except August). Call (510) 547-3855 or email Susan at smontauk@gmail.com.

Rockridge Kitchen Tour: Volunteer Request

by Robin McDonnell, Kitchen Tour Co-Chair



The RCPC Rockridge Kitchen Tour is coming October 2nd, and the committee is looking for volunteers with specific areas of expertise. Interested? Please email us at kitchentour@rockridge.org.

Docents: These are the volunteers who make the tour the enjoyable experience that it is. Docents at each house guide guests to the kitchen, answer questions, give directions to other houses, and keep everything running smoothly. Docents get to tour several of the houses during orientation ahead of the October 2nd date as well as on the event day, and are allowed free entry to the other houses on the tour when not on their scheduled shift.

Publicity: Ideally, we'd like to find a volunteer with experience in writing press releases and who has contacts at local media outlets. This should take no more than two to three hours per week, for about five weeks total. Starting mid-July, we reach out to publications with long-lead calendars and submission dates, and most of the media outreach will be completed by the end of August. There is plenty of collateral material from previous tours, and much of this information can be adapted for this year's tour. ■



The biennial Rockridge Kitchen Tour is back again after a short hiatus.

Advance ticket sales begin on July 15th

and are available by visiting: rockridgekitchentour.org.

Sales end at midnight, September 30th.

Advanced tickets are $47, plus service fee.
Day of the tour tickets are $55.



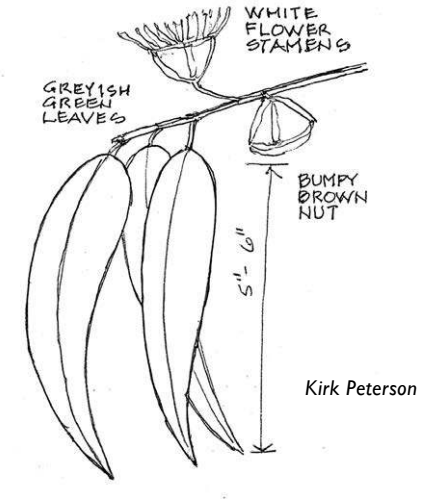
LOOK AROUND

Eucalyptus globulus

by Kirk Peterson

Eucalyptus globulus, the Tasmanian blue gum, naturalized (went wild) in California in the 19th century. Besides majestic individual trees, one can see them lining roads, in agricultural windrows, and in small clusters and dense forests in much of low-elevation California.

Eucalyptus g. was planted widely in the Oakland hills in anticipation of commercial logging that never happened. Over time, the trees grew and reseeded themselves, generally at the expense of native flora.



Kirk Peterson

The trunks shed big shaggy ribbons of bark revealing creamy newer bark. The sharply fragrant evergreen leaves fall all year, and whole branches can drop at any time. The flowers are well loved by our urban bees. Eucalyptuses are highly flammable and can "explode" in flame in a wildfire, hence their removal in Claremont Canyon and above UC.

The heritage *Eucalyptus globulus* on the former College of the Arts site are among the largest trees in Rockridge, and remain visible from a long stretch of College Avenue. The developers of the proposed housing project plan to cut down these trees and many others. Another possible loss to the "there" we have and cherish here in Rockridge. ■

RCPC & NCPC Want You to Organize Your Block for National Night Out

by Casey Farmer, Chair, Rockridge Community Planning Council

National Night Out (NNO) is the annual reminder to neighbors here in Oakland and across the country to host block parties on the evening of **Tuesday, August 2nd**. It's always held on the first Tuesday in August, from 6-8pm; however, individual blocks can pick any day that works for their neighborhood.

The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) and the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) have teamed up to encourage more Rockridgers to host NNO block parties for the purposes of community building and enhancing public safety.

Why Host a Party?

- Get acquainted or reacquainted with your neighbors, even for just an hour or two.
- Strengthen our entire neighborhood's resilience. Building trust with those in close proximity and having each other's contact information really helps in an emergency.
- Use this as an opportunity to give a warm welcome to any new neighbors on the block.
- Provide activities for kids by inviting librarians to hold a mini story time, or invite first responders to swing by. City of Oakland staff, Oakland Fire Department, Police Department personnel, and elected officials will be available.
- Get to know your City and County elected officials by inviting Councilmember Dan Kalb or Supervisor Keith Carson to attend your block party.
- Receive your goodie boxes. In addition to treats, all boxes will include flyers for coordinators to pass out to party attendees that contain upcoming event information hosted by RCPC and NCPC — including a mayoral candidate's forum, a town hall on the City's Housing Element/General Plan, NCPC meetings, and information about these two important local community organizations.

Twenty-five parties throughout the neighborhood will be gifted with a free box of tasty treats from a College Avenue merchant to add to your pot-luck spread.

Want to participate? Please email chair@Rockridge.org with the blocks you'll be helping coordinate, and be sure to also register your party with the City's NNO Program online at: oaklandca.gov/topics/national-night-out-2022. **For those who want to receive activities for kids and a gift for hosts, they must register their party by July 22.**

Email Chair@Rockridge.org to receive a small gift of gratitude for building community on your block. ■

BLOCK PARTY ORGANIZING TIPS

- Save the date — share party details now to ensure folks block off the date. Use your neighborhood's listserv or drop off postcards to homes in your target radius.
- Potlucks offer an opportunity to learn something new about your neighbors. From my personal experience as host on Hermann/Ayala Streets, Martha makes a delightful sangria, Joaquin is a remarkable baker, and Robert learned how to make delicious dumplings while living in China after college.
- Name tags are a great tip to learn and remember names.





Mail Carrier Puts Her Stamp on Local Deliveries

eyes on Rockridge

by Judith Doner Berne

Trailing United States Postal Service carrier **Megan Wilson** as she delivered the mail on Lawton Avenue between Clifton and 51st streets brought to mind the theme song from the Cheers television sitcom, "Where Everyone Knows Your Name." In a bit of a turnabout, it's Wilson who knows everyone's name, plus the names of their pets, on the approximately 15 miles of streets she covers each day. And many know her name as well.

"I try and remember people's names," said Wilson, a five-year carrier who started on her lower Rockridge route in January 2021. "If you plan on staying on a route, it makes things better."

Wilson, who has two rescue cats she found on a prior route, feels the same way about her customers' dogs and cats. "I'm a firm believer that you've got to get to know them. I don't want to confront an aggressive animal. If you don't like animals, you shouldn't be a mail carrier."

She announces "Post Office" or "Mail," or knocks loudly as she makes deliveries unless a customer has asked her not to. That happened early on, she said, when the mom of a sleeping baby yelled at her. But the next day, Wilson found a note of apology on the door. "I completely understand," Wilson said. "There are a few houses where I don't do it because they have a kid."

Rockridge resident **Diana Pasquali** and her dog Mia immediately responded to Wilson's mail call. "It's so nice that she lets us know, so packages don't get taken," Pasquali said. "And she always leaves our dog something too."

Wilson has a special relationship with the cats and dogs along her route. She often leaves them something special atop the mailbox, "so every member of the house gets some mail. They're my customers too." Around Easter, she planted plastic eggs filled with candies along her route where kids (and adults) might discover them.

Her mail cart is adorned with a small Ukrainian flag and an air horn that she deploys in protest when she sees someone speeding along Rockridge streets or blowing through a stop sign. "We aren't allowed to display anything political because it violates the Hatch Act." (Its main provision prohibits civil service employees in the executive branch of the federal government, except the President and Vice President, from engaging in some forms of political activity.)

As the cart started to roll down the sidewalk while Wilson was on someone's doorstep, she acknowledged that it wasn't in the best shape. It needs parts that she hasn't been able to find, she said, although a man on Avon Street re-aligned her front wheels.

"She harkens back to a different era," he said, asking not to be identified by name. "There is no milkman, and the rollover of postal workers is endless." But Wilson, he said, "is super friendly and congenial and many of the people know her on the route. She gives something special to the animals, as opposed to bear spray."

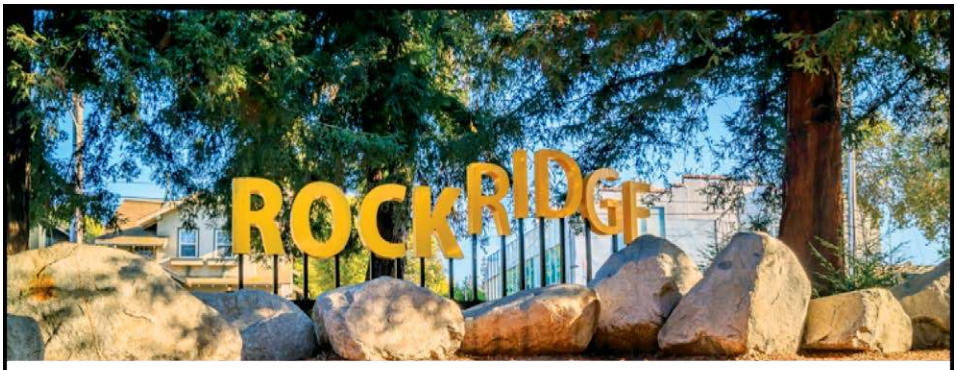
Wilson created an email address that is headed "mailladymegan" and a special phone number for her customers that differs from her cell number. "It costs $20 a month. I give it to them freely," she said. "The customers really appreciate it."

It certainly was useful to Lawton resident **Jerry Sontag**. "We had a registered piece of mail that we weren't at home to sign for," he said. But Wilson left a personal note with her cell phone number, so he could let her know when they would be at home. "She hand-delivered it."

"She's friendly and concerned about her work," said Avon Street resident **Jimmy Pedersen**. After selling his house and moving into an apartment down the block, his mail hasn't always followed. But Wilson has tried to alleviate that. "I depend on her," Pedersen said.

"We first met Megan thanks to our fur babies, Milo (kitty) and Gladys (doggy)," said Boyd Avenue residents **JoEllen Depakakibo** and **Robin Quinn**. "She is like a Disney character where animals turn their heads and start following her. Milo jumps out of hiding to follow her on her route.

Mail Carrier, see next page



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"I'm very people and animal-oriented," said Postal Service carrier Megan Wilson.

Photo/Judy Berne

Mail Carrier, from previous page

"Her kindness is magnetic to all beings," Quinn and Depakakibo said. "We hear stories directly from neighbors who received well wishes cards from her during their struggles. You can truly see Megan's passion and dedication to what she does. She goes above and beyond in her role as a Postal Service worker, genuinely connecting with people on an individual level. She is an inspiration and it brings our family joy when we see her around the neighborhood."

Nancy Sale also was impressed when Wilson posted her contact numbers on the Nextdoor list serve. "Every once in a while, we get a really good mail carrier," said Sale, who has lived on Lawton since 1978. "She acts like she's part of the neighborhood. A.J., my dog, loves her too." But Sale is worried about losing Wilson, as other easier routes become available. "Every single mail carrier has said the same thing about this route — it's too large."

Wilson is still distressed by a shoot-out she could hear but didn't witness while delivering mail in another neighborhood. "I'm so thankful I have this route. The people have been fantastic." Her fiancé, whom she met online, subsequently became a mail carrier too. "But I don't think he loves his job as much as I do. I do think I'm a bit of a 'one of a kind.'"

To comment on this column or suggest future topics, please email judyberne@att.net. ■

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Land Use Chair, from front page

In 2005, Flashman helped form an alliance of neighborhood groups from Oakland and Berkeley, including RCPC, the North Hills Phoenix Coalition, the Parkwoods Community Association, and the East Bay Bicycle Coalition as the Fourth Bore Coalition in opposition to the Caldecott Tunnel 4th Bore Project when Caltrans refused to address impacts along the Hwy 24 corridor.

Flashman, with Rockridge resident Antonio Rossman as co-counsel, sued Caltrans, arguing that Caltrans had violated the California Environment Quality Act (CEQA) by not offering adequate measures to mitigate the environmental impacts of the project, and had failed to offer any boost for transportation options along the corridor such as public transit and riding bicycles to and from BART.

The suit settled in 2009, with RCPC receiving $3 million to mitigate impacts on Rockridge schools — Chabot Elementary and Claremont Middle School. Both schools used the money for advanced indoor air quality and sound mitigation, and Claremont revamped its playing field to include advanced groundwater handling.

Along with community leaders from Oakland and Berkeley, Flashman led successful negotiations with Safeway (now an Albertson subsidiary) over redevelopment of its College Avenue store to address the project's community impact. The settlement for the College Avenue store (mediated by former District 1 Councilwoman Jane Brunner) produced the current highly successful store design, including placing Safeway on the ground floor with a College Avenue entry and establishing the plaza seating area. The new design also included space for the small shops at College and Claremont.

While Safeway agreed to provide $400,000 to address community impacts, RCPC is still trying to access those funds in the face of Safeway/Albertson's opposition.

He was instrumental in negotiating agreements for the mixed-use of the Logan/Whole Foods project that reduced shadowing and parking impacts, and included 15 percent affordable units.

Flashman helped defend College Avenue retail zoning, and, under his leadership, RCPC insisted on reserving new 4-story construction on the avenue for projects that included permanently affordable housing; agreed to allow conversion of part of the former Lucky Store to Pharmaca; helped convince the City to allow Cole Hardware to open; and prevented ground floor office space use in the Dreyer's building where Crossroads clothing store is now.

Over the last three years, the LUC has focused on preparing a Rockridge Housing Study to inform a community discussion on housing policy. While the study is nearly complete, with the change in board and committee leadership there could be a change of course.

Prior to passing the California Bar in 1990, Flashman had a career as a scientist, holding a Ph.D. in Biochemistry & Molecular Biology. He was an Assistant Professor of Genetics at North Carolina State University, in Raleigh. In California, he was an instructor at U.C Berkeley Extension, and Consultant in Biotechnology.

Before moving to Rockridge, Flashman served as a Planning Commissioner and City Councilman in Emeryville. He was also elected to the Board of East Bay MUD, representing Ward 3. He was founder and co-chair of the Emeryville Shoreline Committee, and has served on the boards of the Association of California Water Agencies and Citizens for the Eastshore State Park, as well as the Executive and Legal Committees of the Sierra Club, SF Bay Chapter.

Ken Rich: Incoming Chair

Rich has spent 20 years in real estate development and city planning, steering complex projects and plans through San Francisco's extremely challenging approval process. He served as Director of Development for SF Mayors Ed Lee and London Breed, from 2010 to 2020, where he led the real estate team within the Mayor's Office of Economic

Land Use Chair, see next page

Land Use Chair, from previous page

and Workforce Development.

Projects approved under Rich's direction focused on low- and middle-income housing, waterfront revitalization, workforce development, and the arts. In total, these projects encompassed more than 20,000 new residential units, 6 million square feet of commercial space, and 40 acres of new open space for the City.

Before working as Director of Development, Rich worked for more than 10 years on land use planning at the San Francisco Planning Department, where among other projects, he led the City's initiative to adopt the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan that rezoned a large portion of southeastern San Francisco in order to encourage more housing while protecting industrial businesses.

In 2020, Rich began his consulting practice, Kenneth J. Rich Consulting, (kjr-consulting.com) dedicated to significant development projects and policy. Clients have included: the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market; City of Oakland; City of Berkeley; Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART); Kaiser Permanente; and the Union Square Alliance. Currently, Rich is consulting with BART on the North Berkeley and Ashby station developments (as a result of his consulting relationship, he will recuse himself from any votes regarding the Rockridge station), as well as the Oakland A's Waterfront Ballpark District and Howard Terminal projects.

After an earlier stint living in Rockridge from 1995 to 2002, Rich returned in 2019 to Manila Avenue and to a neighborhood that embodies so many attributes of the kind of places he has dedicated his career to creating.

Outside of work, Rich enjoys mid-century furniture and industrial design, early 20th-century art, classic science fiction, foodie-oriented travel, and, of course, exploring new cities and neighborhoods. ■

RCPC By-Laws Governing the Land Use Committee

Land Use Committee meetings are open to the public, and Rockridge residents are encouraged to attend LUC meetings to learn about land-use policy. You do not need to be a member to attend and comment.

According to the RCPC By-Laws, the committe functions include:

1. To review and analyze zoning applications and current development proposals affecting properties within (or, in the case of major development projects, close to) the membership boundaries of the corporation;

2. To review pending or projected changes in zoning, or in the Oakland General Plan, which might affect the community and residents of Rockridge;

3. To report its findings and recommendations on the above matters, including proposed positions, correspondence, public statements and actions, to the Board of Directors, in order that the Board may determine the organization's strategy and take action.

Ken Rich: New Chair of the Land Use Committee

I have big shoes to fill in taking on the leadership of the RCPC Land Use Committee from Stu Flashman. I intend to continue Stu's good work chairing the committee — my emphasis will be on making it a place for interested community members to discuss, debate and learn about land use and city planning issues affecting our neighborhood and the City as a whole. These discussions will help inform the positions that the RCPC Board takes on key policy questions.

It looks to me that the coming years may be more active ones for Rockridge from the perspective of new development in our community. While I think we will see comparatively little development activity along Rockridge's beautiful residential streets, there looks to be more happening with some of the larger pieces of land in our neighborhood.

From the JCC proposal at the Dreyer's site, to the proposed residential development at the CCA site, the recent Home Depot proposal at Broadway and Pleasant Valley, and BART starting to turn its attention to potential development at Rockridge Station, we will have a lot to talk about and process.

How shall we respond to these opportunities as a community? Should we be working on some sort of "plan" for development of these and possibly other sites? Where do we stand on the age-old debate around "affordable" versus "market-rate" housing? We will be grappling with these and other questions at the Land Use Committee.

The Land Use Committee meets on the 4th Wednesday of every month at 7:30, on Zoom for now. Please check rockridge.org for Zoom link and meeting agendas. ■





Home Sharing, from front page

their homes — with the added benefits of social contact, extra income, and feeling they were contributing to their community. Lindenbaum and Rubinson began formulating a plan to create a similar program here in Oakland and launched Homesharing — a program to connect room owners and room seekers.

Could home sharing alleviate the housing crisis in Oakland? Recent studies indicate the answer is "yes." Demographic changes to households (kids going off to school, deceased spouses) have resulted in approximately 50,000 unused rooms in private residences, many occupied by seniors, and some of these rooms would meet the needs of the educators and other civil servants struggling to find a place to live. Roomily incorporated in 2019 to build that bridge.



Jill Lindenbaum (left) with Elyse Dukatz (right), a retired OUSD teacher who was able to find a current OUSD teacher as a housemate through Roomily.

Roomily "creates a framework which allows the opportunity to address all important factors" in a potential match. Setting expectations is critical. To create harmonious matches, spelling out what both parties expect of each other "requires maturity and honesty, with 99 percent of the work done on the front end," according to Lindenbaum.

Roomily focuses primarily on placing educators, college students, and community workers because these constituencies benefit most from membership in the community and the below-market rent the service offers through the placement process. Roomily assists with rent negotiation, as well as possible barter arrangements where the renter commits to supporting the homeowner with regular tasks. Assessments, training, and background checks are used to make all parties comfortable with the potential match.

Home Sharing, see next page

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Home Sharing, from previous page

Lindenbaum and Rubinson created a pilot with the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) to assist in hiring educators. Quick responses from the community allowed the organization to make 14 matches, which allowed for an equal number of positions to be filled in the OUSD.

platform Silvernest to handle both the data and the process for connecting space owners and space seekers. They want to "understand how people could use an online platform to help themselves."

Victoria Hurd used Roomily to connect with her current lodger. When her husband died, she realized she was "better off not living alone"

To create harmonious matches, spelling out what both parties expect of each other requires maturity and honesty.

In 2020, Roomily received a two-year grant from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative — just in time for the pandemic lockdown. They used the time to refine their program design and make changes to respond to those unexpected conditions. As restrictions lifted, they were ready to continue their outreach and education.

Housing advocacy is new for Lindenbaum. Her background is in PR, marketing, and writing, having worked for Google and other tech firms. She has worked with the Piedmont Racial Equity Campaign and the East Bay Housing Organization. She collaborates with researcher and author **Annamarie Pluhar** to identify the needs of seniors and barriers to home sharing.

Lindenbaum is partnering with the

in her two-bedroom condo. Roomily provided candidates for the available room and supported her as she screened the candidates and made arrangements with the person she chose. The resulting two-plus year arrangement has been "very successful." Victoria is pleased to be "helping with the problem of real estate" in the Bay Area. "This idea needs to be promoted and used," she says.

Roomily has long-term plans for the process, according to Lindenbaum. "Our goal is to see if Silvernest and related services are scalable." The website and training video "Sharing Housing 101" provide extensive information on the needs and opportunities, as well as details on the match process.

Roomily serves Alameda and Santa Clara counties (more home providers are available in San Jose than in Oakland). Roomily will be hosting online events to continue to meet the needs for housing in the community.

More information can be found at https://www.goroomily.com/. ■



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Belly Opens Second Location in Rockridge

by Anna L. Marks

A "laid back café" offering a fusion of Asian and Mexican fare has moved into the space vacated by The Hideaway at 5634 College Avenue. This is the second location owner **Alice Woo** has opened in Oakland — her original location in Uptown was established in 2014.

The venue offers an array of salads, specialty burritos, and inspired tacos including a Pork Belly Burrito ($17; $6.50 for the taco) and Steak and Egg Taco ($6.75) that comes with marinated steak and fries topped with a fried egg, chipotle aioli, and garlic aioli. All burritos can be ordered as a bowl which comes with multigrain rice and other tasty options.



Photo/Clara Rice Photography

Belly's Steak and Egg Taco (also served in a bowl) comes with marinated steak and fries topped with a fried egg, chipotle aioli, and garlic aioli.

"Alan my husband created the entire menu from what he believes are great combinations of flavors. He grew up in San Diego and loves tacos and burritos. A crowd favorite, and also one of mine, is the Shrimp + Avocado Taco. It's crunchy tempura shrimp with the freshness of pico, a little tang from the lime cilantro crema, and comes with a sesame slaw — a refreshing and light taco," said Woo.

"We love serving good food made from scratch — we are excited to bring something new to the neighborhood. We love this area and the community with the abundance of amazing shops and we wanted to be a part of it. Come on in for a delicious meal with good vibes."

During this "soft opening," the restaurant is open for breakfast and lunch, Wednesday through Monday, from 11am to 3pm (closed Tuesdays). ■

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