THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

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Sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) • 4900 Shattuck Ave., PO Box 22504, Oakland 94609

Development Proposal at 5295 College Avenue

by Casey Farmer, RCPC Chair

Many in our community are talking about the proposed development project at 5295 College Avenue. The developer, Allen Construction, proposes a 15-story building, with 88 apartments, 18 of which would be affordable units, and ~43,000 square feet of commercial offices and ground floor retail space (for more information and details, visit the developer's website at 5295collegeavenue.com).

Understandably, this project is generating considerable controversy, both opposition and support. The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) strongly supports more housing development in Rockridge, both affordable and market rate, but we also recognize that this proposal is

5295 College Ave, see next page

RCPC/NCPC Joint Town Hall

Thursday, October 10, 7pm
Rockridge Library
Upstairs Conference Room

Join the Rockridge Community Planning Council and the Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council at a meeting regarding Measure NN, a public safety funding bill, which is on the ballot in November (replacing Measure Z).

This joint meeting will discuss the issues around renewing the police, fire, and violence prevention funding provided by Measure Z, which expires at the end of 2024.

A Zoom link is available to those who wish to attend remotely. For more details, visit www.rockridgencpc.com

The Greater Rockridge NCPC meets every 2nd Thursday of the even-numbered months.



Photo: Oakland Fire Department


Photo: Francisca Darling

A three-alarm fire broke out at East Bay Booksellers in the early morning of July 30th. Pictured above is the fire as seen from around the corner on Clifton Street.

(See story on page 3)

2024 Rockridge Kitchen Tour: See Great Kitchens as an Attendee or Docent

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

by Star Lightner, RCPC Kitchen Tour Chair

Once upon a time, most kitchens in Rockridge probably had Wedgewood stoves and birdcage refrigerators. In the oldest houses, the original stove was most likely wood-burning and, without refrigeration available, perishable food was stored in a "cooler," which consisted of a screened cabinet open to the outdoors on the north side of the house.

These days, kitchen remodels are more likely tackling 1980s or '90s-era remodels by replacing dated oak cabinets, linoleum floors, grout-heavy tile countertops, and inefficient layouts. Contemporary remodels often seek to enhance flow, increase natural light, and create seating in what has become the most popular gathering place in many homes. Other common goals include energy efficiency and sustainability. And, of course, "granny units" have evolved tremendously.


Photo: Ramona d'Viola Photography

Kitchen designed by Amato Architecture

Eight kitchens and two ADUs will be featured on this year's Kitchen Tour.

Kitchen Tour, see next page

2024 Rockridge Kitchen Tour: October 13

2024 Rockridge Kitchen Tour Tickets are Available Online Now thru Sunday, October 6.
Cost: $50 (plus service charge)

Tickets will also be for sale at Market Hall on the day of the tour.
Cost: $55 (plus service charge)

To purchase advance tickets online, go to: RockridgeKitchenTour.com or scan the QR Code –>

New this year: Purchase an extra ticket as a donation towards lower cost tickets for those unable to afford the full cost.

Kitchen Tour, from front page

The eight kitchens and two ADUs on the 2024 Rockridge Kitchen Tour are very diverse — ranging from an extremely functional classic Craftsman remodel to a wildly whimsical reimagining of an entire kitchen and dining area.

Other kitchens include a sleek European pallet; two with the unusual decision not to have an island; one that lovingly preserved and drew inspiration from an original 1906 pantry; and one kitchen on its third remodel by the same owners. Another home has a remodeled kitchen inside and a bonus outdoor kitchen complete with a fully outfitted bar in a converted workshop.

The ADUs offer very different visions of how to get as much as possible out of small spaces while maintaining spaciousness and charm.

Not sure you'll remember the many amazing ideas after taking the tour? Don't worry, Kitchen Tour guests will receive a copy of the comprehensive Tour Brochure describing each kitchen and listing resources for those contemplating a remodel of their kitchen. Docents with extensive knowledge of the remodels will also be on hand to answer questions about each owner's goals and challenges. No matter what you have in mind for your own kitchen, you'll find design and construction professionals who can make it happen for you.

Urgent Call for Docents

Lastly, the RCPC Kitchen Tour committee still needs MANY more volunteer docents for the **Sunday, October 13th Kitchen Tour**. As a docent, you get to tour several of the houses during orientation ahead of the event, and, on event day, you'll get free entry to the other houses on the tour when you're not on your scheduled shift. It's a great way to meet new friends and help your community at the same time. To volunteer, please email kitchentour@rockridge.org. Thank you, because the Kitchen Tour can't happen without docents. ■

5295 College Ave, from front page

unusually tall and dense for its location.

The RCPC has not taken a position on the project and believes that it is too early to do so for a number of reasons: 1) We're not sure that the developer has correctly interpreted and applied several new state law provisions that they represent as permitting the project's size and allowing for expedited approvals; 2) We're not sure if the project is financially feasible and could in reality be constructed now, or in the future; 3) We believe it is necessary to solicit input from our community before taking any position.

On behalf of the neighborhood, we emailed the City to ask about its position on the project, but have yet to hear back. RCPC will continue to follow the project and communicate with the City, the developer, and, of course, Rockridge residents.

(For analysis and impact of the new State housing laws, see page 4)

The Rockridge News

The Rockridge News was founded in March 1986 by **Don Kinkead** and is published monthly (except August). It's 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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Anna L. Marks ..... Editor & Layout Artist
Jo Ellis..... Assistant Editor & Ad Manager
Susan Montauk .....Business & Distribution Manager
Judith Doner Berne ..... Senior Contributing Writer

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Want to write a Letter to the Editor? Letters are limited to 450 words and are published at the editor's discretion. Send letters to: editor@rockridge.org. Please include your name, email, and street of residence. **Deadline is the 11th of each month for the upcoming newsletter.**

All submissions accepted for publication are subject to editing for clarity and brevity. *The Rockridge News* reserves the right to refuse any articles, letters, or advertisements.

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

Display Ad Deadline for OCTOBER 2024: SEPTEMBER 19, 2024

Advertising rates are $28/column inch ($32 for color). Six-month pre-pay discounts available. For display ads, call Jo Ellis at 510-653-3210 (**after noon**), or email joellis1@hotmail.com.

Classifieds: Email Susan at smontauk@gmail.com.

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.*

East Bay Booksellers Consumed by Fire

by Annette Floystrup

On July 30, our neighborhood woke up to the devastating news that a true neighborhood treasure, East Bay Booksellers, had burned in a three-alarm fire. Sixty firefighters, almost half those on duty citywide, fought to keep the fire from spreading to the adjacent buildings. While the façade bravely stands, the business and the building itself are a total loss.

A GoFundMe has passed its initial goal of $200,000, and fundraising continues toward future expenses as they recover. Owner **Brad Johnson** says, "To say we've been encouraged by the outpouring of support would be a huge understatement." He posts frequent updates on the store website *(see boxed item on right)* and Instagram account.

George & Walt's lost electricity as the fire was being fought, but reopened that afternoon. On the day of the fire, Vero for Hair hosted the staff and clients of Elizabeth H/the Art of Hair Design, which suffered smoke and water damage. They are now up and running by appointment. The Chocolate Dragon Bittersweet Café is open and escaped damage, as did upstairs apartments on their half of the building. Some residents are still displaced from the apartments closest to the fire until fire, water, and smoke damage can be repaired, but fortunately, no one was hurt.

For Rockridge neighbors, this building holds many memories. It began life as the Model T Garage, most likely in the late 1910s. When the building was renovated in the mid-'80s, workers found the old mechanic's pit still in the floor. From 1945 to 1980, it was College Bowl, an eight-lane bowling alley, owned by **Rosy** (Rosaire) and **Helen Duval**, where generations of Rockridge kids learned to bowl. Helen Duval was the first woman member of the President's Council on Physical Fitness, appointed during the Kennedy administration where she served for five years.

Today, the building is best known as Diesel, A Bookstore, and most currently, East Bay Booksellers. Diesel was opened by **Alison Reid** and **John Evans**, both veteran booksellers at Pendragon/Pegasus in the then-newly built Emery Bay Marketplace in 1989. They moved to Rockridge as Li'l Diesel in June 1994 into what is now Next Eyewear until the bookstore at 5433 College was complete. A human chain passed books hand to hand down the street in order to stock up their shelves.

Alison and John actively participated in fundraising for the Rockridge Library and were instrumental in obtaining many books for the newly opened library while our community waited for City funds to come through. In August 2017, Alison and John sold Diesel to their long-time associate, Brad Johnson and East Bay Booksellers was born. East Bay Booksellers is currently doing business online, and sponsoring readings at Gilman Brewing Company. ■



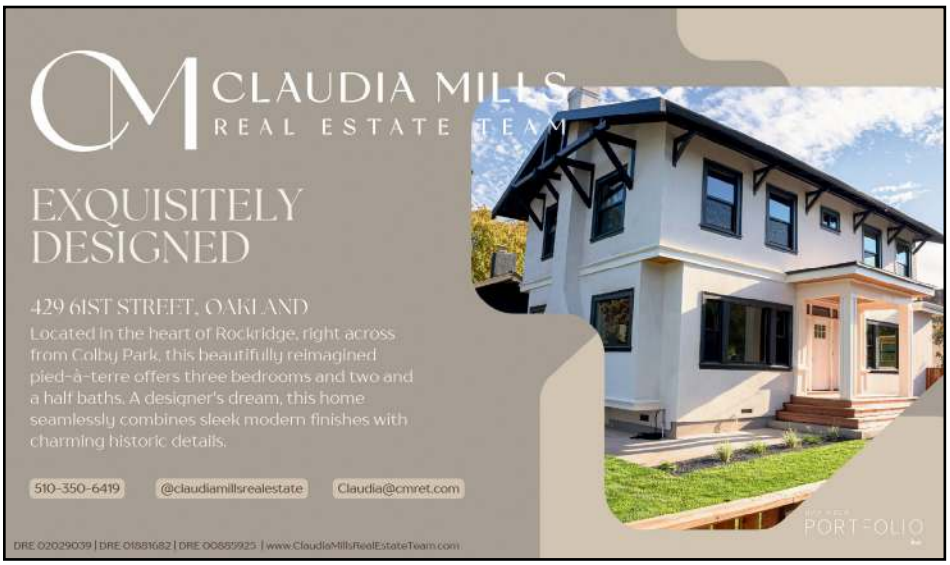
Photo by Francisca Darling, Market Hall HR Manager

Oakland firefighters work to extinquish flames at East Bay Booksellers, at 5433 College Avenue.

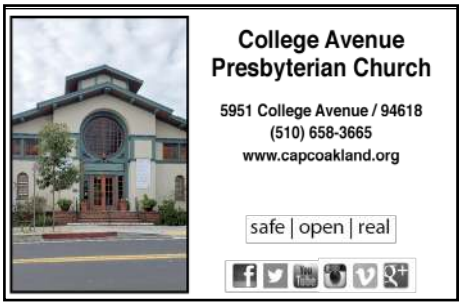
Community Rallies In Support

It took about one week for the Rockridge community to setup a GoFundMe page that has raised more than $200k to date (https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-east-bay-booksellers-come-back).

The owners are extremely grateful and want folks to know that they are still open for business. Visit them at https://www.ebbooksellers.com.







RCPC Land Use Committee

How New State Housing Laws Could Reshape Rockridge's Future

by Tom Lollini, FAIA, RCPC Land Use Committee Chair

The California legislature has passed scores of new laws since 2017 with the intent of addressing the state's housing crisis by accelerating development through a combination of shortening approval timelines by reducing discretionary review; creating density incentives to spur development of affordable housing; reducing parking requirements in urban areas; and entitling builders to seek waivers when jurisdictions are not meeting their obligations to generate sufficient housing as determined by the State.

The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) lays out key housing challenges for the state that these laws intend to address. Since 2019, under SB 35, local governments must have streamlined options for approving housing projects that include affordable units.

Governor Newsom signed 56 new housing-related laws, including SB 423 which extends and expands upon SB 35's approach until 2036. Another bill, AB 1287, provides incentives for moderate income housing as well. Eligible projects must comply with "objective planning and design standards" and meet other requirements detailed in Government Code section 65913.4. The amount of affordable housing required is dependent on a city's progress toward meeting HCD housing production targets for various levels of affordability. Because Oakland, like nearly every other jurisdiction, has not met these targets, proposed projects may make use of these incentives that consist of two key elements:

1) Ministerial Approvals: The primary tool for streamlining is to remove all discretionary review for projects that meet the eligibility criteria. City Council and Planning Commission hearings are eliminated, and design review beyond checking compliance with objective standards are not required. Eligible projects are also not required to demonstrate compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which has been a primary lever for stopping projects over the past 30 years. Public notice and public input are essentially removed from the process.

2) Density Bonuses: Concurrent with streamlining legislation, the State Density Bonus (SDB) program, established in the California Government Code in the 1970s, has been amended multiple times to facilitate housing production. The SDB allows a 50-100 percent increase in the number of units depending on the amount of affordable housing provided, with waivers of zoning constraints such as height limits and setbacks. They also allow for the inclusion of mixed uses such as retail, offices or hotels, as long as it can be demonstrated as necessary to achieve the affordability goals of the project. The SDB program can enable projects to achieve zoning compliance through waivers of certain land use constraints or physical requirements such as height limits or setbacks, and become eligible for accelerated, ministerial approvals.

Additional laws target parking and CEQA, two of the biggest hurdles in housing production.

Parking: Additional laws reduced parking requirements to zero for housing within a half mile of a major transportation facility (e.g., BART) and 0.5 spaces/unit in other locations, while AB 1317 requires unbundling parking costs from rent to make housing more affordable for some.

CEQA Review: Should discretionary review be required to comply with CEQA, other State laws limit the City to a maximum of five public meetings or hearings on any project before rendering a decision. AB 1633 exempts 100 percent affordable projects in urban areas from any CEQA review.

Locally, the City of Oakland's 2023-2031 Housing Element and Planning Code Update was accepted by HCD last year, and with adoption

Land Use, see next page



RCPC Land Use Committee

Next Meeting: Wed., September 18, on Zoom

The Rockridge community is encouraged to participate in LUC meetings where elements of the General Plan is a primary topic of conversation.

Meetings are held at 7:30pm on the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

To participate, or to request links to this or any previous meeting, email landuse@rockridge.org.

Land Use, from previous page

of its Objective Design Standards anticipated this fall, Oakland will be compliant with HCD regulatory requirements. These documents increase allowable heights along College and portions of Claremont Avenues to 55 feet, 95 to 100 feet near the BART Station, 65 feet along parts of Broadway, and from 35 to 40 feet for residential lots within the neighborhood. The City's S-13 Housing Overlay Zone provides local height and density incentives for affordable housing along commercial streets.



Courtesy John Allen Construction/ JDRV Architects

A pre-application for a 15-story, 170-foot-tall, 256,000 square-foot housing project at 5295 College Avenue has been submitted to the City of Oakland.

How Might These Regulations Impact Rockridge?

Given the limited number of large, marginally used sites available for development along primary corridors like College, Claremont and Broadway, the most significant new housing might come from developments at either end of College, along Broadway, around the DMV site on Claremont, and possibly near BART where allowable heights are greater. Other possibilities include incremental development of smaller lots along College with buildings up to five stories, and possibly seven to nine, or higher if State density bonuses laws are used.

Within single-family areas where examples of higher density housing date back decades, accessory dwelling units will likely increase, while lots 4,000 square feet or more might be transformed to four or five-unit buildings three to four stories tall, based on added incentives like no off-street parking requirements, smaller setbacks, and increased allowable height. The current high cost of single-family homes makes this option financially unlikely in most cases.

Is The Proposal for 5295 College Ave. A Beta Test or a Viable Proposal?

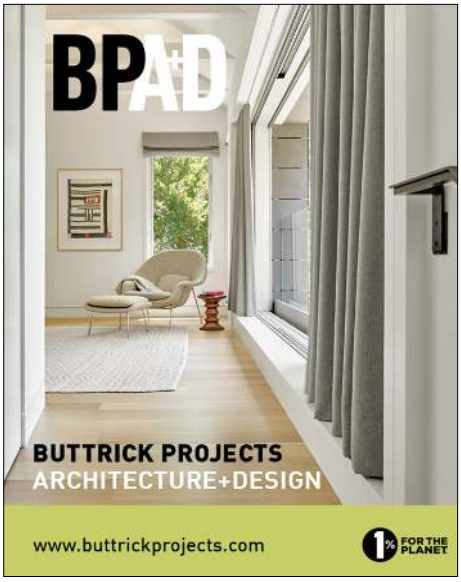
In mid-June, the owners of 5295 College Avenue submitted a pre-application checklist to the City of Oakland seeking to redevelop this multi-building site into a mixed-use project comprised of 88 units of housing, including 18 low- and moderate-income units; a 72-room hotel; office and retail uses, 110 parking spaces and bike parking; plus, private and semi-public open space. The initial images on the developer's website show a 15-story, 170-foot-tall, 256,000 square-foot project. See the developer's website for this project here: https://5295collegeavenue.com/.

The project claims to qualify for as-of-right ministerial approvals under SB 35 and SB 423, plus multiple State housing density bonuses and waives multiple zoning requirements and objective design standards. Based on several methods of analysis, the project appears to make some assumptions that are neither legally, physically nor financially feasible. Inquiries have been made to the City of Oakland Planning Department to ascertain the applications status and the City's evaluation of the applicant's assertions. RCPC will provide updates as this project evolves.

Building an Inclusive Vision of Rockridge's Future.

In recognition of how the unfolding development context will bring significant change to our neighborhood, including strengthening neighborhood diversity and College Avenue's identity as the heart of our community, RCPC also wants to ensure we are thinking forward to improve mobility, public safety, access to open space and other qualitative enhancements that support our existing residents and anticipated increases in population. Please join us in our Community Vision efforts by volunteering to bring your thoughts, dreams, and skills to the table. You can sign up online at bitly/VisionRockridge. ■





Letters to the Editor

Housing or Highrise?

Dear Editor: I was pleased to learn that the owner of the large parcel of land on 5295 College Avenue is planning to build new housing there, including 70 market rate, 18 affordable units, and a hotel *(see artist rendering on right)*. But why 15 stories? This massive structure would be surrounded by a neighborhood of single-family homes and small apartments on both sides of College. It's one thing to support the YIMBY cause (Yes in My Back Yard) because Oakland does need much more housing, but how would you feel if a 15-story building appeared across your backyard and those of your neighbors?



It doesn't have to be a question of either no housing or a highrise. Something in between, that doesn't overwhelm neighbors, that is human scale, that enhances the sense of community, would be welcomed. It is also shocking to me that the City is no longer required to give any public notice of such a proposal.

We heard about it from a newsletter distributed by Upper Broadway Advocates. If you want to be informed, apparently the only way is to sign up for newsletters at ubaoakland.org/take-action. Their last newsletter outlined seven violations of existing Oakland codes, including a 170-foot building in a 55-foot zone. You can also visit the developer's website at 5295collegeavenue.com. Is there no way the developer could be persuaded to modify this proposal?

Abigail Pollak & Helen Brainerd
Rockridge Blvd. ■

A Coyote Killed My Cat

Dear Editor: My cat, Tobywan-Kenobi, liked to sleep in our front yard. It looked like, late one night while he was sleeping, a coyote grabbed him by the throat until dead, ate his entrails, and walked off with everything below the rib cage.

We live on Hermann Street in lower Rockridge, west of Claremont, and have never seen a coyote in 32 years, but now we hear that they're everywhere. Caution: very small dogs are also vulnerable… even on a leash.

We miss Tobywan very much, he was beloved by the whole neighborhood.

Aparna Ewing
Hermann Street ■

Support for High Density

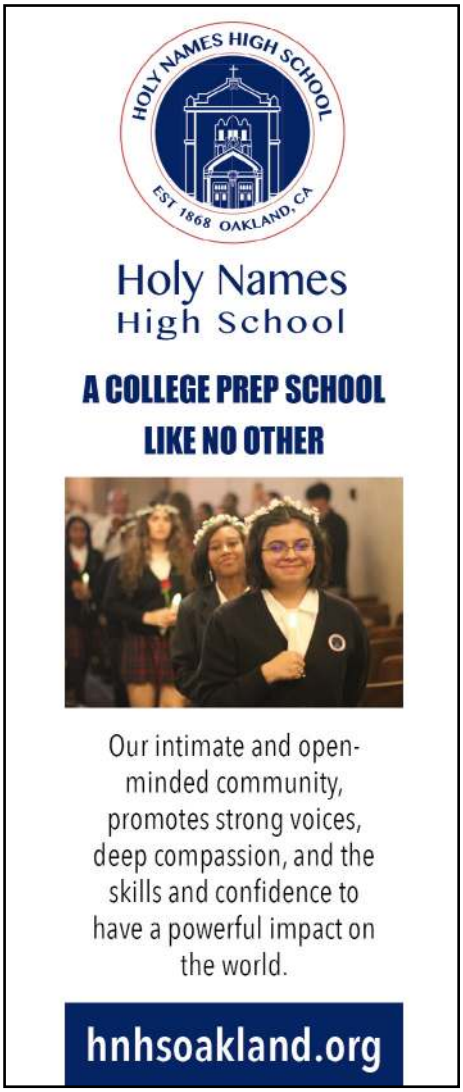
Dear Editor: Happy National Night Out! I enjoyed hanging out with my Rockridge neighbors and, as we do each year, pledging to get together more often. I was a little disappointed to hear people asking neighbors to oppose, prior to any discussion, the proposed Rockridge Tower development for 5295 College.

I think that's a great spot for higher density housing and I'm inclined to support it. We all talked about how much we love our local small businesses and restaurants, but we can't keep them afloat on our own. Bringing in new residents and possibly hotel guests to enjoy College Avenue sounds like an excellent idea to me.

Emily Cronbach
Manila Avenue ■

Letters, see next page





Letters, cont'd

New Project A Nightmare

Dear Editor: I have been a resident of Rockridge for over 41 years. I love rolling around in my wheelchair through this quaint, friendly neighborhood, admiring the landscape and the well-kept houses and yards. I'm appalled that developers would even propose building a highrise in this neighborhood. It would be a monstrosity, and a traffic and parking nightmare. I hope the idea is permanently shelved.

Denise Sherer Jacobson
Clifton Avenue ■

Housing, Yes; Highrises, No

Dear Editor: The plan to build 15 stories of housing and a hotel at 5295 College Avenue reprises a familiar struggle. Upper Broadway Advocates (UBA) has been a consistent proponent of new housing in Rockridge and a consistent opponent of highrises. We like to quote Brian Hanlon, the President of California Yimby, in a 2018 interview with *KPBS* in San Diego, who said, "But if you look at what we're really asking for, we're not saying we want skyscrapers everywhere. That is not the agenda at all. We're saying we want the cities to build these more traditional forms again, these sort of two-to five-story buildings that are human scale, that are more naturally affordable to build than these glass and steel skyscrapers."



According to Jake Allen, son of the property owner, five buildings will be removed at 5295 College Avenue. Most of them have been rebuilt or redone within the last 50 years, and, as such, are structures of "little or no importance."

At the CCA site at College and Broadway, we advocated for 7-8 stories instead of 19, and for 20 percent affordable units instead of the 10 percent offered by the developer. We strongly supported the conversion of the former CCA dormitory into housing for the homeless, and for housing at the Safeway site at Pleasant Valley.

The most recent housing/hotel proposal for 5295 College Avenue includes 70 market-rate apartments and only 18 below-market units in a 15-story skyscraper. There is a possibility that this could be approved despite the gross violation of Oakland's zoning and land-use codes. State Law 423 passed in 2023 allows exemptions and incentives to build highrises, over-riding some local laws, due to a certain percentage of the units designated as "affordable."

Let's advocate for a building that is human scale, respects the surrounding neighborhood, and provides more badly needed affordable units in Rockridge. On a larger scale, let's ask our representatives to amend SB 423 to recognize the advantages of moderate-scale buildings in developed neighborhoods to incentivize their construction.

Join UBA in this effort. Sign up at UbaOakland.org/take-action.

UBA Steering Committee:
Janis Brewer, Steve Cook, Leslie Correll, Joe Johnston, Nicole Lazzaro, Jennifer McElrath, Kirk Peterson, Myrna Walton.

Janis Brewer
Coronado ■

Letters, see next page



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Letters, cont'd

5295 College: Why No Setbacks?

Dear Editor: Setback Requirements: The 170 ft. high wall adjacent to the residential zone does not conform to Oakland's Planning Code Section 17.33.04, Table 17.33.04, where it states that "Buildings in the CN-zones shall have a thirty (30) foot maximum height at the setback line associated with any rear of interior side lot line that abuts an RH, RD, or RM-zone; if the principal building on the abutting lot has a height of 30 feet or less, this maximum height shall increase one foot for every foot of distance away from this setback line…" The adjacent residences are one and two stories, so this section applies.

Recent residential construction nearby on Broadway of the six-story Merrill Gardens and Baxter Apartments adjacent to residential zones are examples of buildings that meet these setback requirements. At 5295 College Avenue, rear and south interior lot lines abut the RM-zone, and setback walls over 30 feet high are required to set back at a 45-degree angle. The residences on Manila Avenue in the rear, Clifton Street on the side, and even residences on the other side of College Avenue at Bryant are all dramatically affected. A 170-foot-tall wall would significantly block their sunlight and seriously affect solar panel output. As a result of global warming, California's residential energy conservation requirements (Title 24) are based on all residential designs ultimately meeting Zero Net energy requirements. These are not just insulation standards, but also require windows that let in sunlight, and roofs with solar panels. Allowing the adjacent residences to be significantly shaded is a significant taking. *Thou shalt not steal thy neighbor's sunlight and solar power access.* Additionally, health studies on the effects of sunlight on human physical and mental health clearly support the need to have direct light for a healthy life. Landscape also needs light to survive.

This project also conflicts with California's SB 330 (Gov. Code sec. 65905.5(c)(1)), which states, "Receipt of a density bonus including any [associated] incentives, concessions or waivers ... shall not constitute a valid basis" for finding a project inconsistent with applicable plans and standards. Any waiver or incentive that is not clearly and objectively defined, is subjective and in conflict.

This is one of many building sites here and in Oakland that are available to provide housing. Building in conformity with residential setbacks still allows a very large building for this site. With the new 55-ft. height limit, it would still be the tallest building on College Avenue.

Glen Jarvis
Benvenue Avenue ■

Welcome the Spirit of Progress

Dear Editor: Rockridge should welcome the application for 88 residential units (20 percent affordable), plus retail, office, and hotel space at 5295 College Avenue. This is an opportunity to address historic exclusionary zoning and redlining practices that have limited so many from living and thriving in our wonderful community. It is a chance to add vibrancy and diversity to Rockridge.

Contrary to what a recent "oppose" flyer claimed, the building is going through the proper process to request waivers to local height limits under the State Density Bonus program. There are options to build higher under current law. And height is desperately needed to keep people in our urban core and near environmentally-friendly transit. We can't keep pushing people of lesser means further and further into sprawling suburbs. Forcing them to spend more money and burn more carbon to access the opportunities that Oakland offers is not in the spirit of our progressive, climate-conscious community.

I welcome a taller building in my neighborhood (two blocks from my home) — more homes for people and more opportunities for small businesses — accomplished with less land. And this will not turn Rockridge into Manhattan. There are few other opportunities to build tall buildings among mostly single-family homes. Let's make our neighborhood a place where everyone can thrive. I urge my neighbors to support this project.

Sam Fishman
Coronado Avenue ■

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Letters, cont'd

Highrise is Wrong for Rockridge

Dear Editor: As a Rockridge resident on Hermann Street, I am adamantly against the proposed Rockridge Tower at 5295 College Avenue. In my career, I was a licensed architect, real estate developer, and commercial real estate broker, frequently representing non-chain stores.

This project is the wrong scale, the wrong location, the wrong design, and blatantly and permanently harmful to the neighbors who currently use and support the businesses and live on College Avenue. The length of time, noise, dirt, and traffic disruption for construction for a project of this size will drive every single small business off the entire block where it is to be located, including most of the south end of College.

The new retail space will be far less welcoming and totally unaffordable for the range of businesses along the street. The streetscape will become similar to the projects such as those at Broadway and Pleasant Valley Road. There will be very little pedestrian traffic — no strolling to enjoy the neighborhood because the only tenants who can afford the space will be chains, and they mostly require a denser population. There will be lots of empty storefronts for many years.

If it can't be stopped, we should fight this project as hard as possible and require that it meets every single code and law such as the 55-foot height limit. It is criminal to ruin one of Oakland's most charming neighborhoods for potentially 18 affordable units. Most of the relatively affordable housing units on top of the current retail space will be lost during construction, never to return. And lastly, who are the proposed developers?

Margaret Christoffer
Hermann Street ■

Thank You "History Corner" for Article Regarding Rockridge BART

Dear Editor: I'd like to thank Annette Floystrup for researching, remembering, and writing on the past and future development of BART (see July 2024 *Rockridge News*). It was ironic to learn the initial BART planning and development proposed a high-density/"mini downtown" development within a quarter-mile radius of the Rockridge BART station. How many more classic, architecturally interesting Craftsman homes would have been lost, not to mention Claremont Middle School? How many residents of Rockridge would not be here, as those additional homes would have been lost and unavailable?

Other questions include: Would Market Hall have been developed? Would Trader Joe's, Zachary's Pizza, Ramen Shop, Maison d'Etre, etc. exist today? Would Rockridge have flourished into what it is today or would the commercial vacancies and blight from the 1970s continue today?

Today, the question is whether BART can adequately fund itself for the future and if BART will continue as it did pre-pandemic. With San Francisco office space vacancies nearing 40 percent and remote/teleworkers continuing their work arrangements, how will BART ridership and revenues increase to support BART into the future?

I'm encouraged to read any further development for Rockridge BART has been delayed. The question of BART sustaining itself into the future has challenges. Thus, if BART patronization does not increase rapidly, what sense does it make to pursue Transit Oriented Development (TOD) at Rockridge BART? Not to mention disrupting the support structure to Rockridge BART and Highway 24 in any potential construction process could be catastrophic.

While it is clear Oakland needs affordable housing, it seems evident that TOD is not the most prudent solution to pursue at this time.

Reginald Hammond, III
Rockridge resident ■

Friends of the Rockridge Greenbelt

FROG



Creek to Bay Day at Frog Park

by Alison Drury

In celebration of "Creek-to-Bay Day," we are planning a clean-up of Little and Big Frog Park. This is our chance to be part of the International Coastal Cleanup Day — a global effort to make our planet's waterways healthier. When we clean up debris, not only does our park look better, but it also keeps litter out of Temescal Creek, the Bay, and the Pacific Ocean.

Date/Time:
September 21, 9am to 12pm

Location: Frog Park, meet at the big oak tree by the Big Frog play structure (near Hudson and Claremont) to sign the waiver to participate.

Tasks include weeding, pruning, trash pickup, raking, and sweeping. Families and groups are welcome. Students needing service hours for school can receive a signed letter verifying their participation.

Volunteers should bring a water bottle and gardening gloves; we will have some gardening gloves on hand, so please bring disposable gloves if you'd like to borrow a pair. We will provide tools, but if you have your own, please feel free to bring them.

In addition, we will be applying a non-toxic waterproof sealant to our wooden play structures at Frog Park, so will require some volunteers (ages 13+) to help. The structures will be closed that day to allow for the application and drying of the sealant. FROG will supply latex gloves.

Coffee and snacks will be provided to volunteers. If you are part of a large group interested in participating, RSVP to: info@frogpark.org no later than September 15 so we can get a headcount. See you there! ■

Elevate Your Kitchen: Easy Upgrades with Big Impact

by Samantha Moss

As always, the Rockridge Kitchen Tour on **Sunday, October 13** will be filled with inspiration to reimagine your space. And while a full-scale remodel is not on the menu for most, making a few small but mighty upgrades can help you love where you live.

Kitchen cabinets, for example, don't need to be rebuilt to be reinvented. Replacing dated doors and drawer fronts with new ones in a more streamlined style can help bring your space into the present. If refacing isn't an option, transform cabinets with a paint color you love. Neutral hues are usually best for kitchen cabinets since these are more expensive than walls to repaint. Another of my favorite design shortcuts is to switch out cabinet hardware for a different style or finish. (*Tip:* Stick to the same center-to-center hardware sizes to minimize the need for drilling and filling holes.)

> ***Never underestimate the power of good lighting to elevate your kitchen***

Changing up your wall color is another high-impact way to lift the mood. When you choose your color, factor in the undertones of fixed elements like countertops and backsplash, pairing creamy or wood elements with warmer wall colors, or Carrera marble and gray with cooler wall colors. While popular wisdom once dictated a shinier satin finish on kitchen walls for easier cleanup, today's much-improved paint formulas let you use a more stylish matte or eggshell finish to match the rest of your home. Cole Hardware on College is a wonderful place to buy paint samples.

Never underestimate the power of good lighting to elevate your kitchen. While many kitchens already have modern recessed lighting, you can easily get the same high-quality light (and stay true to the home's Craftsman character, if that's your style) by using simple but beautiful ceiling fixtures instead. In a larger kitchen, use multiple flush or semi-flush fixtures to ensure ample light.

I encourage my clients to install dimmers everywhere, and the kitchen is no exception: Turn them up at mealtimes for cooking and cleanup; turn them lower in the mornings and evenings for a softer glow. Lightbulbs have a surprisingly strong effect too. Replace overly yellow or too-blue bulbs with more balanced ones; 2700k or 3000k bulbs provide a clean yet warm effect.

Perhaps the easiest kitchen upgrade to overlook is decluttering. If the crockpot on the counter hasn't been getting much use, tuck it away to create more usable space. Bring pretty cookware out of hiding and onto a pot rack, and take cookbooks that you don't use or love to a neighbor's little free library. Finally, make the most of the organic elements that you already use every day — a basket of lemons, wooden cutting boards in different sizes, a small herb garden by the window — to create natural beauty and make this space as warm and welcoming as it is functional.

Samantha Moss is an interior designer and color consultant who lives on Manila. Visit her at samanthamosscolor.com or email her at hello@samanthamosscolor.com. ■







Bill and Kathy Garcia Need Your Help

by Susan Montauk, Rockridge News Distribution Manager

Sincere thanks go out to **Bill and Kathy Garcia** for their service to the community over the decades. They have been *Rockridge News* block captains of Rockwell for over two decades and served as docent volunteers for practically every Rockridge Kitchen Tour since its inception in 1995. Kathy and Bill are moving on and would be grateful, as would we, for someone to take over their route.

- **Route 04E: Both sides of 6200 Rockwell to 6400 Mystic, and both sides of 6000 Rockwell**

The bundle of newsletters is delivered to your doorstep on Saturday or Sunday of the first weekend of each month. We ask you to deliver papers that same weekend. It takes only 10 to 15 minutes to do, and it's a great way to know your neighbors better.

To get that good feeling that comes from serving your community please contact Susan at 510/547-3855 or smontauk@gmail.com. ■

Thank You, Dan Kalb

Dan Kalb, District 1 Councilmember for the last 12 years, will not be seeking re-election this November. Running for the open seat is RCPC Board Member and Oakland firefighter **Zac Unger**, along with **Edward C. Frank and Len Raphael**.

Before leaving office, Kalb has announced additional funding for artist murals (up to $10k). Grant applicants may include a District 1 neighborhood organization, community-based organization, business association, or a combination thereof; or an individual artist or pair of artists working with a property owner in North Oakland.

Interested artists and neighborhood groups should send in drawings of their proposed mural to dkalb@oaklandca.gov. ■

Dogs of Rockridge

Ziggy is a 3-year-old rescue Bluhuahua (Blue Heeler/Chihuahua) who lives in Rockridge with his people, Jacob and Annie. He was a street dog in Tijuana until he was about a year old when he was rescued by a Los Angeles-based organization. He spends quality time at his grandparents' house, also in Rockridge, where he is dedicated to squirrel patrol. Whenever he sees his dog friend, Elliot, they get excited and run in circles for an hour straight.





Maggie is a friendly and adventurous three-year-old English Labrador Retriever. She lives on Hillegass, and when she is not hiking in the Berkeley Hills she can be found walking to Peet's Coffee with her humans (George, Susan, and Miss Phoebe, a third-grade teacher at Peralta). Maggie loves making new best friends with every dog and human she meets.

Does your furry friend live in Rockridge? If so, send a photo of your four-legged companion with a short commentary to: editor@rockridge.org.

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Kitchens for The Way We Live

by Rebecca Amato, Amato Architecture

Rockridge is one of Oakland's most exciting neighborhoods, not just for the great amenities and walkability, but for the historic charm of its early 20th-century homes. A great kitchen remodel should preserve the rich character of the home while updating it for the way we live a century later — when the kitchen is the centerpiece of home life.



This kitchen was recently redesigned at a home on Clemens Road.

1900 vs. 2000: The Kitchen Comes Into Focus

Homes in Rockridge were built in the 1900s and 1920s when families hired servants to prepare meals; kitchens were small and often set at the back of the house, sometimes as part of "maid's quarters." Today the kitchen is a gathering place after a long day at work and school; it's a place where people want to socialize with friends.

A kitchen remodel should take into account the many ways the kitchen functions as a center of home and family life. Ideally, your architect will create zones in which different activities can occur while maintaining an open floor plan in which people can gather and interact.

Island Living

In many families, one person does most of the cooking; the other may enjoy sipping a glass of wine at the end of the day and chatting with them. A kitchen island allows family and guests to be in conversation with the chef while staying out of "the cooking zone." For families with children, an island can also designate a pathway from the kitchen to the backyard that doesn't require running in front of the stove. Intentionally designing pathways through an open space is critical to keeping it functional.

Go with The Flow

Many Rockridge homeowners enjoy entertaining. To allow socializing with guests, a plan should provide an open flow between the dining room, the kitchen, and the outdoors. A beverage station set between the dining room and the kitchen draws people to a dedicated place where they can make their own drinks and socialize outside the cooking zone. A small under-counter refrigerator and a bar sink can just as easily be a place for an espresso machine or smoothie making as would be for making cocktails.

The Drop Zone

In homes where people enter through a back door near the kitchen, it's great to have a "drop zone." This is the place where you can come in and drop keys, groceries, backpacks, and shoes — with a designated space for everything, so the stuff of daily life doesn't take over the rest of the house. Particularly in open-plan spaces, it can be challenging to keep surfaces clutter-free. With a drop zone, a remodel can be beautiful and stand up to real life.

What Makes a Great Kitchen Remodel

A kitchen remodel should take into account all of the ways you use that space. The kitchen, after all, isn't only a place for cooking and eating. It might be your home office or the place where your kids do their crafts or their homework. Outlets tucked into drawers can make sure you have a place to plug in your laptop; dedicated supply drawers can keep office supplies handy but out of sight. Whatever your goals for your space, a great kitchen remodel is one that makes your space more beautiful and functional — with a design that is customized for you. ■

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Oakland Walk to Prevent Suicide

by EML

September is National Suicide Prevention Month, and all month long, mental health advocates, prevention organizations, survivors, allies, and community members unite to promote suicide prevention.

Support the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's "Oakland Out of Darkness, Walk Oakland Walk" by participating on **Saturday, October 19**, at Snow Park near Lake Merritt.

Register online at afsp.org/oakland by 10/19/2024. On-site registration at 6:30am; program at 7am. Location: Snow Park by Lake Merritt. Email: afsp.oaklandcawalk@gmail.com. ■

Claremont Middle School Unveils Multi-Purpose Room



A celebration for Claremont Middle School was held at the school on Saturday, August 17, to unveil the new multi-use space. As reported in the April 2024 *Rockridge News*, the school needed to replace its cafeteria due to fire damage. The newly built structure houses a kitchen, a stage platform for theater performances, several classrooms, and updated landscaping outdoors. ■

Pictured (right to left): Claremont Middle School Principal Tremain Moore; Claremont Middle School student; and Claremont Middle School Community School Manager Edana Anderson

Photo: Oakland Unified Facilities and Planning Management Division; and Kristin Eaves

# of Rockridge

Ain't Normal Cafe: Jammy Egg

5701 College Avenue

The first published recipe for a breakfast sandwich appeared in 1897 according to **Heather Anderson's** landmark book, *Breakfast: A History*. For more than a century, breakfast enthusiasts have been iterating, deconstructing, and reconstructing on this classic. However, it wasn't perfected until recently when Ain't Normal Cafe combined a jammy egg with a flaky biscuit and added just the right amount of aioli and arugula. What makes the Ain't Normal rendition to die for? Like everything at Ain't Normal, it starts with high-quality ingredients; the flaky biscuit stands on its own. The jammy egg is consistent and brilliant in that it allows these sandos to be pre-prepared and taste wonderful at room temp. The aioli and arugula balance the whole thing out while completing the trifecta of essential ingredients (bread, egg, dairy) and a unique ingredient in the form of a green leaf (which is blasphemous in some breakfast sandwich cults, but not mine). ■

— by Galen Wilson



Send your favorite bite or beverage in Rockridge to: editor@rockridge.org

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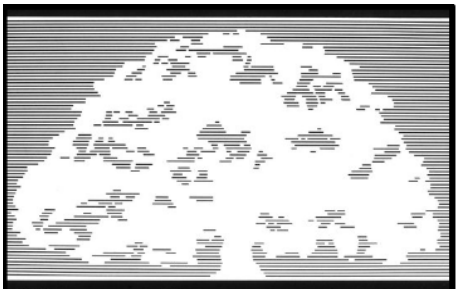
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Market talk: Expect market activity to increase this fall with more inventory and lowering rates! Contact me for a specific valuation on your property.

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Heart of Rockridge: 309 63rd St @ College Ave (Adjacent Cole Coffee). FULLY VACANT 4-plex, roughly $120k/year gross income. Expansion potential. Listed @ 1.695M
COMING:
Glen Highlands: 4+ Bd 3+ Ba 3,300+ SqFt 1990s beauty across Hwy 13 from Upper Rockridge - Listed @ $2.1M

September is Awareness Month for: Hispanic Heritage, Blood Cancers, Library Card Sign-up, Suicide Prevention, Alzheimer's, Forgiveness, Food Bank, Grandparents, Encouragement, Positive Thinking, Self-Care



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SEPTEMBER Events at Rockridge Library

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For Children

Storytime: Thursdays and Saturdays; 10:30am. Chess Club: Wednesdays at 4pm. All ages and skill-levels welcome.

Read to a Dog: Thursdays at 4pm every week. Origami for All: Join Megan for paper folding practice every third Tuesday at 4pm, starting 9/16. All ages welcome.

For Teens ages 12 – 18

Teen Advisory Board: Wednesday, 9/11; 4-5 pm. Join the Rockridge Branch Library Teen Advisory Board (TAB) and take an active role in creating, planning, and implementing programs and services you want to see at your local library.

For Adults

Ask Your Area Home Experts: Every 2nd Friday, noon-2pm. Get answers, tips, and connections from a Senior Loan Advisor and a Realtor, both Rockridge locals. Have questions answered about home ownership, maintenance, finance, investing, ADUs, downsizing, moving, and more.

Rockridge Staff Art Show: on view through September 26th. Come see our creative side.

— Meet the Author —
Wednesday, Sept. 18, 6:30-7:30pm

Naturalist and writer, Obi Kaufmann will discuss his newest book, *The State of Fire: Why California Burns*. Mr. Kaufmann will be signing copies of the book, available for purchase from A Great Good Place for Books.

This event is sponsored by
Friends of the Rockridge Library

Who is Telling Us the News in Oakland: A Forum on the State of Local Journalism.
September 28th, 1-3pm

Meet the voices behind your community's stories. Learn how to evaluate the trustworthiness of your news and how to access unbiased local information. Explore who's supporting and funding the news and understand the new dynamics shaping local journalism. A panel discussion with representatives from: *Bay City News Foundation*, *El Timpano*, *Oakland Post*, and *San Francisco Chronicle*. Moderated by Tasmeen Raja, Editor-in-Chief of *The Oaklandside* in partnership with the American Association of University Women, Oakland-Piedmont Branch.

ROCKRIDGE BOOK CLUB

Meets every 2nd Saturday, 3:30pm to 4:30pm at the Rockridge Library

Please call (510) 597-5017 for info and to get a copy of the book.

RN Classifieds

List your 36-word message here for only $22 (phone number counts as one word). Make check payable to RCPC, and write "Rockridge News Classifieds" in the memo line. Mail to: RCPC, 4900 Shattuck Ave., P.O. Box 22504, Oakland, 94609-20131.

For more information, email Susan at smontauk@gmail.com.

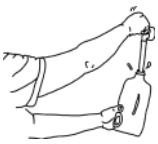
Deadline for October's newsletter is: September 19, 2024 (available Oct 5).

Penelope's Aesthetics!
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End-of-Life Support
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