Our Last Board Meeting – January 25

We squeezed into a makeshift location for a great presentation from guest speaker Bob Glover.

Our Speaker was Bob Glover, Executive Officer of the Building Industry Association of the Bay Area. The BIA represents residential builders and developers in the Bay Area, of which there are 450 members.

Bob offered statistics and estimates to support the claim that there really is a current and projected housing shortage as has been promoted. When asked why there are hundreds of vacant apartments he was unsure why that is the case.

Bob mentioned that there has been a flurry of housing related laws that were passed in 2018. SB330 increases housing density. AB1482 creates state wide rent control. AB16A requires approval for adding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) on a single-family home lot.

AB1483 requires cities and counties to post building fees on line. AB 1484 & 1485 promotes more “affordable” housing units.

A major factor that greatly increases the cost of construction are the building fees governments impose. Fees normally run between $80K to $100K per unit. Fremont’s fees average $150K per unit. Bob considered AB1483 very much needed so builders will know in advance what permit costs will be. Previously a developer would have to contact multiple agencies to know the total cost.

Additional pending housing legislation is SB50 which would allow a home owner to add one detached ADU, one attached ADU, and convert the garage to an ADU. Further the owner does not need to live in the property. This will allow conversion of single-family neighborhoods into a mix with four-plexes. Also no parking need be provided.

BIA members are both union and nonunion. Bob explained that there has been considerable pressure to require only union labor be used in developing the Concord Naval Weapons Station property. The additional cost of union only labor is estimated to make the large development lose money.
CoCoTax President’s Report

It’s election season again. Be sure to click “Election 2020” on our website for our ballot recommendations. Did you know that the schedule for ballot measures begins 88 days before election day? But, we work on it for months before.

Every agency has its own issues with its interests, needs and wants. Voters decide who gets their funding.

At CoCoTax, we strive to stay on top of those issues. Lately, I’ve received communications asking questions such as:

- “What is CoCoTax doing about Measure XXX?”
- “Do you have signs?”
- “Will I get a mailer?”

There are 7 ballot measures in Contra Costa County in this election cycle. We researched, analyzed - and sometimes agonized - over all of them. It started months before the election cycle, monitoring and anticipating what would be on the ballot, and what, if any, action should be taken even before the final measure was written.

Beyond our analyses, recommendations and filing ballot arguments, we are available to speak to voters, engage in informational forums, and to assist citizen groups with supporting or opposing measures.

We do not use taxpayer funds for slick political flyers masquerading as “ informational” mailers, nor a campaign war chest. Unlike public entities and special interest groups who focus on their own matters, we analyze multiple agencies. But that does not deter us from doing our best to educate and inform voters as best we can.

We are grateful to those loyal donors who have stepped up to support us financially. You may still donate, but we must locate and involve other potential contributors in order to offer our best services and pursue taxpayer advocacy. Our annual financial appeal did not meet our expectations, and there is much that will tax our mettle in 2020 (pun intended).

Join us at an event, donate, read the newsletter (especially if you cannot attend a meeting), check our website, see updates on Facebook, sponsor a meeting or event, stay informed.

Susan L Pricco
President, Contra Costa Taxpayers Association
“Good government at affordable cost”