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**3-10-20 8:30 2 minute presentation: The Pleasant Hill Library closing**

I am a psychiatrist, in practice now for 51 years, currently at the Hume Center in Concord. There I supervise treatment of largely seriously impaired citizens. It is fair to say that everyone needs a safe place internally and externally to face life's challenges with confidence. For some of our health impaired population the library is such a place.

Our Pleasant Hill library happens to serve the clients of Crestwood, a well-run treatment Center nearby that serves on average 80 clients. These folks, many of them young, are *there for months gradually accomplishing their treatment goals. The library nearby, provides them, a kind of sanctuary in which to expand their horizons, normalize their lives and be a part of the community. A majority of them utilize our library frequently. Forty-six of them have signed a request to keep the library open.*

Apart from this health impaired population the library also serves other limited or vulnerable folks including the unemployed, the aged, the isolated and lonely, and latchkey students. The library gives them all a safe place to congregate, look up information, use a computer, play games, hear stories read, learn a language, or to simply *experience quiet reading time.*

A two-year closing of the Pleasant Hill library is a tangible guaranteed loss to all who use it. The remedies offered during closure are clearly inadequate in my estimate and entail transportation expenses that are excessive for this health impaired population and I'm sure for others such as the poor and elderly. Using the senior center to store tons of books becomes another area of public service loss.

To undertake the community loss of library closing, on the alleged basis of speculating to get a better land price does not sound right nor make good sense to me. *If this was a necessary move it might be reasonable. But it is discretionary and tied to the advantage to a private group building high cost housing where the library stands.*

The community is the people who live here, not just the land speculators. For this reason I am asking that the county keep this valuable community resource open until the new library is built.

## Remarks before Contra Costa Board of Supervisors-March 10, 2020

Please don't bust our trust in local government and close our library unnecessarily. I grew up with a single Mom in poverty, and I swear that libraries gave me the inspiration and exposure to a different world to succeed. My decades long background as a retired attorney with a masters in finance- who worked in senior positions for a Congressman, Governor, criminal prosecutor and as California business lobbyist- convinced me that trust in leadership is necessary for a functioning society. Whether we are addressing a pandemic or libraries we need trustworthy leaders. You will lose trust long term if you vote to close the library prematurely because it is wrong for our community and based on wrong premises and numbers.

We are losing social capital and faith in our governments to address our needs- both at the national level with Trump and now at our vital local level. The pending decision to close the library will come to haunt both the City of Pleasant Hill and our County Government since it will further erode public trust and social capital because it is wrong on the merits.

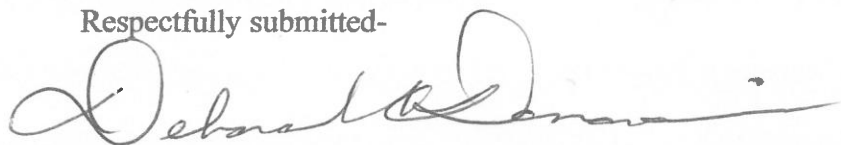
An abundance of social capital is seen as being almost a necessary condition for a modern democracy. A low level of social capital leads to an excessively rigid and unresponsive political system and high levels of corruption. Formal public institutions require social capital in order to function properly. If you vote to close our library unnecessarily with the existing false premises, we will further lose social capital that is harder to build than it is to lose.

I believe that a major reason Pleasant Hill lost the Prop A election to improve its public parks last week is this library dispute. It is not credible that our local residential real property values will fall in any significant and predictable manner, that the existing library needs major repairs to stay open for 2 years, that it is necessary for safety for the neighborhood to do the residential construction at the same time as new library construction or that the proposed alternatives are satisfactory. We can keep the old library limping along for 2 plus years without a major infusion of capital. The numbers that are quoted for necessary repairs- are credulous- we don't need a new roof et al for just 2 years. We can use common sense. The senior and teen centers are obviously not adequate alternatives- for Crestwood residents, for families, for afterschool care or to allow seniors to park and use the senior center as needed.

The decision you will make today- is do you want to disenfranchise a large number of citizens, reduce the quality of life of our community, and send a signal that bogus short term gains are more important than a credible government that cares about responsible governing. I hope not- we need a trustworthy government, and due to the large number of misleading statements and actions around this decision, closing the library years before it is necessary is wrong and is trust busting.

If you care about the social capital and trust in our local government- you will vote to keep the Pleasant Hill- Central Branch- library open during the construction of the new library. Please say no to a discretionary and unnecessarily premature closure.

Respectfully submitted-



Deborah C Donovan, Esq.

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