

# MORRO BAY MATTERS

Volume 1, Issue 7

December 10, 2022

## NOVEMBER 8 ELECTION RESULTS

Local General Election results were certified by the SLO County Clerk-Recorder on December 7:

**Measure B-22**, which sought to raise property taxes, failed 65%-35%.

**New mayor**, Carla Wixom, won 60%-40%.

**New council member**, Zara Landrum, won with a 3.5% lead.

**New council member**, Cyndee Edwards, won with less than a 1% advantage ahead of Sarah Robinson.

The public is encouraged to attend the swearing-in ceremony during the last City Council meeting of 2022. The swearing-in is the last item on the agenda. So, while the meeting officially begins at 5:30pm on Tuesday, Dec. 13, the ceremony will likely not occur for at least an hour.

The mayor and city council members are elected at-large. This means they represent all of us, not just those who voted for them. To reach your elected officials, here are their official email addresses:

[cwixom@morrobayca.gov](mailto:cwixom@morrobayca.gov)

[lbarton@morrobayca.gov](mailto:lbarton@morrobayca.gov)

[cedwards@morrabayca.gov](mailto:cedwards@morrabayca.gov)

[jford@morrobayca.gov](mailto:jford@morrobayca.gov)

[zlandrum@morrobayca.gov](mailto:zlandrum@morrobayca.gov)

## SAFETY FIRST NO BATTERIES BY THE BAY

Vistra Corp, owner of the 100+ acres known as the Morro Bay power plant, wants to build a lithium-ion Battery Energy Storage System, BESS, on the shuttered power plant site. Residents of Cayucos, Los Osos, and Morro Bay have formed a group to educate the public and exert influence on decision makers regarding the BESS project.

"Wrong location" is the main premise of the Safety First Group. A non-ocean-dependent industrial development, in the heart of a tourist mecca, adjacent to a residential neighborhood, and within a 1/2-mile of the town's high school presents a clearly acute, safety hazard. Fires and releases of poison gas have occurred elsewhere. Add in our potential for natural disasters

An Environmental Impact Report, EIR, is scheduled for completion by the end of 2022. It will be made public in the new year. The public will have a chance to make formal comments.

You can connect with the citizens group in 3 ways: **Website**, <https://www.nomorrobaybess.com>  
**Facebook**, No Morro Bay Battery Storage  
**Email**, [no.mb.bess@gmail.com](mailto:no.mb.bess@gmail.com)

# LEGACY OF OUTGOING CITY COUNCIL

## Consequences of Increasing Downtown Height Limits

City Council granted developers the right to go from 30 feet to 37 feet in height, with a possibility of going as high as 43 feet along Morro Bay Blvd and Main Street. **This change hurts current business owners** because many do not own their own building. As a result, in real time, a developer just bought the SE corner of Morro Bay Blvd and Monterey, where Threads, Castaways, and Chicago Title rent. He raised their rents so exorbitant that they must leave.

This causes **the second detriment: a loss of quaint, retro, unique identity to a walled street that could be any downtown anywhere.**

Some argue increased heights create affordable or low-income housing. It does not. It will create market rate condos, second homes, or vacation rentals, we lose favorite, successful, mom-and-pop businesses.

Will the new city council have the resolve to protect our businesses and our identity by calling back this section of Zoning from the Coastal Commission?

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MORRO BAY MATTERS is brought to you by Citizens For Affordable Living (CAL) to inform Morro Bay citizens regarding current City issues. CAL welcomes contributions in the form of ideas, distribution, and printing. Contact CAL at: <https://calmorrobay.wordpress.com> or to view past issues.

## Low Income Housing Loss due to Up-Zoning near Elder Facility

Up-zoning is granting developers increased density (more housing units) than they have a right to.

Normally, up-zoning is a reward for offering the city something the city needs, i.e., low, or very low-income housing. It accompanies the developer's plan. This council granted up-zoning without a plan, and the council bargained for nothing in return. Rather than provide some affordable or low-income housing, these 2 developers are given the right to build all market rate housing, something we don't need.

## More WRF (sewer plant) Money Pit

Confluence Engineering Solutions (CES) was hired for engineering services Dec. 2021 for a gap period while the City transitioned to a new city engineer. An engineer was hired, yet in Jan. 2022 CES stayed on at \$45,000 to engineer capital improvements. Aug. 2022 CES was contracted at \$582,619 thru June 2023 to work on the WRF wells. Yet, Carollo was hired in 2018 to do the well work.

CES founder, Dan Heimel, is the chair of the Los Osos Basin Management Committee. LO and Heimel are working on a plan for LO to receive State Water through MB's finally-paid-off pipeline. Aug. 2022, Heimel suggested at the City Council meeting that the City sell its State Water (\$1100 ac/ft) on the open market for "cost recovery." Problem? WRF wells are 3-4 times more expensive to run than the price we would receive for State Water.