

The Incorporator

Vol. 1 No. 1 Summer 1982

EPA approves new city **Outsiders Defeat Cityhood**

OUTSIDERS DEFEAT CITYHOOD... East Palo Alto made history on April 13, 1982. After two decades of struggle for the right to vote on incorporation, the residents of East Palo Alto went to the polls and approved a new city. But Menlo Park residents — outsiders — were allowed to vote and defeated the bid for cityhood.

There were four separate ballot measures: Proposition A (incorporation); Proposition B (EPA Water District); Proposition C (EPA Sanitation District); and Proposition D (Ravenswood Recreation and Park District/County Service Area #5). Each of the four had to be approved by the voters in order to have a new city of East Palo Alto. All of them easily passed except Proposition C, which lost by forty-one votes.

Why were there four ballot measures? Because the county required them — unlike any other incorporation. Why did all four have to pass? Because the county wrongly claimed the new city needed the funds from the special districts to survive, and because this was the last possible way the LAFCo staff could prevent the incorporation of East Palo Alto.

What happened on Proposition C? None of the 1,918 registered voters who live east of Bay Road were eligible to vote on Proposition C. Yet all of the 713 registered voters in the North of Euclid area and the 437 voters in Menlo Park were each eligible to vote on this proposition. In other words, almost 2,000 potential residents of the new city were denied the right to vote, while almost 1,200 outsiders had the right to vote. The result — outsiders defeated incorporation.

The community was divided into 17 precincts or voting areas, 12 of which were east of the Bayshore Freeway. On the eastside, all four measures passed easily in every precinct except one. One the westside, all four measures lost in the four EPA precincts and one Menlo Park precinct. Still the

combined vote for all of EPA, including the four precincts on the westside, was approval of all four propositions. When the vote was added from Menlo Park, Proposition C lost by forty-one votes.

Where are we now? The biggest problem is that EPA residents will continue to pay taxes for services that we have come to expect — recreation, sanitation, police, and all the others.

Where do we go from here? The East Palo Alto Citizens' Committee on Incorporation (EPACCI) is asking for a new election. It will possibly be held in March, 1983 — almost a year from now. In the meantime, the opponents of incorporation — large property owners and local politicians who have been in power for the last fifteen years — will be trying to prevent a new election and, when it occurs, trying to confuse the voters with the same old scare tactics. But incorporation is an idea whose time has come. Its time is now. It will happen at the next election.

Enough money to incorporate?

INCORPORATION for East Palo Alto is fiscally sound. Separate studies by SRI International and an independent consultant hired by the county confirm that the new city will have more than enough money to support itself.

State subvention and federal revenue sharing monies now paid to the county will come directly to East Palo Alto with **INCORPORATION**.

Taxes paid out by East Palo Alto residents now go to the county. With **INCORPORATION**, these monies will remain in East Palo Alto.

Proposition 13 prohibits the raising of property taxes. Your taxes will not and cannot be increased because of **INCORPORATION**.

The new city of East Palo Alto is able to support itself. This is why the County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved **INCORPORATION**.

INCORPORATION will ensure better police, fire and social services through self government and local control. Commissions will be established, made up of local residents to ensure responsiveness and local control.

What Is Incorporation?

Incorporation means the creation of a city. Incorporation transfers the authority for the control of East Palo Alto to a locally elected city council. Incorporation enables EPA residents to determine the nature and level of services and the distribution of local revenues. Incorporation gives EPA residents the power to control land use; to spend taxes; and to exercise police authority.

Presently East Palo Alto is an unincorporated area of San Mateo County. As such, the County Board of Supervisors collects and spends our tax dollars, then provides for us the inadequate services we have come to know.

The East Palo Alto Municipal Council is an advisory board to the County Board of Supervisors. The Board is under no legal obligation to support council recommendations, let alone abide by them.

A new City Council will be elected which will have the legal power to ensure responsive and effective government for East Palo Alto residents.

Poetry

OUR PEOPLE

Our people are so beautiful.
 They are so filled with determination.
 They radiate smiles to carry them on.
 They carry their History with them in
 everything they do.
 Our people are so very beautiful.
 Even in their darkest hours, they
 survive.
 They use events as stepping stones
 On which they must walk for greater
 achievements
 And for a truly fulfilled life.
 Our people are beautiful.
 Learn to understand and accept them.
 For, in doing so, your life will be
 enriched;
 And the world will become more
 beautiful.

NAIROBI NEEDS YOU

We need you and I.
 We can make it if we try.
 Nairobi needs you.
 Yes, we do!
 Nairobi
 Is a Black Community
 Trying to provide
 What we need to survive

What we need to survive.
 It's a place of higher yearning;
 Trying to keep minds turning
 Through Incorporation
 And Self-Determination.
 We've been working for some time
 For the right to live our time.
 There's been obstacles
 In our daily struggles.
 We've always used our voice

We've always used our voice.
 Others see us as a force.
 We are progressive
 In the way Black folks should live.
 EPACCI has done much to
 Pave the way for me and you.
 We're an idea whose time has come.
 Can't you see where we're coming from?
 We need you and I.
 We can make it if we try.
 Nairobi needs you.
 Yes, we do!

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EPACCI Salutes★

East Palo Alto residents, "spiritually" stunned by the defeat of the cityhood bid, have rallied. Remembering the old proverb, 'God can move mountains,' they have journeyed beyond the realm of depending solely upon themselves to achieve incorporation. With God on the pro-incorporation side, cityhood is sure to follow.

Luckily, one of those men of God who heard and stood behind cityhood from the start was REV. FLOYD PURDY, one of the two outstanding citizens to be saluted in this issue. A relative newcomer to the area, Reverend Purdy has urged incorporation advocates to keep the faith by heeding the significance of Proverbs 3,4,5 and 6: *Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him; and he shall direct thy paths.*

A rousing, dynamic minister, Rev. Purdy who pastors for St. John's Missionary Baptist Church on Bay Rd., originally hailed from Marked Tree, Arkansas before moving on to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. From Milwaukee's Marquette University, he earned a B.A. degree in Sociology and later a Master's from the University of Chicago's Divinity Schools. Happily married for the past 25 years, the reverend, who is also an avid reader and basketball fan, has three lovely children that have in great part inspired his sentiments on incorporation.

Like so many others, Rev. Purdy is confident that incorporation will succeed on the next ballot in 1983. However, to those opposed to cityhood, he simply responds, "Every community should have the right of self-governance — yet, that isn't happening

in East Palo Alto. I am of the opinion that incorporation would be a good thing for this community to embrace."

Another longtime resident agrees totally with Rev. Purdy. MARIE ROUSE VIDRIOS is a seasoned and involved homeowner. Born almost 80 years ago in Sumpter, South Carolina, she is the third oldest in a family of 13 other children. As one of the eldest, she assisted her mother in the operation of the family's restaurant and rooming house. Cooking, scrubbing, ordering supplies and serving customers, she soon learned all there was to know about hard work.

By leaving home in her early teens, Marie saw much of America with her own eyes. She lived in Clariton, Pennsylvania when that city was desegregating its parks, swimming pool and other public facilities. That struggle she views as similar to the one facing East Palo Alto, with one notable exception; the majority of those in that struggle understood what had to be done to improve life for the people of Clariton.

In 1941, Marie came to California seeking a better place to live. Later on in 1955, however, accompanied by a sister, she journeyed to Alaska before that area joined the Union. Liking Alaska, she worked there for a while, despite some hair-raising experiences.

Ever a doer, Ms. Vidrios' contributions wherever she goes are legion. Today differs only a whit from yesterday for her. She is one of the founders and original members of the East Palo Alto Senior Center, a devout parishioner of St. Francis de Assisi Church, and a stalwart member of EPACCI since its inception. She is one of the many East Palo Altans of whom the community is so proud. We are honored to salute this pioneer who is truly a woman of all seasons.

What Inc. will mean for us

- A better quality of police and fire protection services
- Control over land-use through local zoning, planning and building regulations
- Federal and state revenues that return to a community when it is a city, i.e., cigarette taxes, revenue sharing, etc.
- Developing and improving the physical appearance of the community
- Developing social service programs for youth, senior citizens and underprivileged citizens
- Avoiding additional land loss via annexations or undesirable usage
- Providing innovative, well-rounded recreation programs for all age groups
- Ensuring the most efficient management of the sanitation and sewage program
- Exercising the right of self-government
- Reclaiming what is rightfully ours!

Inc. opponents oppose renters, et al

At recent meetings of the San Mateo Board of Supervisors and the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo), the opponents of incorporation tried to stall a new incorporation election. One of their main arguments was that renters, welfare recipients, and newcomers to East Palo Alto are "transients" who do not have a stake in the future of East Palo Alto since they do not own property. According to them, these "transients" could influence the incorporation vote and, therefore, there should be no election. If an election passed, property owners would have to pay the price of incorporation.

What price? Local control. Better recreation, sanitation and police services. Standards for the maintenance and security of apartments. And loss of power and privilege.

Chamber of Commerce

East Palo Alto's Chamber of Commerce is a consortium of many local businesses seeking to advance and revitalize the community's commercial, financial, industrial and civic interests. Officially formed May 25, 1982, the group developed from a well thought out plan spanning more than a year of organizing. It was a long, long road, but the Chamber is off to a good start.

A particular debt of gratitude is directed at James Blakely, Jr., owner and operator of the East Bayshore Shop, and the many other merchants and craftspeople who had the desire to see East Palo Alto's business community thrive. They have several ideas they want to implement.

Plans are now afoot for the Chamber to undertake several fundraising and promotional projects. These include scholarships, senior citizen and summer youth programs, citizenship award presentations, an annual banquet, a Little League baseball team, a monthly publication to improve East Palo Alto's image, a chamber sign, a welcome wagon, information and referral services, and the addressing of unemployment issues directly affecting East Palo Altans.

As its first fundraiser, the Chamber will be hosting an Installation Banquet, Thursday, June 24, the Balkan Village, Los Altos. Anyone interested in attending should either call (415) 327-5846, or contact any Chamber member by 6:00 p.m., Monday, June 21, 1982.

Renters Beware

All people tend to complain. Some with justification, others simply to hear the sound of their own voice. One area, however, more reasonable to complain about than others is Tenants' Rights.

Through the years innumerable complaints have been generated by renters in East Palo Alto on both sides of the freeway. Some of the more major ones listed here may even strike a familiar cord — see if they apply to your situation:

- Why does your rent keep going up?
- Why are many apartment buildings poorly maintained?
- Why is security such a big problem?
- Why can't you do anything about it?

There have been many excuses for these problems, but basically the answers are obvious. To begin with, rent goes up in East Palo Alto because there is no rent control. Apartment buildings deteriorate and become poorly maintained because building codes are minimally enforced (if at all) in most unincorporated areas. Security is an issue because there is absolutely no local control of police. And finally, the reason renters can't change the situation is because there is no Rent Commission to deal with such concerns. In other words, nobody cares.

Can you still recall when landlords said, "If Proposition 13 passes, rents will not be raised." Did you believe them? And what about when they used the same ploy to state, "If incorporation fails, rents will not be raised." Do you believe them now! Register to vote, get involved, support a new city.

It Pays To Be Incorporated

Remember back before the April elections when opponents of cityhood ballyhooed incorporation by crying that user fees would rise, taxes would increase and so forth and so on. Imagine their surprise the, after looking at a May article in the *Times-Tribune*, that an assessment to property owners for street lights in the unincorporated areas of San Mateo County was a very real possibility.

This one-time assessment could range from \$3 to \$40 for owners of single-family homes according to Public Works Director Robert Sans. The cost of keeping the lights on has increased, Sans says. With recent rate hikes by PG&E, the County would be paying \$29,270 per month to keep the older less-efficient bulbs glowing.

Currently, PG&E and the County are negotiating the cost of buying the newer low-pressure sodium-vapor bulbs, although the work crews have already begun installing them throughout the county. With the new lights, Sans says monthly County PG&E bills have been cut by two-thirds. The problem, and the reason for the proposed assessment, is the lack of money needed to buy the new bulbs already in the County's possession. Because little extra money is available at the County level, residents who would benefit from the lights may have to pay PG&E for them. East Palo Alto who has about 750 street lights within its borders, is in the process of converting its incandescent and outdated mercury vapor lights to the new sodium-vapor ones that cast off a kind of orange glow when lit.

Specific areas that would be affected by the assessment would include *unincorporated* areas around Redwood City and Menlo Park, most of East Palo Alto, La Honda, Belmont's harbor-industrial area and the Emerald Lake Hills area above Redwood City.

GREETINGS FROM THE EAST PALO ALTO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE!

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*As of June 8, 1982.

EPACCI Still Meets

EPACCI (the East Palo Alto Citizens' Committee on Incorporation) is seeking new members. If you are interested in East Palo Alto's future, why not stop by one of their weekly meetings. They are held every Tuesday evening, 7:00 p.m., in the County Municipal Building, 2415 University Ave., corner of Bay Rd. New participants make such a difference! Vacancies exist on the following committees:

Coordinating
 Education
 Finance/Fund-Raising
 Application
 Publicity
 Voter Registration

Who says East Palo Alto has the money to incorporate?

THE FINANCIAL EXPERTS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS SAY SO!

- SRI International (independent study contracted by EPACCI)
- Angus McDonald and Associates (independent study contracted by the San Mateo Local Agency Formation Commission)
- Recht Hausrath and Associates (independent study contracted by the San Mateo Board of Supervisors)
- County Manager of San Mateo (independent study of the fiscal feasibility of incorporation)
- San Mateo Local Agency Formation Commission (majority vote based upon a thorough review of the financial studies)
- San Mateo Board of Supervisors (unanimous vote based upon a thorough review of the financial studies)
- Speaker of the California State Assembly, Willie Brown; Congressman Pete McCloskey; Congressman Tom Lantos; State Senator Marz Garcia; and State Assemblyman Byron Sher
- Most of the City Councils in San Mateo County

AND WE, THE PEOPLE OF EAST PALO ALTO SAY SO. All of the financial studies show that our new city will have a budget surplus of \$348,000 to \$634,000 each year for at least the next ten years.

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WHO SAYS PROPERTY TAXES WON'T BE RAISED?

THE STATE LAW SAYS SO. Proposition 13 prohibits tax rate increase by local government. The new city cannot raise your property tax.

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WHO SAYS SERVICE FEES WON'T BE RAISED?

THE STATE LAW SAYS SO. Proposition 13 prohibits service fee increases as a substitute for property tax increases. There can be no special increase in service fees because of incorporation.

WHO SAYS EPA CAN'T BECOME A PART OF MENLO PARK?

MENLO PARK SAYS SO! The Menlo Park City Council, all of the homeowner associations in Menlo Park, and most Menlo Park residents are against annexing EPA. Why? Mainly because 60% of the population of Menlo Park would then live in EPA and Belle Haven. Menlo Park will not ever turn control of the city over to EPA and Belle Haven. If you lived in Menlo Park, would you?

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WHO SAYS INCORPORATION IS AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME?

THE EAST PALO ALTO CITIZENS' COMMITTEE ON INCORPORATION (EPACCI) SAYS SO!!

THE POSTAL CONNECTION



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