

Vote *No* on Mordo? – should Mordo have to go? *Daily Post, Town Crier, and FOLA*

On October 3, 2018, the *Daily Post* editorial made the following strong recommendation against re-electing Jean Mordo to the Los Altos City Council. From the October 3, 2018 *Daily Post*:

We endorsed Mordo four years ago, believing he would help clean up the mess in City government that allowed a debacle on First Street, where three massive buildings (by Los Altos standards) sprung up between Edith Avenue and Main Street, creating a canyon effect.

But Mordo has done a 180 and become too much of a cheerleader for development in Los Altos.

We were astonished when he told us during an interview that he favored putting office buildings downtown because it would increase the number of people getting lunch at restaurants in that area. Office buildings mean even more commute traffic on streets like San Antonio Road and Foothill Expressway. That doesn't seem like a good trade-off — office buildings for restaurant business?

We also don't like how Mordo has been heavy-handed with women. Former Mayor David Casas pointed out in December how Mordo had demeaned former Councilwoman Megan Satterlee in public, was dismissive of other Councilwomen and threatened then-City Manager Marcia Somers if she didn't agree with his agenda.

In fact, Casas complained that Mordo bullied members of the public — both men and women — and at one point yelled at a person in the audience.

We also were alarmed at Mordo's response when current City Manager Chris Jordan decided on his own to give City employees every other Friday off rather than putting the idea on the Council's agenda. Mordo didn't have a problem with it. "He runs the city, not the Council, but he had the courtesy to tell us he intended to propose to do that," Mordo said.

We get the impression he feels the Council is subservient to the City Manager. In reality, it's the Council who is in charge of the City Manager.

It's time for Mordo to retire.

A week later the *Town Crier* gave a lukewarm endorsement of Jean Mordo by recommending the election of two from a list of three candidates, with him being one of the three.

Friends of Los Altos (FOLA) had previously made a strong recommendation against re-electing Jean Mordo. The reasons were that (a) Mordo has been the leader for spending \$10 million more on the Community Center than the \$25 million recommended by the City Staff and Financial Commission, (b) he was the head of the Parking Committee that was disbanded due to illegal meetings under the Brown Act yet he has remained defiant of any wrongdoing, (c) he led the charge for adopting the Downtown Vision Plan which recommends dramatic increases in downtown office space and the development of eight of the ten downtown parking plazas without contemporaneous increases or replacement of the lost parking, and (d) based on some of his comments, it is not clear that he really understands what he is promoting.

An example of the latter occurred when a FOLA board member made a recent presentation to the Chamber of Commerce regarding the proposed rezoning recommended in the Downtown Vision Plan along with the proposed revamped parking ratios recently recommended by the Parking Committee. The combination of these zoning and parking ratio changes would allow every property owner on Main and State Streets who have single-story buildings to add a second story without any requirement to provide additional parking or to contribute to a parking fund.

FOLA explained that the current downtown office requirement of one parking space for every 300 square feet of office space was to be replaced with the significantly lower requirement of only one parking space for every 500 square feet. This would result in parking requirements far below those required in all of our neighboring cities such as Palo Alto, Mountain View, Sunnyvale, as well as Los Gatos and Burlingame, several of which are already facing serious parking problems.

Mayor Mordo later claimed that FOLA had misrepresented the numbers and that the recommended change was only from the original one parking space for every 300 square feet to one parking space for every 400 square feet—even this change would have a strong negative impact on parking. However, he forgot, ignored, or was unaware of another provision in the Parking Committee recommendations that further reduced the requirements for all properties in the downtown triangle by 20%. Once that further reduction is taken into account, the requirement is one space for every 500 square feet, just as represented by the FOLA board member.

It appears that Mayor Mordo is so beholden to the interests of the politically active downtown property owners that he is (presumably) unaware of the actual consequences of the recommended changes that are being promoted. The key advocate for these recommended changes has been Los Altos Hills resident Kim Cranston, who owns commercial property in Los Altos as well as other communities.

One thing we do agree with Mayor Mordo about is that some changes in Los Altos will improve our town significantly. An important first step in making those changes is electing a City Council that includes individuals other than Jean Mordo.