

## Public Measure A Debate Slated

The oft-contentious debate over development and growth in Alameda is getting another airing, and this time it won't be personal. This time they're bringing in a member of the clergy as moderator and referee.

The Alameda Public Affairs Forum, a civic group which usually sponsors debate and forums on weighty national and international issues, is wading into the deep pond of local issues with a two-and-a-half hour debate on Measure A, the 1973 city charter amendment that restricts housing construction. It might be a welcome crash course for those unwilling or unable to attend an upcoming city sponsored marathon session on the same subject, expected to run eight hours.

The issue at hand is whether Measure A's restrictions should apply to redevelopment of the former Naval Air Station Alameda, the sprawling property on the West End set to become a new neighborhood of 1,800 housing units, shops, offices and industrial space. Measure A bans the construction of residential structures with more than two units and sets minimum limits on the size of lots.

The Rev. Pamela Kurtz of Twin Towers United Methodist Church will officiate over the abbreviated session. Retired nurse Gretchen Mackler-Lipow and David Howard will urge that Measure A should be extended to the base, and Helen Sause, president of Housing Opportunities Make Economic Sense (HOMES) will contend that applying Measure A to the base will rob the city of various opportunities.

"Alameda is a lovely little residential island community. Measure A has been in place for more than 30 years," Mackler-Lipow said. "There's no reason why the Point can't be developed within the parameters of Measure A in a way that benefits all of Alameda."

Mackler-Lipow said the Webster and Posey tubes are already at capacity and that allowing more dense development will worsen the Island's traffic problems. "All you have to look at is Oakland, Berkeley, Emeryville and see. Alameda can't sustain that kind of density," she said.

Sause, who believes the city should consider waiving Measure A for Alameda Point, said the city could potentially do more harm than good by keeping the restrictions. "If you don't have rentals and you don't have condos, you don't have diversity of housing types, which means you don't have opportunities for people of different incomes. Without those, there are no opportunities for our kids or our old people to stay on the Island," she said.

Sause contends that while the city's housing policies guarantee some housing units for the poor and the market will deliver structures for the wealthy, density restrictions will severely limit housing affordable to those who "don't qualify for subsidies, yet can't afford a \$1 million house."

The debate takes place at Twin Towers United Methodist Church at 1411 Oak St., Thursday, Nov. 8, at 7 p.m.