

LWV and Piedmont Connect to co-host climate speaker series

Sara Paul of Watch Duty opens series on September 7



Sara Paul of Watch Duty will be the guest speaker for Connect's speaker series on September 7.

By Allyson Aleksey

The Piedmont League of Women Voters (LWV) and Piedmont Connect are co-hosting a climate speaker series, beginning with guest speaker Sara Paul from Watch Duty. Her talk will be on Wednesday, September 7 at 4 p.m. The speaker series will continue through May 2023.

Watch Duty launched in August 2021 as a smartphone application and interactive map that shows where wildfires are burning across the state in real-time with information gathered from a variety of channels and agencies. Watch Duty covered Sonoma, Napa and Lake counties in its inception, and has since expanded to include all 58 counties in California. Paul manages Sonoma County Fire Updates for the app and will speak on wildfire mitigation at next week's Zoom event.

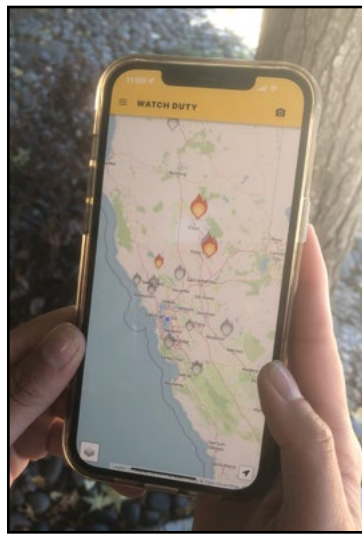
"Watch Duty fills an important gap as a source of reliable fire information provided in a timely manner," said Paul. "Our target audience is anyone living in fire country in California. In 2022, that's all of us."

The Watch Duty team monitors a network of sources to bring information directly to the user. Among its trusted channels are flight patterns of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the statewide network of ALERT wildfire camera, and satellite data.

The speaker series aims to educate constituents on a range of important topics with a focus on environmentalism and sustainability. Paul's presentation will be followed by a question-and-answer session.

Sign up for the speaker series at https://lwvpiedmont.org/content.aspx?page_id=4002&club_id=601389&item_id=1765943.

The event begins at 4 p.m. Registration is free and open to all. The program will be recorded and can be watched after the fact on LWV's YouTube channel.



The app Watch Duty delivers real-time information on wildfires across the state.

Piedmont holds final housing workshop

By Allyson Aleksey

The city of Piedmont held a final community workshop on its draft housing element, published on April 8 this year, prior to City Council review. The hybrid informational session was held in City Hall and on Zoom on August 18.

City Administrator Sara Lillevand and Planning Director Kevin Jackson facilitated the meeting.

Piedmont is a member of the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), which allocates housing mandates to each jurisdiction based on multifaceted methodology.

Piedmont did raise concerns numerous times during ABAG's housing mandate process with questions as to where the methodology was headed, Lillevand explained. This cycle's methodology largely considered access to opportunity and proximity to jobs - Piedmont is considered a "high resource area" and is close to transit hubs, which increased its allotted regional housing needs allocation (RHNA).

"All of Piedmont is considered a high resource area, with [access] to great schools, city services and amenities which contribute to positive outcomes

- and as a result, Piedmont was allocated more units [this cycle]," Lillevand said.

Proximity to jobs across the Bay Area was also a factor ABAG considered when handing Piedmont a total of 587 low to moderate income units. Lillevand said she considered where city and school employees fall under the income based allocation, and found that nearly 80% of city workforce falls under the low-income category, with less than \$110,000 of household income.

Piedmont is not alone in this challenge, Lillevand said - Albany, Emeryville, Orinda, Sausalito, Tiburon, and more cities that fall under ABAG's mandate process all saw dramatic increases in their RHNA.

"If the city is not in compliance with state housing law, it will be ineligible to receive grants and loan programs, and will be unable to issue building permits, conditional use permits and design review permits," Jackson explained. "[Incompliance] leaves the city vulnerable to costly litigation from housing rights organizations, developers and HCD."

"If the city is not in compliance, it will only have one year See [Housing Workshop](#) on page 30

Planning Commission to provide informational report on housing element September 12

By Allyson Aleksey

The Piedmont Planning Commission will provide an update on the draft housing element at its regularly scheduled meeting on September 12. It will be an informational report and no action will be taken by the commission.

City staff and commissioners will discuss the activities that the Planning Department and Lisa Wise Consulting, the city's housing consultants, have undertaken related to the development of fair housing policy.

The meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. in City Hall and will be available via Zoom.

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