



OPINION ENDORSEMENTS

Editorial: IJ recommends Farac, Christian in Novato council races

By **MARIN IJ EDITORIAL BOARD**

PUBLISHED: September 13, 2026

In two of Novato City Council's five districts, voters have choices in deciding who will represent their neighborhoods.

In both elections, the incumbents are seeking to retain their posts.

In District 2, Rachel Farac, currently the mayor, is seeking a second term.

Her district covers a northwest slice of town, including much of the area bordering Center Road, the Marin Highlands neighborhood and those around Sinaloa Middle School.

District 4 is represented by Pat Eklund, who has served on the council since 1995. Her district covers much of southwest Novato, including Ignacio Valley, Loma Verde, Marin Country Club and areas along Sunset Parkway.

Both incumbents are also facing challengers, giving voters a choice.

Farac was elected to the council in 2022, after serving on the city Planning Commission. She and her husband have two children and she stresses that she is the only mom with young children on the council.

She and Eklund are the two women on the council.

Farac says that among her focused issues are growing Novato's economic vitality by filling vacant storefronts and attracting new businesses and increasing the city's housing stock.

She has been endorsed by three of her four council colleagues.

Her challengers, Mike Little and Bob Rasmussen, are both longtime Novato residents. Both work for Pacific Gas & Electric Co. Both, however, lack Farac's civic experience. Their campaigns have helped raise important issues in the district, among them the condition of heavily traveled Center Road and spotty cellular coverage.

On the ongoing debate over the future ownership of the now city-owned Marin Valley mobile home park, Little says once the city's bonds are paid off next year, the city should keep the promise it made to turn the park over to the residents. "The city is overplaying its hand," he said of the council's reluctance. Rasmussen said he would support a plan that would give park tenants greater autonomy over the park.

Farac was more circumspect. She said her top priority is making sure the park remains long-term affordable housing for seniors, which was the city's goal when it bought the park in 1997.

Eklund's challengers can't match her impressive record for longevity on the council. She has been on the council for nearly 30 years and has served seven terms as mayor. For most of that tenure, she's been a maverick, often breaking ranks with her fellow council members and challenging City Hall. Over the years, attempts to unseat her have failed.

In this turn for reelection, she's drawn three challengers. Because it takes a plurality to win, Eklund's name recognition over three relative newcomers gives her a big advantage.

Her challengers include Chris Carpinello, a local building contractor who says he stands for "limited government" and fiscal accountability.

Earlier this year, he ran for county supervisor.

Luigino Galletto is running because he wants to represent "working-class residents" who are "disillusioned" with the way the current council operates and communicates with the community. He is a member of the city's design review board.

Among the challengers, Daniel Christian, the pastor of Novato's Good Lutheran Church, has endorsements from two current and four former council members, all of whom have served with Eklund. He says he would bring "a fresh perspective" to the council and District 4. As a pastor, he knows Novato, from ages 8 to 80 and the challenges local families face. He would also bring awareness of challenges of doing business in town as his wife owns a bistro in Hamilton Field.

On Marin Valley, Eklund, Carpiello and Galletto say the city should keep its promise and turn the park over to its residents whose rents will have paid off the city's bonds in 2027. Eklund was on the council when it voted to purchase the park, where its senior residents sought the city's help from escalating rents.

Christian says the city should retain ownership, but preserve the park as affordable housing.

Christian, a member of the city's Economic Development Commission, says he will work to bolster Novato's economic vitality, especially downtown.

Galletto shares that priority, stressing that more businesses and increased competition should add up to living in Novato being more affordable.

Christian stands out as a pragmatic choice, someone in touch with residents and the business community.

Eklund has proven herself as someone dedicated to public service. We respect her heartfelt and tireless commitment to her community. But after nearly 30 years and having a strong council in place, it's time to give others the opportunity to lead. Christian is a strong choice to step into that role.

On the Nov. 3 ballot, we recommend reelecting Rachel Farac and electing Daniel Christian to the Novato City Council.