

## **April 18 2017 ANNUAL SPRING LUNCHEON**

### **Held at THE CLUB, McGinnis Park**

The guests start to arrive and are given name tags and meal type tags by our Social Committee Chairperson, Linda Glasscock – who did all of the arrangements for the luncheon.

Thanks also to Nadine Muller, Membership Chairperson, who arranged for us to be able to use PayPal as part of our Registration process. She plans to use a similar method in the near future to encourage membership dues payments.



**Owen Haxton, by Patti Church, brought one of our oldest members, Betty Mattea, center.**



**Dick Spotswood, center, our favorite columnist for the Marin Independent Journal.**



We had 51 attendees, who enjoyed socializing before the meal, including too many others to name them all.



**Our speaker, Bob Silvestri, President Community Venture Partners and our President, Jack Nixon**



Our speaker, Bob Silvestri, is President of Community Venture Partners (a non-profit), but unless you have followed his determined efforts on behalf of the public, his title tells you nothing. So, let me try.

We needed only one cogent reason to invite Bob Silvestri to tell us about his organization's work—he has become a one-man task force to hold our local governments accountable for their actions and decisions.

His credentials are impeccable: graduated in architecture with honors from The Cooper Union in NYC; immediately started his own building design practice which led to 40+ years of experience in architecture, construction, real estate development and finance; became disillusioned with these professions in the 1990s; moved to Mill Valley, became increasingly involved in local planning and public policy issues; founded Community Venture Partners, Inc. in July of 2013: a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working for better planning and for bringing strong local voices to Marin local government decision making.

Since early 2014, Community Venture Partners has hammered away at three major problems:

Lack of government transparency, accountability and adherence to state and federal law;

The negative impacts and unintended consequences of bad planning decisions;

Escalating taxes, fees and cost of living without compensating community benefits.

Bob described how Community Venture Partners is challenging local and regional government. In its short existence, among its many accomplishments, CVP has:

Stopped the adoption of the Larkspur Landing Station Area Plan, which would have approved over 1 million square feet of new commercial and residential development at Larkspur Landing;

Successfully sued the Marin Board of Supervisors for violating the State's Open Meetings Law (the Brown Act);

Stopped the City of Mill Valley from adopting a "by right" ordinance that would have removed all public control over multifamily development in commercial zones;

Exposed the history of mismanagement at the Marin Public Housing Authority, which led to increased transparency and public participation;

Uncovered an illegal plan to destroy a federally protected wetland in Corte Madera.

It was great to hear these fascinating but troubling stories of David and Goliath battles from Bob's perspective and an update on the ongoing challenges his organization is confronting.

If you would like to help Bob's activities, go to MARIN POST and be a contributor or guest writer on items of public interest, or go to Amazon.com, select SMILE, and change your charity to Community Venture Partners, Inc of Mill Valley, CA as a recipient of your purchase points.