Fight the Pandemic

• Follow the Science, Not the Politics

I feel strongly about all of my issues, but this is the most urgent. While I was going out on radio and newsprint explaining and advocating for mask mandates, the City Council was as backward on masks as Donald Trump. At the beginning of May they complained requiring masks would be “hard” and require “nuance.” (Universal masking wasn’t too hard for Smart and Final or too nuanced for those of us at Black Lives Matter protests.) At the end of June, after the governor mandated masks, Anti-Mask Andy refused to wear one for an hour-long meeting she called me in for in a windowless room—not only illegal but disrespectful and really just plain nuts. Even now the city can’t bring itself to say that masks are required in public under state mandate. The SLO PD would save more lives getting people to wear masks that getting protesters to stay on the sidewalk.

We don’t know how soon a vaccine will come, how effective it will be, or how many people will take it. We don’t know how the science may change. If we want public health measures to work locally, we need to inform, encourage, and enforce—and not put store clerks on the front lines of our public health policy. In a pandemic that has targeted minority communities, service and agricultural workers, and people confined to institutions from group homes to prisons, those less at risk can mask up for everyone else.