

## Richmond's Salute restaurant's eviction notice withdrawn

By **Rachel Swan** Updated 7:53 pm, Thursday, August 18, 2016



IMAGE 9 OF 10

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Richmond Mayor Tom Butt reaches out to hug Salute e Vita restaurant owner Menbere Aklilu at a rally and news conference in Richmond, Calif. on Tuesday, Aug. 9, 2016. The popular restaurant and its philanthropic ... [more](#)

A beloved Italian restaurant will stay in its white-shingled home in Richmond's Marina Bay neighborhood — for now.

Salute e Vita, which is known both for its cuisine and for the philanthropy of its owner, **Menbere Aklilu**, was handed a 30-day eviction notice on Aug. 5, in what some activists and city leaders claim was an act of political retaliation by a landowner who for years has jostled with the city.

But on Thursday, the restaurant's landlord had a change of heart. **Jacqueline Poe**, whose firm **Penterra Company** owns the building, withdrew the notice, saying she would give Salute "one more chance" to fix what she said were severe plumbing leaks that threatened the health and safety of customers. Such repairs are the tenant's responsibility according to the lease, Poe says.

"Penterra's decision to give the restaurant one more chance stems from the corrective actions that are believed to have taken place since the Aug. 5 termination notice," Poe said in a statement. She said the restaurant had recently steam-cleaned the ceramic tile in its bathrooms and kitchen, a measure that her hired environmental consultant had recommended to prevent the spread of harmful bacteria.

Contra Costa Health Services officials inspected the building in August and dismissed Poe's claims of a sewage leak.

Richmond Mayor **Tom Butt** says that Poe's son, Richard Poe, is behind the eviction and that it is payback to voters for rejecting two ballot measures he pushed in June. One measure would have granted approvals for a town house project Poe wanted to build along the waterfront; the other would have limited the city manager's salary.

Butt spoke up for the restaurant shortly after it got notice to vacate.

Richard Poe vehemently denied those claims and accused Butt of trying to distract the public from what he said was a landlord-tenant dispute over maintenance issues.

“The mayor, rather than appropriately dealing with the serious health issue at hand and directing city code enforcement to investigate, chose instead to mislead the public and the press by stating the failure of ballot Measure N as the reason for the landlord-tenant dispute,” Richard Poe said in his own statement.

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Aklilu, who found out about her “last chance” through news reports rather than from her landlord, called the move a temporary relief.

“But then what?” she asked. “What’s going to happen a month from now?”

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