

Fate of Foreclosed Home Soon Final

By Cathy Tyson



Front of 3195 Condit Road, Lafayette

For neighbors, it can't happen soon enough. In an area with freshly painted homes, neatly mowed lawns and lush rose bushes, this house looks more than a little out of place. They have been patiently waiting for someone to demolish or start seriously remodeling this home on the corner of Condit Road and Pleasant Hill Road that's been declared a public nuisance.

As reported in January of this year, selling this foreclosed house can only be described as challenging. "This home slipped through the cracks," said Carolyn Lacy, Contemporary Home Solutions Manager, "Nobody could figure it out." A Notice of Default was issued by Countrywide Bank in March of

2008, but they also filed a Notice of Rescission less than a month later. A Notice of Rescission cancels or annuls the effect of a Notice of Default.

For almost two years the property languished – the homeowner erroneously believed the property had been foreclosed by the bank. A flurry of official notices and certified letters were ignored, from Notice to Comply to Notice of Violation Lien and more.

In the middle of the original process, Countrywide Home Loans was purchased by Bank of America. Bank of America finally issued another Notice of Default on the property in March, 2010 and has a Trustee Sale scheduled for July 17, 2010. Interested parties are invited

to bid at public auction for the property, with the home ultimately going to the highest bidder.

The home was purchased in August of 2004 for \$845,000 via a nothing-down first and second mortgage through Countrywide Home Loans. For real estate investors, that was a lifetime ago, when demand out-stripped supply, before anyone had heard of a credit default swap.

"Trespassers continue to break into the property. The presence of an empty swimming pool and the use of candles at night pose risks to trespassers as well as neighbors. The City of Lafayette wants to eliminate such risks by demolishing the structure and filling in the pool prior to the trustee sale. Efforts are currently underway to petition the Courts to allow this to happen," said Lacy.

Bank of America is trying to do the right thing and has assigned a representative from their Field Services Department to clean up and secure the property. "I'm working with Bank of America on property maintenance," said Greg Wixom, County Building Inspector, "I visit the property every week to make sure B of A is meeting their end of the bargain." He's also working with Mosquito Abatement and checks on the water level of the pool to make sure its less than 18 inches deep.



The Lafayette City Council is soliciting applications to fill the following volunteer vacancies:

The Code Enforcement Appeals Board is the official hearing body for Code Enforcement actions within the City of Lafayette that are appealed. The duties of the board are to hear appealed Code Enforcement cases in accordance with Chapters 1-9 and 8-21 of the Lafayette Municipal Code.

The Lafayette Community Center Foundation is dedicated to renovating and expanding the Lafayette Community Center. The Foundation was formed in 1983 to oversee the capital improvements and renovations necessary to transform the old Burton School into an active recreation center designed to accommodate our community's diverse needs and to provide a beautiful place to learn, create and have fun.

The Creeks Committee encourages beautification of Lafayette's more than 16-miles of creeks and improves residents' awareness of creek maintenance and pollution prevention policies. The committee helps the City's staff ensure compliance with public education requirements under its Storm Water Permit.

Environmental Task Force (2 vacancies) The City is committed to developing and implementing environmental policies and programs that will enable the City and its residents to meet their present needs without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their needs Position open until filled.

Public Art Committee composed of Lafayette residents that by experience, training, education, occupation or avocation, have demonstrated knowledge of and interest in the visual arts. The committee will advise the city council in matters pertaining to public art acquisitions, gifts, and artwork maintenance. The committee will serve as steward of the city collection.

Central Contra Costa County Transit Authority the Citizen's Advisory Committee follows the bylaws of the CCCTA Board of Directors and consists of members of the public from each of CCCTA's jurisdictions who have an interest in and commitment to public transportation. The CAC acts as a community advocate and liaison to transit users in their jurisdiction. Each Member is appointed by their jurisdiction for a two year term. The committee meets the second Tuesday of each month at 3478 Buskirk Ave., Ste. 100, Pleasant Hill, at 6:30 p.m.

The Contra Costa County Library Commission-Alternate was established by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors in March 1991. The Commission was created to serve in an advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors and the County Librarian.

Individuals interested in these volunteer positions may obtain an application on-line at www.ci.lafayette.ca.us or call the main office at 284-1968 and an application will be mailed to you. If you have questions related to these volunteer positions please call Joanne Robbins, City Clerk at 299-3210.

Cost of Parking Tickets Going Up in Lafayette

By Cathy Tyson



That expired meter will soon cost drivers \$5 more. Meters and every other violation will be a bit pricier in the near future to pay for SB1407. Parking scofflaws may not recall voting for the passage of this bill, which established a State Court Facilities Construction Fund, but they will soon be responsible for an extra \$3 for court construction costs that will be added to each citation, in addition to the \$1.50 that the State is now authorized to take. The Lafayette City Council recently approved the \$5 increase recommended by City staff.

What's a new ticket going to cost? Depends on the ticket – but for most common violations – like an expired meter, or parking in a no parking zone or loading zone, the new and improved tickets will cost \$30. Even leaving keys in a parked vehicle will cost you \$30, if sighted. Parking in a handicapped space will set you back \$280. Parking in a bus zone is also quite pricey at \$255.

It's unclear when the in-

crease will take effect, "We are working that out with the City Attorney right now," said Administrative Services Director Tracy Robinson. She mentioned the tentative start date is early July.

Add courthouses to the long list of things in California that are crumbling. Signed into law in September 2008, SB1407 "Launched an unprecedented courthouse rebuilding program in California by designating judicial branch revenues to fund up to \$5 billion in lease revenue bonds that will finance 41 new construction and renovation projects," noted the Office of Court Construction and Management. Of the 41 Courthouse projects from Alameda to Yolo County, none of the funds are going to Contra Costa County.

Proponents call the bill a major step forward to ensure the safety and security of courthouses and the improvements will not come from the cash-starved State General Fund, but rather court users.

Although many residents complain about the lack of parking downtown, the City of Lafayette is making a real effort to solve the problem. About \$250,000 is collected from parking tickets and \$120,000 from parking meters every year. That revenue goes into the Parking Fund and to support downtown maintenance, like medians, sidewalks, landscaping and Code Enforcement. Now at \$2,500,000, the Parking Fund money can only be used to buy

or build additional parking inventory.

Just recently a Parking Inventory was undertaken to quantify the parking problem in the Downtown Core and develop long term solutions. No surprise to folks who want to shop at Trader Joes on a Friday afternoon. City administrators are actively looking for properties to buy or lease in the downtown core.

Bookmark Café is Open



Soraya Radmanesh, David Amanat, and Mona Amanat in front of Bookmark Café Photo Cathy Tyson

Looking for a latte to enjoy while perusing the shelves of the new Lafayette Library and Learning Center? Check out the Bookmark Café, just to the left of the main entrance on Mt. Diablo Boulevard for juice, chocolate milk, coffee, tea, sandwiches and snacks. The library is food friendly, so snackers need not fear getting busted for munching their Madeleine's while reading.

C. Tyson

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