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Mayor Mike Anderson Discusses Priorities for 2013

By Cathy Tyson



Mayor Mike Anderson speaks with reporters Dec. 21 when Mt. View Drive reopened. Photo Cathy Tyson

Walnut Creek, Martinez and Clayton. Also responding to concern about slower response times, ambulance service provider American Medical Response is working on finding a way to reposition its units to better serve areas with station closures.

Moving on to the ever increasing traffic congestion within the downtown area, Anderson wants to take a comprehensive look at the overall situation, hoping to identify trouble spots, and use the latest ideas and technology, possibly adjusting signal timing to make traffic flow "as efficient as we can." Additionally he'd like to have a discussion with school district management about the possibility of staggered start times at Lafayette schools to help reduce bottle necks.

Concerned about some of the public comment regarding potential school overcrowding that came up at hearings for the controversial but recently approved KB Home project downtown, Anderson wants to partner with area schools, so that when a project is approved there are no surprises about potential expansion of the number of students. "We should have that conversation; we want to give schools information so they can plan accordingly - no surprises."

Finally, he'd like to encourage local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce to work with the Youth Commission on internships and summer jobs. Over the years as a liaison with this group, Anderson is clearly very impressed with the talents of the many students involved and the only city task force that actually makes money - on the annual haunted house.

On a personal level, juggling his full time job with the East Bay Regional Park District and the demands of being mayor can be challenging. "It's a little crazy sometimes," Anderson said. "My wife calls it a habit or minor addiction."

The couple also had a unique storm-related surprise, with the now-famous Lafayette sinkhole, right in their immediate neighborhood. The good news is the repairs continued 24/7 to get the job done as quickly as possible. The bad news is that repairs were 24/7 with heavy machinery and diesel generators humming throughout the night. He used earplugs and a blindfold in order to get some sleep. Several of his neighbors were conspicuously absent; chalk it up to an extended Christmas vacation, staying at a friend's home, or perhaps taking up the offer partially subsidized by the City of Lafayette with a generous discount by the Lafayette Park Hotel-rooms for \$50 per night.

Despite the noise and fumes, Anderson has nothing but compliments on how the process was handled, from quick-acting city staff that diligently worked on plans to obtain the necessary permits, to service providers. "It's amazing how responsive they've been - EBMUD, Central San, PG&E, and of course the C.C. Myers crew working through the night."

Longtime Lafayette resident Mike Anderson won re-election to the City Council back in November, and was sworn in as mayor in mid-December. This isn't his first rodeo, having served on the council since 2004 and taking another turn as mayor in 2008.

At the official city council reorganization meeting last month, Anderson outlined his priorities for the coming year. Most pressing is the closure of the Los Arabis Fire station, bringing the number of fire stations that serve Lafayette down to two from three. The station had been closed due to mold and pest infestation since late June; at that time, the firefighters stationed there moved down the street to Station 15 on Mt. Diablo Boulevard.

In order to avoid, or at least blunt the impact of the closure, while responding to Fire Chief Daryl Louder's suggestion of "creative solutions" Anderson called for adjusting staffing from three to two firefighters at each of Lafayette's three fire stations. Louder and union officials did not support that idea.

"There will be more discussion in the coming weeks," said Anderson. He explained that the chief will be going to all of the cities where there's a station closure - Lafayette,

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