

Published May 4th, 2016

City Council Throws Support Behind School Bond

By Cathy Tyson



Lafayette Unified School District board members Teresa Geringer and Suzy Pak flank Superintendent Rachel Zinn at the April 25 city council meeting. Photo Cathy Tyson

student growth - in five to six years projections show an additional 105 students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade; at Stanley Middle school during the same period, studies show an additional 140 students - it was clear the district needed renovations and more classrooms.

If passed, the bond translates to \$29.50 per year for every \$100,000 of assessed value of a Lafayette home. It's estimated that a typical homeowner will pay about \$185 per year. Both commercial and residential property owners would be subject to the assessment and all the funds would stay local, with independent citizen oversight and mandatory audits to ensure that funds are spent properly on school facilities and infrastructure, Zinn said.

"It's a pleasure to have an opportunity to compliment a public agency that is well led, well managed and we would urge the council to support this school bond," said Jack Weir, president of the non-profit, non-partisan Contra Costa Taxpayers Association at the April 25 city council meeting. He explained how the group carefully reviewed all of the tax measures on the June ballot using a list of critical criteria, and this school district "met every single one of our key criteria" including project scope, labor agreements, and whether the agency seems to do a good job in fulfilling its mission, specifically educational outcomes.

"This district does an excellent job," he said, adding that the bond is completely reasonable. "There're no frills, no funny stuff."

Grace Dixon, a parent of local school children, added her voice to urge the council's support, as she said she feels that home values in Lafayette rise and fall on the quality of the school system here.

After clarifying with the city attorney that it was appropriate to take a position on the matter, which is possible as long as no public funds are spent, the council unanimously voted to support the bond measure.

The Lafayette City Council showed its backing for local schools by voting to support the Lafayette Unified School District Bond Measure C, which will be on the June 7 ballot.

With all but one of the schools in the Lafayette School District between 50 and 70 years old, Superintendent Rachel Zinn briefed city leaders on the "tremendous need" in the district as the reason the school board is pursuing a \$70 million dollar bond to accommodate future growth as well as repair and upgrade structures that are "frozen in time."

Two years ago the district began a comprehensive process to examine campus buildings and infrastructure, along with student population trends for the four elementary schools and one middle school, Zinn told the council.

Given the age of the buildings and the projected

Reach the reporter at: cathy@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA