

Lafayette

Lamorinda Community

Lafayette

Calendar

City Council 7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room
500 St Mary's Road
Monday, June 22

Planning Comm. 7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room
500 St Mary's Road
Thursday, June 18

Design Review 7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room
500 St Mary's Road
Tuesday, June 23

Senior Services 3:00pm
Community Center, Alder Room
500 St Mary's Road
Thursday, June 25

City of Lafayette:
<http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us>
Chamber of Commerce:
<http://www.lafayettechamber.org>



Hit and Run, 5/25/09 A Betty Lane resident returned home late at night and parked his vehicle on the street in front of his home. When he returned to the vehicle the next day, he discovered it had been hit by another vehicle. Damage to the vehicle included a broken rearview mirror and a dent over one of the tire wells. There are no suspects and the only witness is missing a mirror.

Notice: Unlocked Car Doors Attract Purse Snatchers, 5/26/09 The victim left her purse in her unlocked vehicle and walked into First Steps Learning Center on Stanley Boulevard. She later discovered the purse was missing. Lost contents included her Ghurka wallet and BlackBerry Storm telephone. The purse snatcher rounded out the insults by using both of her credit cards and her ATM card at local establishments and on-line.

Look Out for Strawberry Vendors, 5/29/09 An alert and impressively concerned citizen contacted Lafayette Police when they saw an unknown suspect selling strawberries on St. Mary's Road near Rohrer. Police made contact with the Spanish-speaking subject and attempted to explain that he was not allowed to sell strawberries (or any other produce) without a permit. Police soon received another concerned call about a second strawberry vendor on St. Mary's Road. Both strawberry salespersons were given a ride to BART so they could go home.

DUI, 5/30/09 An anonymous passerby called police when he observed a single car accident on Pleasant Hill Road near Quandt. The suspect involved in the solo car accident admitted to driving the vehicle. She was arrested and transported to the Martinez Detention Facility.

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Fate of Downtown Apartment Building Undecided

By Cathy Tyson



Proposed development behind Panda Express Illustration provided by Heller Manus Architects, San Francisco

The 1.47 acre gravel parking lot behind Panda Express may be ever so slowly progressing toward development. It's been a circuitous route for the proposed C-shaped, 87-unit apartment building with one, two, and three bedroom units, known as Town Center III. The preliminary plans, after the first go-round of review will definitely be adjusted, more on that below. But at the moment the project features parking on two levels,

accessible from Dewing Avenue behind the Pet Food Express store. There is also a courtyard divided into public and private areas, with access to the public section from the BART pathway, and a 2,500 square foot community plaza/sculpture park. At a recently held Joint Meeting with the City Council, Planning Commission, and Design Review Committee, representatives of KB Home, Inc and Lafayette Residential

Partners were hoping to see if there was support for the project or not, which will determine if they file a formal application for development. In general, city staff support a multi-family project at this location because of its proximity to BART, shopping, and parks and find it "an ideal site for higher density housing," said Niroop Srivatsa in a Staff Report.

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Budget Goes From Red to Less Red

In addition, many felt that that reserve was to be used in case of a major earthquake or fire. Given the Council's fiscally conservative history, staff put together a menu of service and cost reduction options to choose from to put a dent in the deficit.

Seven pages of options each with a service implication and estimated savings were prepared. Getting off to a great start, Ron Lefler, Manager of the Public Works department, negotiated a rate reduction of \$85,000 from contract vendors. Add to that \$100,000 that won't be spent for new radios this year - a part of the Regional Communication System. City offices will be closed for four days between Christmas and New Year. Jennifer Russell, Director of the Parks, Trails and Recreation Department reported that summer fees were higher than anticipated, saving approximately \$27,000. The combination of these and other items totaled \$411,000, bringing the deficit of \$900,000 down by almost half to \$489,000.

One thing not on the negotiating table, at least at press time, was employee salaries and merit increases. "The Council has received some, shall we say, 'less than posi-

tive' response to this decision," said Administrative Services Director Tracy Robinson.

How are salary increases determined? "Each employee is given a performance evaluation and receives an overall rating of 0 - 3. That rating is then multiplied by a merit "factor" -- this year, the contract stipulates that the multiplier is 2.5; therefore, employees can receive a raise of between 0% and 7%. Last year the average merit increase was 6.7%. However, because the raises are pro-rated for new hires, the actual percentage increase in salaries was closer to 6% overall. Two notes -- not all employees are receiving a 7% increase and that \$135K figure (for merit increases) is fully loaded and includes the cost of social security, workers compensation and fringe benefits," said Robinson.

Getting back to this year's unusual one-time charges, in addition to the State money grab, accounting for the stupendous rise in the cost of policing through the Sheriff's department has gotten increasingly difficult. "Lafayette's total cost for police services in 2005 was \$2.9M, but we expect that number to climb to \$4.0M in the next fiscal year and -- unless something is done -- to

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\$7M within five years," said Falk. The proposed 2009/2010 budget reflects \$250,000 in increased reserves to offset the potential cost associated with a change in the provider of police services.

Another growing expense is non-negotiable Contra Costa County fees. The County is also in dire financial straights and continues to push expenditures onto cities where possible. For example in 1996 Lafayette paid nothing for Animal Control services, in 2006 the county charged \$54,000 for the same level of service. This year the fee will be \$150,000.

The feeling around the administrative offices is that if the County and the State would just leave Lafayette alone, the city would be just fine.

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Multi-Use Path Almost Open for Business

By Cathy Tyson



Photo Cathy Tyson

It's a win-win for Lafayette. It's not everyday that you get more than you pay for - especially in this case where EBMUD is footing the vast majority of the bill for the project. The brand new porous concrete Multi-use path originally planned to extend along Mt. Diablo Boulevard from Risa Road to the Reservoir entrance, was lengthened all the way to El Nido Road.

"We committed a specific amount of funds toward the multi-use path, and the city designed a cost effective project. With the competitive building climate right now - estimates came in much lower than anticipated," said Sonna Garcia, Associate Civil Engineer with EBMUD.

Serious joggers and cyclists take note, "This will provide a link to the trail system that con-

nects with Happy Valley, Upper Happy Valley and El Nido," said Matt Luttrupp, Associate Engineer with the City of Lafayette.

EBMUD provided the funding on this cooperative project, while the City of Lafayette provided engineering and staff time. "We are very excited to see the path get built, it looks great," said Garcia. "Discussion with the City about collaboration began with planning for the pipeline that will be built on Mount Diablo Boulevard in 2010. Because it's a heavily used pedestrian area we wanted to improve safety during construction. Long term, it provides a nice pathway in Lafayette and improves access for visitors to EBMUD's Lafayette Recreation Area."

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Ware Design is going west on Mt. Diablo Blvd!

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