


Civic News

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Lafayette


Public Meetings

City Council	Monday, December 14, 7:00 pm Lafayette Library and Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd
Planning Commission	Thursday, December 17, 7:00 pm Community Center, Manzanita Room, 500 St Mary's Road
Design Review	Tuesday, December 22, 7:00 pm Community Center, Manzanita Room, 500 St Mary's Road
Circulation Commission	Tuesday, January 19, 7:00 pm Lafayette Library and Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements
City of Lafayette: <http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us>
Chamber of Commerce: <http://www.lafayettechamber.org>

The City of Lafayette Senior Services Commission is soliciting citizens of any age for the current open position on the commission. Residency within Lafayette is not a present requirement but zeal for enhancing the well being of older adults is. The commission meets on the 4th Thursday monthly from 3:00 – 5:00 PM and ancillary committee work is also entailed. Call 284-5050 Lafayette Senior Services.

Police Report



Feeling No Pain, 11/26/09 The suspect was clocked doing over 100 mph on Highway 24 near the St. Stephen's exit. The erstwhile dangerous thrill seeker was arrested for speeding and driving under the influence of alcohol. She was later released to a sober friend at the Lafayette Police Department. The racecar was towed from the scene.

Lock the Car, 11/21/09 When the victim returned to his parked car on N. Thompson Road, he discovered some contents were missing. A thief opened the door of the unlocked car and made away with a camera, a key fob and two bags with contents valued between \$800-\$900.

Theft from Vehicle, 11/25/09 An unknown suspect gained access to the victim's vehicle on Hidden Valley Road by rudely smashing a window with an unknown object. Mr. Smash and Grab managed to lumber away with a variety of treasures: \$20 in change, a car club and a season's pass to a Lafayette theatre. Be wary of theatre patrons paying for drinks with change and carrying a club.

Stick Up by Zip Lock, 11/27/09 A white male entered Bank of the West on Mt. Diablo Boulevard and presented a semi-automatic handgun to the bank tellers. The robber demanded they fill two plastic Zip Lock bags with cash. Zip Lock took the cash and ordered everyone to the floor before heading out the back door in an unknown direction. A K-9 track for suspects ended with negative results.

Downtown Plan Keeps Moving Forward

By Cathy Tyson

Lafayette's draft Downtown Strategic Plan (DSP) continues on its journey, and is now in the competent hands of the Planning Commission which is painstakingly deliberating district by district preparing comments that will ultimately go to the City Council. In addition, an environmental impact report (EIR) of the draft Plan is being prepared by an independent consultant; both are meant to keep the process moving forward toward the adoption of a final plan.

Preparing a framework for long term future development doesn't happen overnight. As they clarify and listen to public input, the Planning Commission is well aware that nothing will be decided upon until the EIR and

Economic Analysis are available and reviewed. The task at hand is to dig into the nitty gritty details of the draft Plan and prepare a list of recommendations for the City Council.

Perhaps that's why the last meeting had a much friendlier tone and was decidedly less argumentative than DSP meetings of just a few months ago.

To expedite the task at hand, staff has clarified each district of the DSP by dividing it into two sections: the existing General Plan and the draft DSP to identify key differences. Oddly enough, like differing residents - there are sections where staff has two different points of view. These are complex issues and a variety of factors play a part. Even staff couldn't come

to agreement – so both sides of the argument are spelled out, and the issues opened up for public comment.

The Planning Commission meeting focused on controversial height issues. Planning and Building Manager Niroop Srivatsa suggested that building heights in the downtown retail district should be allowed to 35' with the ability to go to 43' with conditions. A staff report best sums it up, "The downtown retail district is the heart of the Downtown and should be the district that allows greater intensity of uses, density and height. It should not be a large district in area or length; rather it should be compact and walkable...the goal of protecting views of the hills should be balanced with provid-

ing the right environment and tools for the development of pedestrian oriented retail uses and housing."

Srivatsa also encouraged the Commission to treat Lafayette Circle gently and carefully to limit development due to the quieter, smaller street.

Commissioner Thomas Chastain hit the nail on the head when he asked staff how to put into a Specific Plan the nuance particular to a site - especially without an actual project at hand.

"Lay down a vision to talk about preservation of views and clarify what that means, list important design guidelines – like views or setbacks. It requires a lot of analysis and preparation; it's crafted to be more of a guide," said Srivatsa.

Notorious Home for Sale

By Cathy Tyson

It was more than four years ago that Pamela Vitale, wife of defense attorney and television legal analyst Daniel Horowitz, was brutally murdered in the entry way of a mobile home the couple was living in while they built their dream home nearby. Scott Dyleski, a 16-year-old neighbor at the time

of the incident, was found guilty of first degree murder and was sentenced to life without parole.

The home was completed and, according to Horowitz, has been occupied for over two years. The mobile home where the incident occurred is long gone, and the luxurious four

bedroom, three-plus bath home in Hunsaker Canyon is for sale. The home could be the bargain of the century. For residents looking for a spectacular, very private 6,200 square foot Italian villa on over thirteen acres with commanding views, this could be just the ticket.

"Between the murder and the location (up a narrow one lane road) it would take a special person to buy this house" said Cathy Schultheis, a Lamorinda realtor. Some might consider it a bit of a bargain – it's huge, has an approved federal winery license, vineyards, four fireplaces, game room and more. For the same asking price, \$3,998,000 there's a slightly larger, 6,488 foot, home available in Lafayette, but it's situated on slightly less than half an acre, closer in to town.

According to California Civil Code section 1710.2, deaths on a property must be disclosed for three years. Since

it's been just over four years, technically the realtor handling the transaction doesn't necessarily have to mention it. However, according to Tom Pool, Spokesman for the California Department of Real Estate, "Agents have a duty to disclose all material facts."

A laborer with a local contracting firm working on the home at the time of the murder who wished to remain anonymous said, "All of the guys were creeped out. They kept referring to, 'una fantasma,'" a ghost in Spanish.

Already on the market for 121 days, this could be the perfect Christmas gift for a motivated buyer. Interested parties should know this is a gated property, so don't plan on stopping by if in the Burton Valley neighborhood. (Repeated calls to Peggy Cortez, the listing agent with J. Rockcliff Realtors, were not returned by press time.)

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