

Memorial Service for Ned Robinson



Ned Robinson Photo provided

Council Member Ned Robinson at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 23 at Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette.

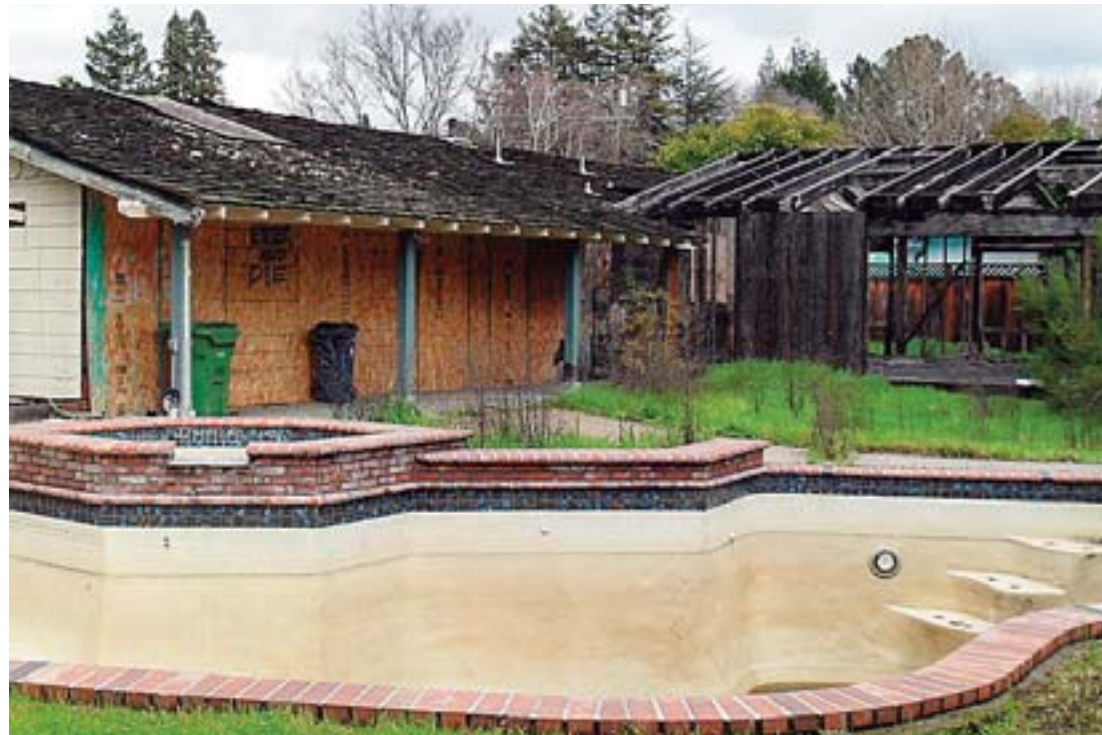
Robinson served on the City Council for a total of 18 years, and was Mayor in 1972 and 1978. His first civic calling was working on getting Lafayette incorporated in the 1960's. Even after retiring from his career as an attorney, Robinson kept busy. He recently served as Vice-Chair of the Code Enforcement Appeals Board and attended meetings about the Downtown Strategic Plan.

"Ned's early guidance and easygoing manner put Lafayette on the right course following incorporation. He consistently and graciously gave his time and energy to make Lafayette a better community. When I followed Ned on the Council in 1985, after his second retirement, I always felt I had very big shoes to fill," said Mayor Don Tatzin.

He passed away at John Muir Medical Center in Walnut Creek on December 20; he was 82.
C. Tyson

Public Nuisance Home Continues to Deteriorate

By Cathy Tyson



The backyard of 3195 Condit Road, Lafayette. The windows were recently boarded up. Photos Cathy Tyson

What does it take to sell a foreclosed home, especially one that has been officially declared a nuisance? Although Bank of America, succeeding Countrywide, owns the property and several parties have expressed an interest in buying it, 3195 Condit Road, at the corner of Pleasant Hill Road, continues to deteriorate. The City of Lafayette will shortly be slapping an additional \$10,300 lien on the unoccupied place for abatement fees and fines - this is on top of a total of \$15,000 in liens placed on the property back in September, 2009. This paper originally reported on the property at that time; since then nothing has changed.

Lamorinda Code Enforcement Officer Greg Wixom just sent another round of certified letters as required by law to the mortgage holder for the cost of abatement - removal of dead bushes, repairing the fence and fines. "I can't explain it; I don't know what their rationale is. You think they would want to minimize their losses," he said. Mosquitoes have not been a problem yet, but that may change come springtime with a vacant dirty pool and standing water. "Vector Con-

trol has been notified, but with the cool weather mosquitoes are not an immediate concern," said Wixom. "Nobody seems to know anything about it," said next door neighbor Vivian Williams. "I can't find a human being to talk to at B of A. I'm exhausted - it's frustrating. This affects my property. I have called the police numerous times about teenagers partying inside." She's especially concerned that the teens hanging out inside the structure light candles that could possibly start a fire. With all of the rotting lumber and tall dry weeds the fire could easily spread to her adjacent home.



"Clearly Bank of America is not doing a thing with the property - not returning phone calls, not interested in working with the City," said Wixom. Rather ironic since there are a couple of developers and two contractors, according to Wixom, who have said they would like to buy the property if it ever becomes available.

Since 2007, the owner of record has been officially noticed to clean up the property. As of press time, the weeds are still there, the framing for an unfinished addition continues to rot and the partially drained pool hasn't seen chlorine in a very long time.

Wrestling with the Downtown Parking Problem

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"The preparation of a comprehensive parking strategy is critical to the future success of the downtown."

Staff took a look at how other cities handle parking. Danville has cheaper parking a few blocks away from their downtown core. Redwood City allows for up to four hours at a meter.

Guest speaker Bob Powers, member of the Walnut Creek Downtown Parking Task Force and owner of a number of parking facilities in Walnut Creek, said enforcement and time limits are the only way to control parking. "People are lazy and cheap - that's the conclusion I've come to." Meaning people don't want to walk too far and they don't

want to pay too much.

Larry Blodgett, who joked he is keenly aware of the issue after receiving a \$25 parking ticket on the Library's opening day said, "The City should consider leasing vacant lots - a potential source of income for Lafayette. I'd like employee permit parking."

"Real or perceived - there is a parking problem in Lafayette. I encourage the City to buy or potentially lease property. We agree that street parking is essential," said Jay Lifson, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce.

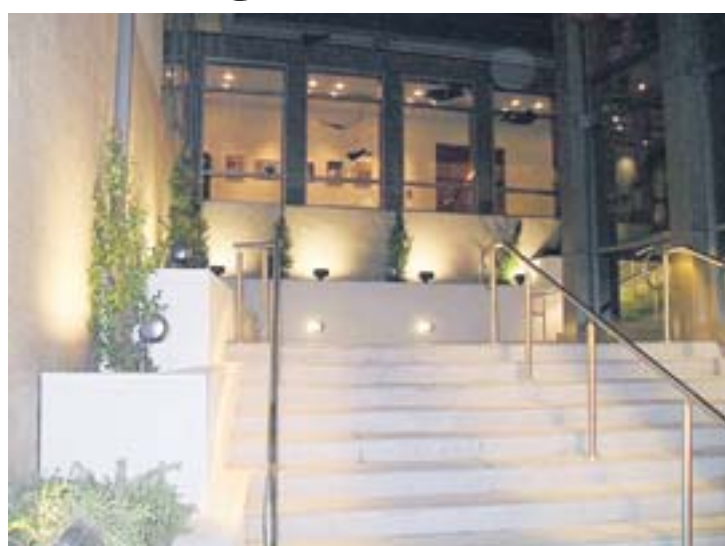
Erling Horn, former City Council member and an ex Parking Commissioner, suggested the city

re-establish a Parking Commission/Task Force.

The Planning Commissioners all agreed that the city obviously has a problem. "Whole Foods will put another burden on parking in the center of town," said Commissioner Karen Maggio, "we have to do this now." She also recommended that Lafayette should make efficient use of shared parking. Vice Chair Patricia Curtin-Tinley supported forming a Parking Commission or Task Force.

Chair Thomas Chastain summed up the current state of the Parking discussion, "I think it's irresponsible not to have some strategy toward a solution, but I'm not sure how to get there."

Finishing Touches on Library Landscape



The exterior of the new Lafayette Library and Learning Center was aglow with lighting and newly installing planting - a joy to evening patrons and City Council meeting attendees. With the exception of a handful of large trees in crates on Golden Gate Way waiting patiently to be installed, and ground cover for the amphitheater, the landscaping is almost complete.
C. Tyson

Photo Cathy Tyson

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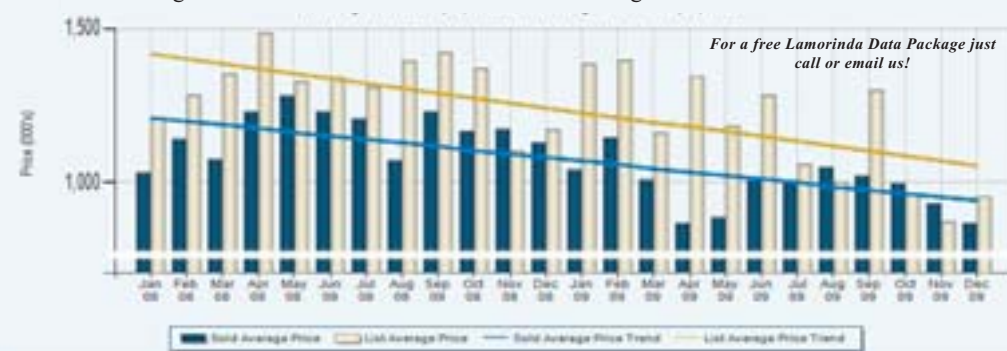
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