

Third Time's the Charm for Mayor Federighi

By Cathy Tyson



Photo provided

Like a fine wine getting better with age, the trio of Lamorinda mayors that were serving their citizens in 2007 are back in the saddle again, serving as mayors for 2012, perhaps with a little more gray hair, and experience under their respective belts. All are getting the same staggering compensation they did back in the day; that would be zero dollars for countless hours of work to keep the municipalities running.

With generally stable city councils composed of five members, seems like everyone gets a turn in the mostly ceremonial role of being mayor every handful of years.

Similarly the staff and management at the Lamorinda Weekly will also be celebrating an anniversary of sorts, 2012 marks our fifth year of bringing all the local news fit to print to Lafayette, Orinda and Moraga.

"I'd like to think I haven't changed much in five years," said new mayor Carol Federighi, who has served on the city council since 1999. She has served a mayor twice before, in 2003 and 2007. "I still believe in strong fiscal management, open government, a lively and attractive downtown, recreational opportunities for our citizens, support for senior services, civil discussion of our differences, and the protection of our hillsides and ridgelines."

Key staff members are the same, fellow city council members are the same and unfortunately, "I am again becoming mayor on the heels of another defeated road measure, but Lafayette continues to be healthy fiscally as staff and the Council have pursued conservative policies," said Federighi.

While change does not come quickly in Lafayette, there have been some notable new additions in the last five years. When she was mayor in 2007, Federighi participated in the groundbreaking cere-

mony for the Lafayette Library and Learning Center, which is obviously now completed and open for business.

"We have a Farmers Market in Lafayette now, and some additional great new restaurants. We've added to our pathways and trails...and there's a new stage at the Lafayette Reservoir. Our last road measure was defeated at the polls, but we have made progress in addressing our backlog of repairs by squeezing to pave," said Federighi. "We have strengthened senior services, but have been unsuccessful to date in obtaining the requisite financing for new affordable senior housing. We face more challenging economic times than before."

Federighi figures she has made progress on goals set in 2007, but has more work to do, "Without more revenues than we realistically anticipate, we will be unable to repair all of our failed residential roads. We haven't yet adopted a Downtown Specific Plan, but we are close to it. In 2007, Lafayette was in the national spotlight with the Crosses of Lafayette. One of my goals was to revise our sign ordinance in a fashion that met Constitutional scrutiny but protected our residential neighborhoods. We adopted a new ordinance in 2008 but have postponed addressing signs in the downtown until a Specific Plan is adopted. Another of my goals in 2007 was to increase communication with our commissions and task forces and with our neighboring communities." Now the three communities have yearly joint meetings.

Topping this year's to do list is beginning the process of revitalizing the businesses facing Plaza Park by adopting a Plaza Park Overlay District, as reported in the last edition of this paper. "The overlay proposes to provide incentives to participating owners to redevelop their properties in a way that preserves and maintains their historical character and addresses the chronic parking shortages and poor circulation in the block." She also hopes to revise the downtown sign ordinance and look at opportunities to develop a pedestrian and bike pathway on the EBMUD right-of-way land.

Getting out her crystal ball to look five years into the future, Federighi sees the revitalization of the Plaza Park businesses, more housing and new retail in the downtown. She adds, "Hopefully, we will also have a more vibrant economy than we have now and that the Downtown Specific Plan will guide some positive initiatives and public amenities."

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