## Lafayette denial of big home remodel upheld in court; plaintiff to pay costs

By Pippa Fisher



The Woodalls' plans for a large two-story, Tudor-style mansion were found to be incompatible with the character of this Hilltop Drive neighborhood in Happy Valley. Photo Pippa Fisher

State of California announced its decision on Nancy and Michael Woodall's lawsuit over their de- suit against the city of Lafayette, nied plans to build an English-style arguing that the council's decision mansion in favor of the city of Lafayette and furthermore ruled that evidence. the city is entitled to recover all costs.

nounced Oct. 26, follows several city for all of its costs to defend years of wrangling over the Wood- the case, approximately \$15,000, alls' plans to demolish their existing single-story 4,111 square-foot Steve Falk points out, should serve ranch home and replace it with a as a deterrent to others who would two-story construction of a 5,595 file frivolous lawsuits against the square-foot Tudor-style country city. house featuring steeply pitched roof lines in the Happy Valley Dell and, since they were funded by taxsubdivision of Lafayette.

plans when first presented in 2013, Falk. including bringing the proposed roof height down by 17 inches decision," commented Lafayette and an initial approval from the Design Review Commission, both the Planning Commission and the City Council agreed with the many neighbors who appealed on the grounds that the project was not structures, seriously. The Court of compatible with the mostly smaller, single-story ranch homes in the due diligence in evaluating and ulneighborhood and would reduce timately denying the permit."

the Court of Appeal of the views of adjacent properties. The proposal was denied.

The Woodalls brought the lawwas not supported by substantial

The court, finding in favor of the decision made by the city, or-The court's decision, an- dered the plaintiff to reimburse the which as Lafayette City Manager

"Those costs are substantive payers, this is a win for the city and Despite changes made to the for all Lafayette residents," said

> "We were very pleased with the City Attorney Mala Subramanian. "The city council and its commissions each take their responsibility to review and evaluate property matters, including the design of Appeal decision confirms the city's

## Lafayette school district seeks to quickly rectify parcel tax error

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Photo Pippa Fisher

This calculates out to about \$26 per year, per taxpayer."

The errors came to light when trict.

Zinn says they are very grateful that the resident brought it to their grams will need to be cut as they attention so that they can rectify the issue refunds, points out that the problem as fast as possible.

the general fund or reserves, or some combination of the two," said Zinn. Taxpayers will be receiving a nity for even passing a parcel tax letter when the district has worked out the mechanics of refunding the money, including a process for "opting out" as a choice. The district is now working with SCI Con-sible."

sulting Group as they straighten out the problem.

Zinn says the reaction she has a resident new to the area was ex- received so far has been overamining his annual tax bill and whelmingly positive with many brought questions to the school dispeople suggesting they would rather the district keep the money.

Zinn, who says that no prodistrict really needed the parcel tax "The refunds will come from to support programs in the face of inadequate state funding.

"I am so grateful to the commuto enable us to provide such a high quality education. We really regret that this happened and want to get it taken care of as quickly as pos-



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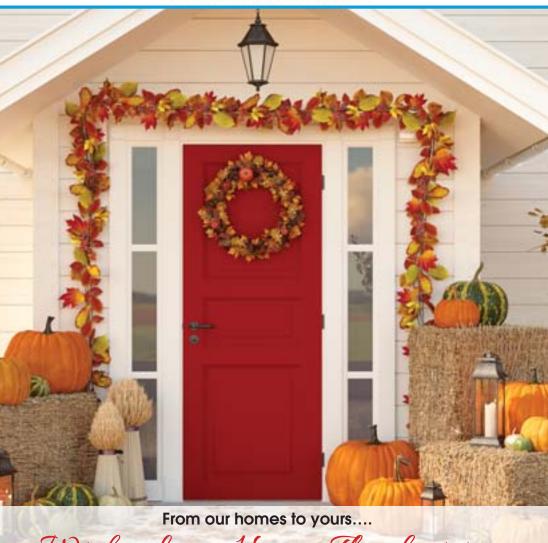




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