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## Ho Ho Ho! Santa knows 'It's a Wonderful Life in Lafayette'

By Pippa Fisher



Santa's visit last year

Photo provided

Lafayette is once again embracing the holiday season and kicking it off with its traditional "It's a Wonderful Life in Lafayette" celebration, featuring refreshments, music, activities and, of course, starring the big man himself.

Yes, that's right. Santa will be there, checking his list and visiting with children, ably assisted by Town Hall Elves. The fun, family-friendly, free party runs from 4 to 6:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 1 and is hosted by the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. The event is sponsored by local realtors, The Dana Green Team and Branagh Development, who together are hosting the environmentally friendly downtown Lafayette twinkle lights for the 2017 Holiday Season.

The annual celebration includes the tree lighting, live music, a community sing-a-long, and crafts. Santa's "sleigh" for the event is Lafayette's historic fire truck, Old

Betsy, which will parade along Golden Gate Way from the Lafayette Historical Society with a police escort, arriving in the Plaza Park at 4:30 p.m.

The police department, which is partnering with the Lafayette School District for its Second Annual Toy Drive, will be accepting donations during the festivities. This program collects toys for distribution to those in need within the community. Residents can help fill a police car with new toys.

There will be an exhibition of holiday drawings by Lafayette's third-graders. Local student musicians will be providing music for the celebration.

Residents always enjoy the community and the cheer of the season as they take advantage of the photo-ops with Santa at this heart-warming Lafayette tradition – a great way to start the holidays!

## No rent review ordinance for Lafayette

By Pippa Fisher



The apartment complex owned by Tilden Properties was the focus of discussion about rent at a recent city council meeting. Photo Pippa Fisher

Lafayette lawmakers fell short of the votes needed to adopt a residential rent review ordinance at this time.

With only three members of the council voting at the Nov. 13 city council meeting and one of them publicly opposed to such an ordinance, it was clear from the start that there could be no further action. Council members Ivor Samson and Mark Mitchell had elected to recuse themselves from the discussion due to potential conflict of interest.

Nonetheless the council heard follow up from city staff on several points that had been raised at the September city council meeting.

At issue was whether the city should adopt an ordinance capping rent increases in complexes of 25 units or more at 10 percent.

Lafayette City Planning and Building Director Niroop Strivatsa presented the \$60,000 roughly-estimated costs of a rent review program (including the hiring of

a part-time planner to run the program) and showed studies of other cities – Fremont, San Leandro and Concord – that have implemented similar programs.

City Attorney Mala Subramanian drew the council's attention to the recent ban on price gouging implemented at the state level by California Gov. Jerry Brown, which will remain in effect until April, stating that rental-housing rates may not be increased by more than 10 percent, with certain exceptions.

As at the September council meeting, several speakers complained of rent increases, all from the 1038 Second Street complex in Lafayette. One such resident, Peggy Pricco, said that she had sought legal advice and had been advised to consider legal action. She said she was told, "If your city is not willing to stand behind you, the legal action should become a class action and be inclusive of the city."

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In the spirit of the holiday season we have made a donation to the Wine Country Fire Relief Fund.

Happy Holidays!

 1042 Leland Drive, Lafayette Pending	 1154 Glen Road, Lafayette Sold   \$3,525,000	 4144 Canyon Drive, Lafayette Sold   \$2,755,000	 952 Stow Lane, Lafayette Sold   \$1,965,000
 3676 Hastings Court, Lafayette Sold   \$1,950,000	 1136 Glen Road, Lafayette Sold   \$1,700,000	 3155 Stanwood Lane, Lafayette Sold   \$1,645,000	 840 Santa Maria Way, Lafayette Sold   \$1,425,000
 3341 Betty Lane, Lafayette Sold   \$1,420,000	 149 Calle La Montana, Moraga Sold   \$1,375,000	 1753 Spyglass, Moraga Sold   \$1,300,000	 3337 Sweet Drive, Lafayette Sold   \$1,220,000
 2313 Belford Drive, Walnut Creek Sold   \$1,212,000	 49 Mariposa Way, Walnut Creek Sold   \$1,160,000	 3294 Sweet Drive, Lafayette Sold   \$1,075,000	 3150 San Gabriel, Concord Sold   \$690,000
 2560 Oak Road, Walnut Creek Sold   \$545,000	 1324 Skycrest, Walnut Creek Sold   \$430,000	<small>*Represented either the Buyer or Seller in the above properties*</small>	



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