



Published October 17th, 2018

## City postpones follow-up meeting with PG&E officials

By Nick Marnell

Because of the unavailability of key community members, Lafayette postponed its meeting with Pacific Gas and Electric Company officials to discuss pipeline safety and other public frustrations with the utility. The meeting planned for Oct. 22 was rescheduled for Nov. 13.

Over much of this year community members, led by community group Save Lafayette Trees, lashed out at PG&E regarding their concerns over natural gas pipeline safety, tree removal on private property and lack of clear communication to the public over disruptive projects like the closure of St. Mary's Road during the summer. In response to the complaints of his constituents, Vice Mayor Cam Burks organized a special city council meeting on Sept. 10 that included company officials and representatives from the California Public Utilities Commission to listen to the public and come up with answers and solutions to their concerns. About 30 residents attended the meeting that Burks spearheaded and the vice mayor said that the dialog was frank and open but that a follow-up session was required for the company and the CPUC to return to the public with solutions.

Several community members leading the efforts regarding pipeline safety will not be available for the planned Oct. 22 session. Gina and Michael Dawson of Save Lafayette Trees will be speaking in New Orleans at a conference hosted by Pipeline Safety Trust, a pipeline safety advocacy group.

"Even if we were going to be there on Oct. 22, we still haven't had a discussion with PG&E since Sept. 10," Michael Dawson said. "We need PG&E to engage with us now, but nothing has happened. We are anxious to get this done and I hope the company shares the same energy."

"Everything is being evaluated right now with respect to this engagement," said PG&E spokesman Jeff Smith. Burks promised that a member of the city staff will attend a meeting with representatives of Save Lafayette Trees and company officials prior to the Nov. 13 council meeting, but though Burks and Smith said a meeting was in the works neither could commit to a date.

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