

Lafayette

Lamorinda Community

Lafayette

Calendar

City Council 7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room
500 St Mary's Road
Monday, July 27

Planning Comm. 7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room
500 St Mary's Road
Thursday, August 6

Design Review 7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room
500 St Mary's Road
Tuesday, August 11

Senior Services 3:00pm
Community Center, Alder Room
500 St Mary's Road
Thursday, July 23

City of Lafayette:
<http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us>
Chamber of Commerce:
<http://www.lafayettechamber.org>



Mailbox Thief 6/29/09 – A La Caminita resident wrote a check to JC Penney and put it in her mailbox. Later that day, the resident was contacted by US Bank in Pleasant Hill to see if she'd written the check to a female suspect at the bank. The resident confirmed she had not written the check to the suspect and the bank advised her to contact the police.

Razor Blade Fan at Safeway 6/30/09 – A suspect was observed placing 7 packs of Gillette Power razor blades in a Safeway basket and then transferring them to his backpack. The suspect then walked out of the store without attempting to pay for the razor blades valued at \$139.33. The suspect was stopped by store employees and attempted to flee before police arrived. It turned out the suspect has a rather curious razor fetish and had been arrested during the prior month for stealing razor blades at Target in Walnut Creek.

Lock Your Car 7/6/09 – A Carol Lane resident left her unlocked car in her carport for the evening. She returned the next morning to find the trunk, driver's side door, glove box and console open. The crafty villain managed to open the unlocked car and got away with a \$20 bill and a phone charger.

Dog Statue Defaced 7/17/09 – A School Street resident called police to report an act of vandalism. An unknown suspect had rudely defaced the owner's cement dog statue. The statue was valued at \$200.

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Lafayette Moves Forward With Charter City Process

By Jonathan Seclow
The Lafayette City Council is considering dropping Lafayette's general law status in favor of becoming a charter city. Such a move would place Lafayette among the 114 cities in California that have adopted charters.

The City Council assigned a committee to investigate the advantages of becoming a charter city. On Monday, the committee's findings were presented to the council by the committee's chair, Cheryl Noll.

In her report, Noll explained that the City Council's primary motivation for considering such a shift is the possibility of increased revenue. Charter cities have the ability to raise their property transfer taxes, which

are fixed at 0.055% in general law cities. The benefit of a higher property transfer tax is that it creates a source of local revenue that cannot be withheld by state legislators in Sacramento. Such a revenue source would be particularly valuable now, as many fear large "take-aways" by the state during California's budget crisis. Even if Lafayette were to adopt a charter, voters would still have to approve any increase in property transfer taxes.

Furthermore, the report claimed that a move to a charter city would give Lafayette greater control of local governance as it relates to capital projects. There are regulations that general law cities must follow

when awarding contracts to vendors. Charter cities are allowed to bypass many of these regulations for contracts under \$100,000. This will free up time and money for city administrators, who are forced to devote time to advertising and evaluating bids. It will also allow the city to award contracts to local vendors in cases where they are not the lowest bidder.

Another benefit of pursuing charter city status, according to the committee's report, is that it allows the city to restructure and modify its local government in a manner that is seen fit. However, the City Council stated that they found no problems with the current structure.

Finally, the committee said

that charter cities might be able to pay non-prevailing wages for certain capital projects. While this seems possible under California law, it has proven much harder in practice for cities that have tried it. To date, no city has been able to pay non-prevailing wages without being contested. There are several cases regarding the matter in court now.

The risk of adopting a charter is that it can be amended in ways that could constrain the city government. The committee found that these risks were minimal, and very few city charters featured binding arbitration amendments.

Following the presentation, Noll announced that the committee

would like to support Lafayette's pursuit of a charter.

"We would like to recommend that Lafayette adopt a shorter and broader charter. We would like one similar to San Ramon's," Noll said.

The City Council reacted favorably to the committee's recommendation.

"The consensus then, is to have the committee move forward and prepare a draft charter for Lafayette," said Mayor Don Tatzin.

Following the committee's presentation, the Council moved to have the committee prepare a draft charter for possible inclusion as a ballot measure in the next local election.

New Classroom Building Almost Open



Photo provided

Pictured above is the new 18,000 square foot classroom and administration building of the Contra Costa Jewish Day School, scheduled to open this August. Located across the parking lot from Temple Isaiah, off of Risa Road, it has a commanding view of the Lafayette Reservoir.

"Our new building represents a huge milestone for the Contra Costa Jewish Day School as we establish ourselves as a vibrant and permanent fixture in both the independent school and Jewish communities of Contra Costa County. We have grown from a school of 25

students when we opened in 2001 to 120+ students for the coming school year and we're still growing," said Lisa Friedman, Director of General Studies. C. Tyson

Beautiful Gazebo Care of Garden Club



Photo provided

While some residents might grumble about pulling weeds, pruning and fertilizing, these folks can't get enough of it. Formed thirty-nine years ago, the

dedicated members of the Lafayette Garden Club have spent countless hours supporting civic beautification projects.

At 150 members strong, mostly women and a few men from their twenties into their eighties have endeavored to enhance their knowledge and love of gardening. Their most visible imprint on the city has been maintaining and improving the Gazebo since its dedication in 1987 to celebrate the Bicentennial of the Constitution and the adjoining Virginia Anderson Memorial Garden. Located at the corner of Golden Gate Way and Mt. Diablo Blvd, it took the Friends of the American Legion Post 517 along with Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8063, The Lafayette Garden Club and many others to get it built.

Early on there was no water at the Gazebo, so devoted member Virginia Stone and her husband filled up big buckets at home and drove them to the garden to hand water. When Barbara Peters took over she decided to ask the city for a spigot. Now they have a drip watering system, but it can be a little temperamental. At one point the Public Works Department had a water truck come by to give thirsty plants a drink.

"It's a great opportunity to dig in the earth and get to know people on a different basis than at the meetings. It's been so rewarding, I encourage everyone to get involved," said Stone. Even Barbara Peters, who has a very large lush backyard garden of her own, notes that it's been a labor of love. Because her

husband Ray was part of the effort to get it erected she said, "I always felt loyal to the Gazebo." It's quite busy, with parents and children and walkers who're taking the bridge that crosses the creek and links it to the regional path. "People really appreciate it," said Peters, especially on a hot day, who wouldn't enjoy a comfortable bench and some welcome shade.

The Club meets once a month where they share a potluck lunch and have a featured speaker. Ecology, flower arranging, and growing exceptional tomatoes are some of the wide range of topics speakers cover. Noting the breadth of ages of members, Ruth McCahan, past President said, "About three years ago there was a big influx of women with grammar school aged kids that add to the overall vitality of the Club." They recently re-landscaped the Anderson Memorial Garden with drought tolerant plants.

Annual fundraisers alternate between a spring plant sale and a garden tour. Last year's tour raised a phenomenal \$10,000 which the Club gave to schools to support garden projects. Their other projects include Youth Homes - helping children who live in a group home with a backyard garden, a white elephant sale and supporting a promising DVC student who is interested in horticulture with a scholarship.

They even have their own club flower - the daffodil. For more information, see website - www.gardencentral.org/california/lafayette/.

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