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Playtime for City Council at Unveiling

By Cathy Tyson



From left, Mayor Don Tatzin, Carol Federighi, Mike Anderson, Carl Anduri, Photo Doug Kohen Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Russell and Vice Mayor Brandt Andersson

The design and construction of the new play area took nearly seven months from start to finish, and is scheduled to officially open to the public around August 20. Park Development Fees paid for the project. Developers who are building a subdivision as well as residents doing a major home remodel, such as adding a couple of bedrooms to an existing home are required to pay Park Development Fees. The idea is that when increasing the city population, a contribution to city parks and recreation is required. This could be toward purchasing land or in-lieu fees toward a playground such as this.

Although estimated by city engineers to cost \$180,000, residents got a lot of bang for their Park Development Fee buck, the low bid came in at just under \$125,000 due in part to the depressed economy.

In his dedication speech Mayor Don Tatzin recalled the history of the Community Park, "Back in the early 80's shortly after Cal Trans declared surplus several tracts of land that had been intended for a freeway through Burton Valley, a group of citizens met with, what was then called the Recreation Commission and recommended the City buy 68 acres of this property for a city park." The City Council approved the purchase embarking on an ambitious plan to build new sports fields, then a parking lot, footbridge, picnic areas and restrooms.

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Beneath a dazzling blue sky, Lafayette Mayor Don Tatzin dedicated a new high-tech playground at the south end of the Community Park, near the baseball fields. Supporters and the balance of the City Council were there to cheer him on. It's not every day you get to see the Mayor take an inaugural slide.

Clearly playgrounds have come a long way from the monkey bars of yesteryear. "Our objective was to create a playground with a unique identity that will draw kids out to play in Lafayette Community Park. This universally accessible playground is visually stimulating and offers different types of challenges and experiences," said Karen McArdle, Landscape Architect of Lafayette-based Hansen McArdle Inc. "Climbing, sliding, cooperative and creative play activities are encouraged under, around and on the treehouse-like tot structure. A xylophone, gong and auditory surprises are incorporated. The tot play area has an attractive fabric shade canopy and is enclosed by a fence. Older kids are invited to experiment with movement and will be challenged by the climbing rock and a sculptural assemblage of dynamic equipment."