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## Published May 12th, 2010 Expect Changes at Clocktower Building

By Cathy Tyson



Photo Cathy Tyson

The historic Clocktower building, a mainstay on Mt. Diablo Boulevard for more than thirty years, has a new Property Manager that intends to, "Bring it to the next level."

"We are leasing and manage the property for the owner, the Parks family," said Craig Semmelmeyer, Founder and Principal of Main Street Property Services. Because of the work they had done at the Parks' Bel Aire Plaza shopping center in Napa, they were asked to manage the Clocktower building.

New management is currently submitting some design guidelines to the city. They want to change the awning and signage but will not be doing any renovation, and are working with the existing tenants, said Semmelmeyer; although at press time, a sampling of tenants had only heard rumors of a change.

"I have signed a lease at a new location," said Leila Douglah of Douglah Designs. "I knew that I needed to act fast after the new property management company started talking about their 'vision' for the property. I feel like the new vision for the property is totally self-serving to the property management company and the Parks family with total disregard to the business owners that currently occupy the

spaces." She has been in her space for a total of six years and has invested over \$250,000 into her showroom, including high end kitchen and bath displays, upgrading the lighting, flooring and bathrooms. "It doesn't make sense; I pay fair market price for my space promptly every month and have made upgrades to the building."

Her three year lease, with a two year option to continue renting, expired in February of 2010. When Main Street agreed to a meeting she was two weeks past the 60 day requirement to renew. Technically Main Street was able to not renew, but that's not the way it was when Hap Parks was running the business, Douglah explains, on a handshake.

She was told a six month extension was the best Main Street could do. Look for Douglah Designs to move directly across the street from their current location, near Supercuts and Hollywood Video, later this year.

"We want to challenge people," stated Semmelmeyer; that includes having new requirements for tenants, like being open seven days per week, "and we're asking them to spruce up their spaces."

"What's most rewarding is watching businesses improve and step up their game and reap the benefits of good retail." He added that they are looking to add a new tenant here and there. "We're sharing with tenants the secrets to being successful. We want to help the tenants to be active, vibrant and thrive. Sales performance justifies a rent increase."

"He's not challenging people," Douglah says, "He's playing dictator with people's lives and their businesses. It's a good time for me to be somewhere else. When presented with lemons, make lemonade! I'm very excited about setting up a new showroom across the street with all the latest products and materials the industry has to offer."

"I hope all the other tenants have success finding new places so that they can go back to running their businesses as they see fit without the current worry and uncertainty. This is going to turn out to be a very positive change for me, and I hope it's the same for the others, too," added Douglah.

Because of ongoing negotiations some tenants were not willing to comment publicly.

Main Street's website reads, "Main Street's objective is to achieve maximum value for our clients by providing long-term solutions to retail projects through creative leasing strategies." A few clicks further on the site, shows an impressive collection of before and after photos and drawings illustrating tired strip malls that are now modern, contemporary shopping hubs.

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