

Big Turnout, Concerns at Homeowners' Annual Meeting

By Cathy Tyson



Mayor Brandt Andersson and Assemblywoman Catharine Baker taking questions at the annual Lafayette Homeowners Council meeting. Photo C. Tyson

Many members of the Lafayette Homeowners Council aren't thrilled with the direction the city is going. "In recent years, a lot has changed in our little town, and not all the changes have been positive," wrote LHC President Jenny Kallio in a letter to encourage attendance at its April 23 meeting. At the meeting, she acknowledged that while some things are clearly better, she concluded that "with improvements come more of everything" – parking troubles, traffic, and development. The LHC is a nonprofit organization founded in 1984, made up of representatives of neighborhood associations as well as concerned individuals, to be an advocate for homeowners' interests.

After his introduction at a crowded Community Hall, Mayor Brandt Andersson gave the State of the City address and responded to the LHC's concerns. Recently elected Assemblywoman Catharine Baker, who represents District 16, which includes Lafayette, also reviewed the work she's been doing.

The mayor looked both forward and back in time. He has the unique perspective of having been mayor five years ago, in 2010, as well as for 2015. He reminisced about changes that occurred over the years, calling the opening of the new Lafayette Library and Learning Center, "an enormous success, rewriting the role of the local library." He also mentioned other pressing concerns from a handful of years ago: police costs, the fire

station, failed roads and problematic state finances.

Looking ahead, he said he feels the budget is in much better shape, and the city will soon completely address the road repair backlog. He explained that now instead of putting every extra dollar toward road repair, the city can potentially spend money on other projects. That's the reasoning behind the Community Conversations – getting input about citizens' priorities.

Although there was one more Community Conversation scheduled at the time of the meeting, Andersson didn't want to keep the audience in suspense. The most popular suggestions from residents are to preserve open space, add more resources for police and make improvements to the Park Theater, either civic or private, as well as the revitalization of that area.

It's unclear if any of the night's discussion swayed LHC members. Although Andersson pointed out that there are over 10,000 parking spaces in the downtown area, the problem is many are in segregated small lots out of sight. He said the city is in negotiations with a parking management company to address the situation with technology.

The city's new transportation planner, Austin Lee, presented the final scope of work for a comprehensive downtown congestion study at last week's city council meeting that, if approved, will study congestion and ultimately come up with a preferred solution. ... continued on page A9

Musical Saturday in the Park

By Cathy Tyson



Photo Andy Scheck

Those community-minded Rotarians are at it again. This Saturday, May 9 they will be showcasing the talents of local musicians at the Lafayette Reservoir stage in an effort to raise money to support Lamorinda and Bay Area schools with new instruments for their music programs. What better way to spend a Saturday than enjoying complimentary music, surrounded by nature while enjoying a frozen treat or burger?

The annual Concert at the Res, now in its 24th year, was conceived by longtime resident and Rotary member Dick Holt, who is proud of "Lafayette's great reputation for supporting the music community." The fundraiser party hosts musicians young and old, from junior high students in Stanley Middle School's Symphonic Band to the legendary Big Band of Rossmoor that features the talents of senior members like Frank Como and music students in their teens.

Not only do the Rotarians host the show, they also built the stage where the musicians will be playing. In years past, the hard working volunteers would construct and take down a temporary stage to put on the event. After many years, it became unsustainable, so Rotary members looked

for a more long-term solution that could also be used by the public. Community support at concerts also helped fund the construction of the new permanent stage.

Performing this year with the Stanley Band are invited guests from Oakland's Westlake Middle School Band, the Acalanes High School Jazz Ensemble, the Bentley Jazz Ensemble, and the Dominant Seven Jazz Combo. Together they will provide music from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. What's music without dancing? Back again this year: the Lamorinda Theatre Academy Dancers and the Town Hall Theatre Troupe.

Organizers thought of everything. The stage is adjacent to a shady picnic area on the east side of the reservoir, and for those who may need a little help getting from the parking lot to the venue about 150 feet away up a slight incline, golf cart rides are available, along with comfortable chairs set up near the stage.

Don't miss the best free concert that gives back to the community this weekend in Lamorinda. How often do you get to double dip – enjoy the show while supporting local music programs via a Popsicle or a raffle ticket. It's a family-friendly win-win.

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