



Lafayette

Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, Aug. 10, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, Aug. 3, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Aug. 10, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Arts & Science Discovery Center,
3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Lafayette:

www.ci.lafayette.ca.us
Phone: (925) 284-1968

Chamber of Commerce:

www.lafayettechamber.org



Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report July 5-11

- Alarms** 47
- 911 Calls** (including hang-ups) 4
- Traffic stops** 46
- Suspicious Circumstances** 10
- Suspicious Subjects** 9
- Suspicious Vehicles** 14
- Abandoned Vehicle**
4100 block Hidden Valley Rd
- Burglary, Auto**
4000 block Canyon Rd
1100 block Upper Happy Valley Rd
1200 block Cambridge Dr
3700 block Sundale Rd
4100 block Hidden Valley Rd
3700 block Highland Ct
3700 block Highland Rd (2)
20 block Crest Rd
3300 block Deer Hill Rd
Oakwood Athletic Club
4000 Valente Dr
- Civil Problem**
1000 block Aileen St
3700 block Mt Diablo Bl
- Disturbance**
3200 block Quandt Rd
- Drunk in Public**
Safeway
- Fireworks**
Stanley Bl/Vacation Dr
- Found Adult**
3400 block Moraga Bl
Burton Dr/Gold Ct
- Fraud**
3300 block Sweet Dr
- Harassment**
Trader Joe's
1100 block Hilltop Dr (by phone)
Mt Diablo Bl/Happy Valley Rd
800 block Moraga Rd
600 block Glorietta Bl
- Hit & Run**
3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
- Loud Music**
Acalanes High School
Springbrook Pool
- Loud Noise**
3300 block N. Lucille Ln
Springhill Elementary
Ridge Rd/Hawthorne Dr
800 block Reliez Station Rd
Acalanes High School
- Loud Party**
Hough Av/Wildwood Ln
Rowe Pl/Moraga Rd
Silver Dell/Reliez Valley Rd
Stanley Middle School
- Police/Fire/EMS Response**
3300 block Betty Ln
1000 block Brown Av
- Public Nuisance**
Trader Joe's
3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
Crescent Dr/Moon Ct
- Promiscuous Shooting**
Wallabi Ct/St Mary's Rd
- Prowler Heard**
3300 block Glenside Dr
- Reckless Driving**
Hwy 24/Oak Hill Rd
Reliez Station/Pleasant Hill Rds
Burton/Apache Cts

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Priority Report Spurs Question of Possible Tax

By Cathy Tyson

Responding to results from the recent Community Conversations that identified issues residents wanted to see the city accomplish over the long term, the Lafayette City Council wrestled with how to fund them. Open space conservation topped the list of chief concerns by residents who responded to the “willingness to pay for” question on the survey, followed by crime surveillance, a larger police force, a bike path, the Park Theater and a parking garage.

Council members noted at the July 14 meeting that parking and congestion are definitely hot topics around town and especially with the Chamber of Commerce, as merchants complain about lack of parking for customers. It’s about to get even worse as the large KB Homes condominium project gets underway, located on the former parking lot behind Panda Express that held 100 spaces. In addition, construction crews working on the project will surely be driving into Lafayette.

It’s unclear if voters are willing to tax themselves to chip away at this wish list, and the council wasn’t sure

either, but they indicated an interest in clarifying the situation.

“The public has expressed an interest in certain programs,” said City Manager Steven Falk, who made it clear that “you can’t afford (these programs) without an additional revenue source. These are choices you have to make.”

He gave a concrete example: In a recent feasibility study, an expert drew up plans for a potential parking garage slated for the city-owned parcel at 949 Moraga Road. Construction is estimated to cost \$3.85 million for 80 parking spaces. Falk continued, “If parking is your highest priority, then the council needs to have a serious conversation on how you are going to fund it.”

City Attorney Mala Subramanian outlined possible options if the City Council wanted to pursue putting a sales tax on a future ballot, possibly as soon as November 2016. Shoppers in Lafayette currently pay 8.5 percent sales tax; 7.5 percent is the state sales tax and 1 percent goes to voter-approved Contra Costa Transit Authority and BART measures. If the City

Council wanted to put a general tax on the ballot, where revenue goes into the general fund to be used for public purposes, it would need a simple majority to pass. If they chose a special tax that can only be used for a specific purpose, two-thirds of voters would have to approve – a more challenging threshold.

Complicating the issue is the current statewide cap on additional sales taxes, which is now at a maximum of 2 percent above the current statewide level of 7.5 percent. It is possible that CCTA and BART may take action to increase their current tax rate. If they do that before Lafayette imposes a tax, the city would be limited to an increase of 0.5 percent. Pending in the state legislature is measure AB 464 that would increase the cap from 2 percent to 3 percent. The measure has been approved by the state senate and is going to the assembly. Its “looking positive,” said Subramanian. If Assembly Bill 464 passes, it would be possible for the city of Lafayette to potentially place a 1 percent sales tax on the ballot.

Another option for parking may be to partner with BART to expand its

parking lot, although there are a couple of wrinkles to consider. The Happy Valley Improvement Association is clearly not in favor of a large parking lot in its neighborhood and there is a very “narrow window,” as Falk explained, to chime in on BART’s expenditure plan.

The biggest hurdle for Council Member Don Tatzin is having ample reason to ask voters to increase sales tax. Looking at the Community Conversations survey results, Council Member Mike Anderson focused on willingness to pay and concluded, “We’re going to have to come up with a mechanism for funding,” adding, “Now may not be time to do it, but we need information to make a decision.” He wants to see if the business community is willing to support it.

Moraga, Orinda, Concord, Richmond and El Cerrito voters have additional voter-approved transaction and use taxes.

No decision was made, but the council agreed to continue the conversation at its Aug. 10 meeting to determine if a committee should be formed to explore the matter further.

Controversial Sufism Reoriented Sanctuary on Track for Spring 2016 Completion

By Adam Blake

Anyone driving in the Saranap neighborhood located on the Lafayette border has undoubtedly noticed the large trucks and tall fencing at the construction site on Boulevard Way. The new Sufism Reoriented project was approved in April 2012 and is set to open spring of next year.

Sufism Reoriented is an Americanized spiritual movement that has been centered in Saranap for 35 years. The group has about 350 members, most of whom live within a mile of the new sanctuary. Indian spiritual leader Meher Baba founded the group in 1952.

According to Sufism Reoriented president Ira Deitrick, the group has lacked space for its congregation since the beginning.

“One of the wonderful parts of it for us is to finally put all of the activities together in one place and share the space,” Deitrick said. “That’s very important for us because the kind of spiritually training we do involves group activity, involves people work-

ing together in harmony, and if they’re all separated in little spaces apart, that can’t happen. So this will enable us to move forward with our basic life pattern.”

Construction began in May 2012 and is set to open mid-2016. Community members clashed with the organization for four years during the approval process.

“There were many public hear-

ings, and a lot of the public records certainly reflected very boisterous discussion on both sides,” District 2 Supervisor Candace Andersen said. “I think the majority of people recognize the right of a religion to be there and a sanctuary to be built, but it was just ensuring that visually and, more importantly, traffic and parking wasn’t going to impact their neighborhood.”

Since the area is technically in-

corporated Walnut Creek, the county was in charge of approving the project. On Feb. 29, 2012 the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to approve the project.

Reflecting on the process, project director for the new Sufism Reoriented Sanctuary, Robert Carpenter, saw the positive outcomes of the situation. ... continued on page A12



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