

Lafayette School District Leans Toward Bond Measure

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Ceiling water damage at a Lafayette school.

Photo provided

With no other facility funding coming from the state, the district, which includes four elementary schools – Burton Valley, Happy Valley, Lafayette, and Springhill – along with Stanley Middle School, is on its own.

Superintendent Rachel Zinn said, “There’s a tremendous amount of need” due to wear and tear from decades of constant use at every campus. She explained that safe modern schools are essential to protecting the outstanding quality of local neighborhood schools and that the longer the district waits to remedy the laundry list of renovations and repairs, the more expensive it was going to be.

HKIT Architects proposed a long

project list, covering renovation or replacement of aging, deteriorated building systems and infrastructure at each of the schools. Specific items include aging roofs, plumbing, lighting, heating ventilation and air conditioning, site utilities – sewer, water, and electrical services – classrooms, walls, ceilings, floor coverings, siding, paint windows, fire alarm systems, parking lots and more.

The board concluded from all the information gathered, including a structural evaluation, a public financial management presentation, a capacity and utilization study along with long-range enrollment projections, that critical facilities at all of the campuses that educate Lafayette students

from kindergarten through eighth grade must be addressed.

The Lafayette School District has not had a bond measure since 1995, although the Acalanes Union High School District has had measures that were passed by voters in 1988, 1997, and 2002. However, voters in 2014 approved Measure B, a parcel tax extension for the Lafayette School District, which continued existing tax rates without an increase.

For more information on all the studies the bond measure is based upon, go to the Lafayette School District website, www.lafsd.k12.ca.us, click on District, then select Facilities Master Planning Resources from the drop down list.

Town Opt's Out

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“I’m feeling a lot of pressure with this March 31 deadline and I don’t react well to pressure,” said councilmember Phil Arth at the Feb. 24 council meeting.

Vice Mayor Dave Trotter suggested to Marin Clean Energy CEO Dawn Weisz, who was at the meeting, that her company extend its deadline to the end of June to give Moraga more time to decide. Weisz responded that her board would have to make that decision.

“Why wouldn’t we want to keep our options (with the county) open?” asked Mayor Mike Metcalf. The law prohibits a city from joining two different CCAs. If Moraga joined MCE, it would preclude later joining the county’s own CCA.

Town Assistant Planner Coleman Frick noted the drawbacks of waiting for the county to create its own collective. “The county is in the preliminary stages of creating a CCA,” said Frick. “The county has asked for communities to share the cost of a feasibility study. There are other unknowns for the county program; one of their options is to join MCE.”

Frick noted that it took Alameda county two years to go through such a process, and that the cost to participating agencies could be much higher than what MCE is currently asking. Because of all these uncertainties, staff’s recommendation was to join MCE.

The Board of Supervisor’s Inter-

nal Operations Committee Feb. 29 directed Jason Crapo of the County Department of Conservation and Development to bring to the next board meeting on March 15 a recommendation to start a study to either join MCE or engage in creating a Contra Costa CCA. Crapo anticipates the feasibility study will be complete by the end of 2016. Alameda County voted to create a CCA in June of 2014, but it has not launched yet.

Moraga residents came to the council meeting to support the idea of joining a CCA, but not necessarily MCE. Former mayor Lynda Deschambault recommended keeping control, investments and jobs local, and supporting the county’s efforts. The Contra Costa Clean Energy Alliance says that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has designated 40,887 acres of land in Contra Costa County (mostly former industrial sites) as suitable for renewable energy generation. This means that the county’s local renewable production potential could power 1.27 million homes. There are 406,772 households in Contra Costa County.

The council’s final decision was to ask PG&E to share Moraga electricity data with MCE for potential membership, while MCE decides whether or not to extend the joining open enrollment period for three months. Staff will continue monitoring the CCA efforts of Contra Costa County as an alternative to MCE.

Development, More Development

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Also, three commercial or mixed projects are under development in Lafayette. With its multiple-story apartments and condominium projects, Lafayette has the most active downtown development, which, according to Vice Mayor Mike Anderson, presents the challenge of preserving the quality of life as that has been enjoyed in Lafayette.

Orinda’s development includes the 245 Wilder homes, 16 of which are completed and 23 are under construction. Mayor Victoria Smith mentioned the commercial building now in the planning review process at 25A Orinda Way across from the library, and JJ Ranch’s 13 single-family

homes with preservation of the Moraga Adobe. The mayor noted that the recently completed housing projects in Orinda, 73 homes at Orinda Grove and the 67 Monteverde Senior Apartments, were immediately sold out and occupied.

The meeting concluded with a presentation about common paving jobs, such as a Moraga-Orinda repaving of Ivy Drive, the combination of two separate surface seal projects in Lafayette and Moraga, and an Orinda-Lafayette project at White-Oak Court. These collaborative projects were heralded as nice first steps in the right direction.

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