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Anderson spells out 2020 goals for the city



Lafayette Mayor Mike Anderson

Photo courtesy Jeff Heyman, city of Lafayette

By Nick Marnell

Though recent operational reports show the city of Lafayette in good overall shape, Mayor Mike Anderson pushed the city for more as he presented his major goals for 2020 at a

December city council meeting. The mayor kicked off his priority list by referring to the eight goals and objectives former Mayor Cam Burks spelled out for the city in 2019. Those targets included the augmentation of citywide emergency preparedness,

relief of downtown traffic congestion and the development of a comprehensive transparency strategy for the city. Anderson charged the city staff to develop a proposal and a budget for delivering the eight high-priority items. Recently passed legislation could impact the city planning and development review process, Anderson said, and his goal was for the city to increase the awareness of those impacts. For example, Senate Bill 330 changes the timeline for consideration of a project from 120 days to 90 days, with no more than five total hearings permitted. "That is going to be very difficult to do," Anderson said. The Capital Projects Assessment Committee comprises five members, and the mayor would like to add two more in 2020, with the goal to evaluate the operation of public utilities and to advise on future options. Anderson cited the development of microgrids for delivery of electrical service as a way to lessen the impacts of a citywide power shutoff. "Maybe in

parts of the city we can have separate power sources that can keep the city lit in those particular areas," he said. An unusual uptick in residential crime likely prompted the goal to review video surveillance systems in order to enhance city security. The mayor praised the work of the Lafayette Police Department, which had solved two frightening home invasion crimes in the fall, but Anderson pushed to stay ahead of the curve. "We need to keep on our toes and see if there are things out there we can do better," Anderson said. Impressed by the Park Theater renovation, the mayor led the charge for the city to codify a density transfer ordinance, a way for developers to trade increased density for certain public amenities, like affordable housing or height restrictions. Anderson also urged the city staff to focus on the General Plan update. "Hopefully it won't take 10 years," Anderson said. "Maybe we can get it done in five."

Lafayette battalion chief charged with grand theft and misappropriation of public funds



Photo Nick Marnell, Lamo archives
Former Battalion Chief Lou Manzo

By Nick Marnell

The Contra Costa County Dis-

trict Attorney's Office filed criminal charges in December against former fire district Battalion Chief Lou Manzo, who was charged with 12 counts of grand theft and misappropriation of public funds. Manzo had been assigned to Contra Costa County Fire Protection District Battalion 1, which includes Lafayette, Pleasant Hill and Walnut Creek, since 2014. According to Steve Hill, ConFire public information officer, district leadership became aware of possible misconduct by Manzo in December 2018. Manzo was

placed on administrative leave and a full internal investigation was ordered and conducted. When results of that investigation revealed apparent misconduct over five years, the results were immediately handed over to the district attorney for criminal investigation. Former Deputy District Attorney Dodie Katague worked the case in 2019 and explained the basis of the charges. "Manzo took advantage of his knowledge of ConFire's internal system to fraudulently misrepresent his hours and time off requests, in two separate fraud

schemes," Katague said. In one scheme, Manzo would take vacation days but then later change his timecard to claim special pay for an extra assignment outside of his normal course of duties. Manzo would list a special assignment that he did not attend, or which did not happen on the day he said it did. "He would then go back and not claim the vacation time. He wanted to preserve his vacation time in relation to his pension," Katague said. Manzo also claimed overtime pay for out-of-office work events that he never attended. A review was conducted of the GPS logs on his

assigned work vehicle. "Witnesses confirmed that Manzo did not attend these events or was never near the event location," Katague said. Hill said that after Manzo was placed on administrative leave Manzo subsequently applied for retirement. Manzo left the district in March after 29 years. "In total, the loss to ConFire is \$46,000 in direct salary payments and \$19,000 in costs incurred to cover shifts while Manzo was out of the office or claiming to be on special assignment," Hill said. ... continued on next Page

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