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Photo Jeff Heyman

# Heatwave fun at the Moraga Commons splash pad

By Jeff Heyman

This was certainly a heatwave to remember. Thanks to the splash pad at the Moraga Commons Park, summer relief came in the form of water-sprouts and cooling sprays for all to enjoy. Activated by touching cleverly designed sensor pads with a foot or hand, undulating and seemingly random water bursts – which surprised the uninitiated as the water appeared to come from nowhere – de-

lighted young and old alike. Families flocked to the water feature at the 40-acre multi-use park at 1425 St. Mary's Road in Moraga to have a little bit of sunny fun and beat the heat.

And there was heat to beat: the mercury reached into the triple digits this past Fourth of July weekend due to a temperature-trapping heat dome that drove parents and kids seeking cooling relief

to the Moraga Commons' splash pad. Kids waved flags, others hung out for a cool spraydown – all recorded on video by parents who also jumped in to enjoy the temperature-defying mist. The Town of Moraga operates the splash pad everyday from Memorial Day to Labor Day, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. – another reason to enjoy living in Lamorinda.

**LAMORINDA**

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## Lafayette City Council votes for ask for sales tax measure to fight looming deficit

By Elaine Borden Chandler

On July 8, the Lafayette City Council held a discussion whether a sales tax increase should be placed on the Nov. 5 ballot. This potential sales tax increase would be to address the annual financial deficit of \$2 million that Lafayette will face starting this year. This deficit will occur if Lafayette continues only ongoing operations and does not account for additional expenses such as inflation or wildfire preparedness. A half percent sales tax would keep current operations going while a three quarters percent tax or one percent tax would give additional funding to cover other expenses.

A previous poll by Strategy Research Institute (SRI) had been taken in order to gauge knowledge of Lafayette's fi-

nanial difficulties and the support among Lafayette voters for different percentages of a sales tax raise. A digital packet was distributed beforehand by SRI with the results of their new tracking poll.

Beginning the discussion was Dr. Gary Manross of SRI, who presented the tracking poll results. It showed that after Lafayette's information campaign, the 'Likely Yes' support for a one percent increase rose from 36% to 48%, for a three quarters percent rose from 41% to 50.5%, and for a half percent increase rose from 46% to 55.5%. He also showed that popularity increased with a sunset clause of seven or ten years and a citizens' oversight committee. He stated that SRI would not

make a recommendation but that he personally thought that the Council should aim for a one percent tax increase with a seven-year sunset clause and a citizens' oversight committee.

This tracking poll, however, included a new chart that was not in the distributed packet. It detailed the specific levels of support for each percentage of tax increase instead of the broad support for "Up to 1%" that had been provided earlier. In this chart, it was revealed that after being presented different arguments for the tax raise, support for a one percent tax increase dropped from 48% to 42.5% while support for the other options rose.

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## Orinda offers residents more money to increase fire code compliance

By Sora O'Doherty

The Orinda City Council recently approved an increase that doubles the matching funds available to residents for work done to bring their property into compliance with the fire code. Using funds raised by the increased sales tax approved by the voters in 2020, the city will match 50% of expenditures by homeowners annually, up to \$1,000 per year.

The grants under the Measure R Fire Fuels Reduction Incentive Pilot Program were previously limited to \$500 in matching grants. Orinda residents may now apply for the program each calendar year, so long as funds are available.

Additionally, in the past the grants were limited to evacuation routes, but now residents on any roads that may be accessed by fire equipment qualify. Residents also need to be in a current Firewise community, have had a Fire Adapted Community Assessment completed within a calendar year, or have received a notice from the Moraga Orinda Fire District that the property is not in compliance.

The types of work that will qualify for the grants include: total removal of Eucalyptus and/ or Monterey Pine trees; total removal of dead or dying trees; removal of ladder fuels (shrubs and bushes), ... continued on Page 6

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