

# Planning Commission Struggles

By Andy Scheck

The members of the Lafayette Planning Commission have had a difficult role to play of late. There is a carefully crafted General Plan for Lafayette, there are areas in the city that are in need of major improvement and there are developers that want to do the job. The Woodbury development, proposed for 3758 Mt. Diablo Blvd. behind the Veterans Memorial Building, is a perfect example of how the Design Review Board, City Staff and Planning Commission work together to get a project ready for a final decision by the City Council.

How many improvements to a proposed development can be made? How closely must it adhere to the guidelines of the General Plan? Step by step, KO Architects has followed the advice of the Design Review Board and the Planning Commission. Over the course of many meetings, a

proposal was forged which, after a 4-2 vote of the Commission, will be presented to the City Council at its next meeting on August 13.

The Woodbury development will replace an existing motel and the surrounding area with four stylish townhouse buildings creating eighty condominiums, of which twelve will meet the affordable housing requirement. The Woodbury is a big step towards the General Plan target of bringing multiple housing units and affordable living to Lafayette.

In looking at this area, it is important to note that there are two more properties between the existing Veterans Memorial Building and the new development. The East Bay Municipal Utility District owns the space behind the Vet building, complete with right of way rights and use restrictions.

Rick Stover, the development's landscape architect, presented a plan for the possible use of the EBMUD property. A bike path, walkways, grassy playground and pleasant seating areas will make this open space enjoyable.

In voting against sending the project to the City Council, Commissioners Will Lovitt and Mark Mitchell again addressed their concerns about the height of the buildings, which at 41 feet exceeds the 35 feet maximum. At its next meeting on August 2nd, the Planning Commission is expected to hold its final vote on the extended building heights and the rezoning of the property from C (General Commercial) to P1 (Planned Unit Development).



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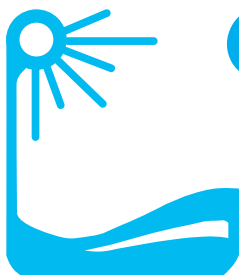
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