

Twinkle Lights Saved!

By Cathy Tyson



Last year's Diablo Foods' tree stands in for lack of twinkle light photo Photo Andy Scheck

Thanks to Jay Lifson, the quick thinking Executive Director of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, the trees along Mt. Diablo Boulevard will sparkle with brand new, energy efficient twinkle lights in time for the holiday season.

The fate of the lights was dim earlier this year. Property owners resoundingly rejected an increase in the Landscape and Lighting Tax assessment this summer. Since the increase didn't pass, the City Council had to look at options for reducing expenditures, twinkle lights were cut and a number of other items were reduced. With hat in hand,

Lifson politely asked the City Council to reconsider their decision. Because the Chamber of Commerce was willing to put up \$13,000, half of the total cost of \$26,000, and two additional business donations of \$2,000 had been received to offset Lafayette's portion of the cost, the City Council was willing to renegotiate. Any additional business donations, which the Chamber is actively soliciting, will go directly to the City to further reduce the cost of the lights.

It was in a nick of time too, as Public Works needed to know the very next day, to order and get them installed before Thanksgiv-

ing. The lights were last replaced in 1999. The new completely replaced and upgraded LED lights use just one-tenth of the energy of traditional lights. Next year, it's estimated that the lights will cost approximately \$11,000. to maintain. It might be well below that the following year.

"Let's be a leader on this," said Lifson, regarding showing the community a way to light the downtown and save a tremendous amount of energy. The benefits of the twinkle lights, "aren't quantifiable, in terms of shoppers or sales tax revenue. We can't let the downtown go dark. Its just a feel good thing."

"I 100% support businesses stepping up," said City Council Member Mike Anderson. He commended Lifson for a good effort given the short amount of time. The City Council was in unanimous agreement. Look for Mt. Diablo Boulevard to shine once again this holiday season.

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