

# Lamorinda Community, Calendar, Agendas, Notes, News

# Lafayette

Calendar	
<b>City Council</b>	7pm Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Monday, Dec 10
<b>Planning Comm.</b>	7pm Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Thursday, Dec 6
<b>Design Review</b>	7pm Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Tuesday, Dec 11
<b>Park, Trails, Rec.</b>	7pm Community Center 500 St Mary's Road Wednesday, Dec 12
<b>Circulation</b>	7pm Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Monday, Dec 3
<b>Emergency Prep.</b>	9:15am City Offices 3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Suite 265 Wednesday, Dec 12
<b>Senior Services</b>	3:30pm Community Center, Alder Room 500 St Mary's Road Thursday, Dec 6

check online:  
Town of Lafayette:  
<http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us>  
• all meeting notes  
• calendar updates  
Chamber of Commerce:  
<http://www.lafayettechamber.org>  
• local businesses  
• upcoming events

## Downtown Dilemma

By Cathy Tyson

Because a key downtown property owners' tax that would have split landscaping maintenance among other things did not pass over the summer, the City Council recently had the difficult job of figuring out a way to reduce expenditures.

This fiscal year, projected costs will be \$558,079 to keep Lafayette's medians green and trimmed, as well as keep seasonal banners and the beloved twinkle lights, but property owners are only required to pay \$158,000. That's the problem, that the City's burden has increased over the years, but the portion paid by property owners has substantially remained the same. If passed, costs would have been split 50/50 between the Core Landscape and Lighting District and the City of Lafayette.

The City has spent a considerable amount of money beautifying these medians and providing the extra polish to Lafayette that arguably brings more shoppers and restaurant-goers to town. This in turn brings more sales tax dollars to the City, which accounts for 24% of general fund revenues.

"To cannibalize the downtown is to bite the hand that feeds us," summed up Lynn Hiden, one of the concerned citizens at the meeting.

City Staff took everything into account and came up with five scenarios to reduce expenses in the downtown core area. The options ranged from A to E. On the more severe end of the spectrum Option A proposed a 75% reduction in landscaping services and no plant replacements, having property owners repair their own sidewalks and maintain landscaping along their street frontage, turning off streetlights, and eliminating banners, twinkle lights and community events. Towards the other end was Option D, no reduction in landscape services, but sharing the cost of twinkle lights, banners and community events, with property owners repairing their own sidewalks and maintaining their own landscaping. Finally Option E was the status quo. It was suggested that the title of Option E be changed from "Do Nothing/Business as Usual" to "Continued Investment in the Vitality of the Downtown Core."

Jay Lifson, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce saved the day once again, suggesting the Chamber can work with the City Council toward a mutually beneficial solution, "I would like the Council to consider Option E because it's the right and fair thing to do." Larry Blodgett continued the theme, stating, "let us be a part of the so-

lution." Other possible options to increase revenue included, "Adopt-a-Median," to a city sales tax increase of 1/10th of a cent, to a business license tax.

City Manager Steve Falk suggested the City should look to find a comprehensive solution incorporating roads, police and the downtown budget.

On the bright side, since City Staff estimated conservatively, it's projected that Lafayette will have revenue of \$1,000,000 over their targeted amount of \$590,000 this fiscal year. According to the Staff Report, submitted by Tracy Robinson, Administrative Services Director, if Option E is selected, "the issue of funding the Core Area can be reviewed in the context of the whole budget either at the December 2007 meeting or in the spring, when the FY 2008-09 budget will be proposed."

In the end, the City Council selected Option E. Lafayette residents can sleep soundly tonight knowing banners, street lights, sidewalk repair and tree trimming will continue as usual. Hopefully they'll be so well rested, and enchanted by the twinkle lights and banners, that they'll spend a small fortune on Christmas gifts downtown.

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**Car Theft, 11/12/07** A Reliez Valley Road resident had his 1996 2-door Nissan XE black truck stolen from an address on Windsor Drive. The car was locked and parked in the driveway. A key was left inside the center console. The registered owner was home but didn't see or hear anything. Two Mono Lake stickers are on the camper shell.

**Stolen Vehicle Found, 11/12/07** A white, 4-door Nissan Altima was found parked at La Fiesta Square by the owner, a Wildwood Lane Resident. The car had been there for the last four days, according to the parking lot attendant. Car and driver are happily reunited.

**Car Trouble, 10/14/07** Two vehicles were parked in a Kingsley Place driveway, a gray 2003 GMC Yukon XL and an unlocked 2007 Chevy. Sometime between 11/10 and 11/11 an unknown person or persons ransacked the unlocked '07 Chevy and drove the '03 truck away with the key left in the console. To make matters worse, the thief hit the resident's mailbox pillar while departing.

**Probation Violation, 11/12/07** A 59-year old white male was walking in and out of traffic in front of Diablo Foods at night. He was disoriented, belligerent, having some difficulty walking, and appeared drunk. Officers found the gentleman to be on probation. Unfortunately, the terms of his probation expressly forbid drinking alcohol. He was arrested for being drunk in public.

## Lafayette Party Shack Smashed

By Cathy Tyson

Due to the quick actions of Lafayette Youth Services Officer Mark Greenwood, a keg party at "The Shack" was stopped. He found a flyer advertising the event circulated at Acalanes the day of the party, Friday November 9th, advertising \$2.00 beers and \$1.00 refills. With some detective work, Greenwood found the party venue off of Franklin Lane and Happy Valley, tucked way back in a little ravine, off of a private road.

Because it was located on East Bay Regional Park land, Park police came with a large 4 x 4 truck equipped with winches to help Lafayette officers destroy

the shack prior to party time. Leveling the 600 square foot structure was not easy. "It was amazing the amount of planning,



time and effort that obviously went into this thing. It's not just a tree house," notes Greenwood. ... continued on page 10

## Senior Housing Likely in Lafayette

By Cathy Tyson



Former site of Butler-Conti Dodge on Mt. Diablo Blvd. Photo Cathy Tyson

Finding housing in Lafayette is difficult enough, but finding affordable senior housing is nearly impossible. Help is on the way, though it may take a while. The Senior Housing Task Force (SHTF) has been hard at work since early 2005 to remedy the situation. With a total of seven representatives, two City Council Members, two Planning Commissioners, three Senior Services Commissioners, a housing consultant to provide technical assistance and City Planning staff Niroop Srivatsa and Glenda Warmoth, the SHTF was on a mission.

Following discussions with a number of developers, the non-profit Eden Housing, Inc. was se-

lected. In business for 39 years, Eden Housing has partnered with the cities of Clayton, Martinez, Concord, Richmond and Hercules to "create a variety of high-quality affordable housing opportunities for lower income families, seniors, and people with disabilities," according to their website.

It's been difficult to find a site with the necessary zoning that is relatively close to downtown. After speaking with a number of possible landowners, a 1.35-acre parcel at the corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Blackwood Lane was chosen, the former site of Butler-Conti Dodge.

"Eden Housing is still working to secure the property, but right now it looks promising,"

said Glenda Warmoth, Assistant Planner.

Although the project is in the planning stages, tentatively approximately 50 independent living units, with parking in the rear, is on the table. Once the property has been purchased, plans will be formalized. Eden Housing's architect, Rick Williams, of Van Meter Williams, Pollack is currently working on conceptual plans.



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