

Lafayette Police Staffing Update

By Cathy Tyson

On November 7th of 2006, voters failed to pass the Lafayette Police Services Act, Measure P, a local tax to increase funding for police. It would have levied an annual parcel tax of \$64 per parcel on all single-family residential properties in Lafayette for five years. Larger apartment complexes and business parcels would have paid significantly more. Although 60.6% voted yes, it needed 66%, a 2/3 majority to pass.

More than a year later, the most obvious fallout is the limited police presence around town. At times there are only two officers patrolling Lafayette, one north of Mt. Diablo Boulevard, and one south of Mt. Diablo Boulevard. Back in October,

the department received over 1,000 calls for service during the month for everything from false alarms, to traffic issues to noise complaints. All those calls require some kind of follow-up; lean staffing means longer response times and prioritizing calls.

“We want to address citizens concerns. Please call us about things you’re concerned about, like suspicious people or vehicles,” said Chief Mike Hubbard. He added that residents can help the department by being vigilant, the eyes and ears of the community.

In referring to patrol officers, he noted that, “The more cars you stop, the more bad guys you find.”

Lafayette has the smallest police force per resident of any city in the County. While most communities have 2 officers/1,000 residents, Lafayette and Orinda have .06 officers per 1,000 residents. By comparison, nearby Brentwood has 2.5 officers/1,000 residents.

Currently the department is staffed with 15 Sworn Officers, 5 Reserve Officers, 1 police dog, “Doc”, and 4 Non-Sworn Officers. They are all working hard, but stretched thin due to the current budget.