

No Increase in Sales Tax

By Cathy Tyson

The final decision to not place an additional sales tax measure on the November ballot was made at last week's City Council meeting. After cake, complimentary t-shirts, bumper stickers and the "happy birthday" song to celebrate Lafayette's fortieth year since incorporation, a substantial amount of public comment was heard.

Not surprisingly much of the comment was negative. Council members wondered aloud how a sales tax would pass without community support. Council Member Carol Federighi was concerned that yet another tax measure loss would leave the city in a bad position for future measures.

City Manager Steven Falk said, "59% of those polled said they want to tax themselves to pay for better roads, extra police patrols, and more open space in Lafayette, and so it's disappointing that the community couldn't find a way to come together and support this idea. However, with nobody stepping forth to run the campaign and with the

Chamber of Commerce opposed to the proposal, I completely understand and defend the City Council's action."

Voytek Konopk, owner of Novina Fine Jewelry said, "Why should merchants be punished to pay for the tax?" He feels an additional sales tax would encourage potential customers to buy over the internet, thus robbing the city of any sales tax at all.

Also mentioned at the meeting was unhappiness over the paving of a section of Mt. Diablo Boulevard. Residents didn't understand that the city leveraged a small investment, \$85,000., from gas tax revenue received from the State, and paid only a fraction of the total price tag, wisely garnering federal and regional grants for the balance. Although the street had gotten a slurry seal some years back, it hadn't been paved in fifteen years. Considering the project cost \$865,000, the City paid less than 10% of the total amount; that's a bargain any way you slice it.