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Investigating Other Options for Deer Hill Road Zoning

By Cathy Tyson



Corner of Pleasant Hill Road and Deer Hill Road
Photo Cathy Tyson

17 dwelling units per acre.

Due to the outpouring of impassioned residents' pleas over the course of two meetings, the City Council decided that lowering the density of the controversial Christmas tree lot parcel at the corner of Deer Hill Road and Pleasant Hill Road from the current maximum 35 dwelling units/acre to 17 dwelling units/acre was not the best solution to the zoning conundrum that the City itself started.

Concerned residents strongly preferred that although the city was proposing down-zoning, reducing potential development size on the property, the proposed re-classification was still not acceptable.

There was some confusion among residents at the February 8th City Council meeting about what exactly was being proposed. Many argued initially against a change in zoning - not knowing that the proposed change would mean less dense development at the site.

City attorney Mala Subramanian clarified right at the very beginning of the proceedings that there is no proposal for development at that site, and the city is proposing to reduce the zoning that has been in place since 1974 - Administrative/Professional/Office/Multifamily Residential, which allows for up to 35 dwelling units per acre to the classification Low Density Multi-Family Residential which allows up to

Eliot Hudson summed up the crowd's desire to preserve the semi-rural nature of Lafayette, "We want no development - if there has to be development - the smallest amount possible - Does everyone agree with that?" Attendees replied with a vibrant round of applause and shouts of "Yes!"

Even an attorney for Anna Maria Dettmer, the owner of the parcel, came to clarify the current situation and put to rest some rumors that have sprouted up. He said there will be no low income housing on the site, that Ms. Dettmer has no plans for a project, that the grading that was done many years ago was approved and that the Las Trampas earthquake fault that runs through the property also runs through most of eastern Lafayette. His main point was that the City of Lafayette initiated this process and recommended that the City Council take no action at the moment.

In a four to one vote, City Council members decided to direct staff to look at single family zoning options and report back in April. Most agreed that it's a rather isolated spot, not walkable, and not really in-fill development. "Multi-family is the wrong use for that parcel. I favor going back and starting over," said Council Member Carl Anduri.

Reach the reporter at: cathy@lamorindaweekly.com

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