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Lafayette

Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, May 9, 7:00 pm
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd

Planning Commission

Monday, May 2, 7:00 pm
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd

Design Review

Monday, May 9, 7:00 pm
Lafayette Library & Learning Center
in the Arts & Science Discovery
Center at 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Lafayette:

www.ci.lafayette.ca.us

Chamber of Commerce:

www.lafayettechamber.org



Police Report

Not a Pillar of the Community, 4/3/11-4/11/11 A resident on Estates Drive returned from spring vacation to find his two driveway pillar lights smashed and broken. \$200 damage was done. Police think vandals used a baseball bat, but they've struck out finding a suspect so far.

Baby You Can't Drive my Car...4/15/11 Vandals on Los Arabis Drive caused over \$500 in damage to a Saab and Mercedes when they slashed or punctured tires on both cars.

Same Street, Different Day, Different Crime, 4/17/11

A juvenile was arrested on Los Arabis Drive, cited with DUI and released. Police were responding to a report of vehicular collision (that's a car crash in layman's terms). The damaged car pointed to the guilty party.

Bad Guys had the Extra Man, 4/12/11

An i-Phone and \$60 in cash were stolen from two Acalanes High School Lacrosse players during evening practice. The items were taken from the boys' locker room, and the thief made an easy Fast Break.

Can You Hear Me Now? 4/11/11

A juvenile who broke into Radio Shack and stole a \$150 pair of headphones got caught red-handed and was arrested. Now he's got to face the music.

Smaller Version of Burton Valley Remodel Approved

By Cathy Tyson

“We’re happy to say that we are in substantial agreement,” said David Bowie, an attorney representing Joe and Noelle Polichio in their request to add a second story addition to their Burton Valley home. “We have no objections with the staff report and conditions.”

In a process spanning all levels of approval, from Design Review to the Planning Commission to the City Council, a compromise was ultimately reached that settled the matter once and for all. Initial hearings at the City Council were quite contentious, but ended with only positive comments and even a few moments of collective laughter – look for a new design element in Lafayette, the “Don Tatzin ridge,” named after his sugges-

tion of adjusting the roof line above the garage.

The Polichios originally requested approval from the Design Review Commission to expand the existing 2212 square foot home, 1612 of living space plus a 600 square foot garage, to accommodate three bedrooms and bathrooms on the second floor. Although that application was approved by Design Review, it was denied at the Planning Commission level after two neighbors appealed that decision. The plans have gone through a number of changes, but the final version has shrunk to a 718 square foot second story, less than half of the original 1,580 square feet requested.

At a recent City Council meeting,

matriarch Joan Bruzzone, widow of Russ Bruzzone, said, “My husband and I built a number of homes in Burton Valley and he didn’t go through near as much trouble as the Polichios.”

After being encouraged by City staff to work with the neighbors, and holding a couple of negotiation sessions, they came to a compromise that the homeowners and the neighbors could live with. Attorney for the neighbors, Brian Mulry, said his clients wanted to keep the home as one story, but they searched for common ground and the Polichios were very receptive.

“We entered into the process in good faith,” said the Polichios architect, Ken Hertel. “This is a unique lot

with eight large mature dense trees.” Those trees limit the ability to expand on the ground floor.

On a four-to-one vote, the City Council approved the application subject to conditions. Carol Federighi, who originally voted to deny the project, said, “I’m ready to support it; the applicant has come a long way. I can find it compatible with the neighborhood.” The lone dissenter, Mayor Carl Anduri, still has concerns about the size and mass of the addition, “It comes down to finding if it’s compatible in this unique neighborhood. My concern is that it’s setting a precedent – it will change the character of the neighborhood.”

Model Home Needs Permit for Photo Shoots

By Cathy Tyson

Although photo shoots at Brian Griggs’ lovely secluded home on four and a half acres just off South Silver Springs Road had been going on since 2004, it was only after a recent anonymous complaint by a neighbor that the city’s Code Enforcement Officer informed the homeowner that using the residence as a business required a residential business land use permit.

Because the home has high ceilings and is very open, products can be “staged easily” said Griggs in a letter to the Planning Department, that—along with a generous garage for storage during multi-day shoots—makes the home attractive to merchants, including Williams-Sonoma, Pottery Barn, Cost Plus, Walmart, Restoration Hardware and Beverages and More. With a large turn around on the property, a lower parking area, and nearby retailers to pick up last minute props like plants and food for the crew for lunch – it’s easy to see why he has repeat photography visits from these merchants. According to Griggs, over the past three years the home has averaged four shooting days per month, usually in the spring and fall to prepare for the next season’s catalogs.

While some municipalities have a film permit application with associated fees, Lafayette doesn’t. The City of Pasadena has a twenty-four page

contract with a laundry list of multiple fees and requirements, while Morro Bay’s contract is two pages long. At a recent meeting, Lafayette’s Planning Commission weighed testimony and indicated it will likely grant a land use permit to allow residential business activity at the home on Fernside Lane. At press time, there is still some negotiation over the allowed hours of operation.

The small, quiet Silver Springs neighborhood was divided over the request for a land use permit. Many neighbors stated they didn’t even know what was going on. The home is tucked back on a two hundred and fifty foot driveway off the end of Fernside Lane - a private road. “I’m not going to call it a civil war but a tribal skirmish,” said longtime neighbor Mike Olson describing the repercussions of this process. “There is a small group with differing opinions than the rest of us.” Opponents sited noise, safety and traffic as concerns; proponents noted it was not disruptive and that teenagers were by far more of a traffic hazard than professional delivery people.

Griggs, a 29-year resident of Lafayette with four kids, has reached out to smooth things over inviting immediate neighbors for an open house to see the parking situation on the property and where the photography

takes place. He even offered a seven item list of self-imposed conditions. “The restrictions allow continued use of the property and also put in place measures that the City can enforce,” said Griggs.

Planning Commissioners wrestled with the particulars of the Land Use Permit: limiting photo shoot days to forty per year, hours of operation, and imposing an expiration date in three years as a mechanism to review use. After three years, Griggs can request a new permit. All agreed that the City should research a more per-

manent film policy or ordinance. Temporary use permits can only be used for perishable businesses – like a fruit stand or a Christmas tree lot, because of his preference for an ongoing situation, this type of permit isn’t applicable.

Jay Lifson, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce concurred, commenting that there are hundreds of home-based businesses in Lafayette, “The City should have a policy or ordinance that is fair and equitable.”

Gerringer’s Day Job

By Cathy Tyson

Teresa Gerringer, a member of the governing board of the Lafayette School District since 2000, also has a day job – since March, 2010, Gerringer has worked with Tramutola, LLC, a small political consulting firm in Oakland. She’s responsible for a number of things there: business development, marketing, communications and administrative support.

“Teresa is a great employee, and

committed to her school district,” said Larry Tramutola, President and CEO. “This firm was established to help school districts,” he explained. Indeed their roster of school clients is in the hundreds and they have expanded their services to include healthcare, local government and corporate entities. He added that, “We do lots of pro bono work; it’s just the right thing to do.”

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Pre-registration is necessary. To Register Contact:



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