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Fentons Quest for Parking Relief

By Cathy Tyson



Photo Cathy Tyson

Calling it a “fantastic vision” and “great opportunity,” all the members of the City Council were enthusiastic about Fentons

Creamery possibly locating in the historic Park Theater building—but securing the project would require officially changing the

parking standards around the edifice on Golden Gate Way.

“I’m in favor of ice cream,” disclosed Council Member Brandt Andersson at a recent City Council meeting, “I hope we can make this work.”

The Park Theater and nearby Plaza Way property owners want relief to officially lower the strict parking requirements in the area. With only twelve, that’s right – just one dozen parking spaces, The Park Theater building is 54 spaces short of meeting the current city requirement, according to a letter from developer, and one of the owners of the Park Theater, Greg Woehle. He proposed a compromise, “Unless we can come to some kind of common goal – we will never be able to bring in this iconic business.” He’s been diligently negotiating with nearby parking lot owners – the “Absolutely No Theater Parking” lot directly adjacent to the Theater and the First Street Bridge Lot just down Golden Gate Way, along with the 76 Gas Station to chip away at the parking dilemma.

Michael Poy, whose father

opened Squirrels Restaurant back in 1983, is considering making an investment in a remodel of the iconic eatery, but wants to clarify the parking situation first.

The four property owners on Plaza Way signed a letter asking for an official adjustment of the parking requirement – citing the unique significance and character of this block that’s crucial to the image of the city, “but is crippled by strict parking requirements.” The historic area houses the former Pioneer Store and The Wayside Inn which dates back to 1898 when it was a tavern and hotel, according to the Lafayette Historical Society. At that time there wasn’t even a horse parking requirement.

Fenton’s bottom line – either solve the parking issues in a timely manner or they will look elsewhere. They hope to open the new location in the summer of 2012, so time is of the essence getting the recently approved parking subcommittee to come up with new historic district guidelines. Once those are in place, and building permits are approved, a significant remodel can begin.

Planning Commission Denies Permit Application for “Large” Change in Plans

By Cathy Tyson

The Lafayette Planning Commission recently decided that a proposed 10,388 square foot house is really not the same as a 5,900 square foot house even if it’s at the same exact location as the original request – apples and oranges.

Despite convincing arguments from attorney David Bowie representing the land owners, “this is essentially the same project from a massing standpoint that you originally approved,” the Planning Commissioners disagreed and voted unanimously that this version does not conform to the original approval.

Bowie was referring to an approval on March 20, 2008 for a Phase I Hillside Development Permit for a new 5,900 square foot, one and a half story home on a vacant fifteen acre parcel on Monticello Road. In late 2008, the architect for the property owners at that time, Richard Bartlett, submitted a Phase 2 application that covered design and the impacts of the project approved in Phase I, but that time around the project grew to two stories and 7,171 square feet. Turns out, that application was deemed incomplete in December of 2008. Fast forward two years and the land owners,

Steve and Linda Wight, have a new architect, Andre Pierce with Resort Design Architects, who submitted brand new and greatly expanded plans for a lovely but large 10,388 square foot home.

“The issue is off-site visual impact” for the Phase 1 approval, said Bowie, pointing out the proposed project is nestled into the saddle of the expansive property and is virtually concealed from neighbors. While it’s true that in the newest incarnation only a small portion of chimney is visible, less of the home than in the original drawings, the overall mass of the project is significantly

larger.

Many neighbors were concerned about the proposed project. Don Walket said, “Residents feel stunned – this doubles the size of the previous project.” Bill Bucher, President of the Happy Valley Improvement Association, spoke in support of the staff recommendation to go back to Phase 1.

Speaking for his clients the Wight family, Bowie said he is currently “reviewing options” with the City and these matters, “tend to ultimately work out well. I think this house is perfectly sited, very gracious, and it deserves due consideration.”

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Lafayette

Civic News


Public Meetings

City Council
Monday, August 8, 7:00 pm
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd

Planning Commission
Monday, August 15, 7:00 pm
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd

Design Review
Monday, August 8, 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

Read my Scrips, 7/18/11 Police received a report that someone was forging stolen prescription pads to illegally obtain narcotic drugs.

Reading, Writing and...? 7/15/11 Vandalism was the lesson of the day, when someone discovered graffiti painted on two walls at Burton Valley Elementary. Three flower pots and two mosaic tiles were also broken. A few days earlier, 7/11/11, someone stole a pedal cart, from a locked enclosure, belonging to a summer camp at Stanley School.

Two-fer, 7/11/11 Two cars parked at Lafayette Safeway sustained minor front end damage in a jump- the-bump hit and run. Thanks to a witness who got the license number, police located the suspect and vehicle. When questioned by police, the driver said he accidentally hit the gas instead of the brake, jumping his car over a concrete barrier and into the aforementioned victim cars. The driver said he knew he hit another car but because he didn’t think he’d done any damage he did not leave contact info.

Just for Kicks, 7/10/11 Someone kicked open a side garage door on Springbrook Road. He/she then stole from the garage and the kitchen, scoring an estimated \$1,000 in goods.

Please submit

Letters and Opinions:

letters@lamorinda-weekly.com

