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Measure G Falls - Now What?

By Cathy Tyson



Despite a valiant effort by proponents, only 3,683 Lafayette residents voted "Yes on G," not enough to pass the \$89 parcel tax. Photo C. Tyson

Council agreed to contribute \$3 million from General Reserve Funds to help address the asphalt infrastructure problem, but the funds were contingent on the measure passing. Although nothing was decided, the Council agreed it needs to look at the issue broadly.

As reported in the June 8, 2011 issue of the Lamorinda Weekly, the city has a whopping \$9.8 million in the General Reserve account, the equivalent to 86% of General Fund expenditures, substantially over the City Council's target of 50%. Whether they choose to spend it on roads is unknown at this time.

The Mayor asked City Engineer Tony Coe to give a quick snapshot of where the city stands today on the road repair problem. "For 2012, \$2.95 million has already been approved for road repair," said Coe. He explained that Lafayette received more gas tax than originally anticipated, but despite the additional funds it will still have 81 failed roads remaining at the end of 2012.

Looking forward to the five year Capital Improvement Plan - he estimates known road funding to be \$9 million, that's enough to fix 18 roads and take on 15 more with stop gap measures - a less expensive rubberized seal to be used exclusively on the end of cul de sacs. That would still leave scores of residents living on failed roads. "It's just not fair," said Anduri.

On November 8, Lafayette voters decided the fate of Measure G, the \$89 parcel tax for a maximum of ten years that would have funded road and storm drain repairs. Proponents were hopeful that it would pass due to an extensive outreach campaign and because there was little organized opposition.

Although the measure received a majority of votes, 57% in favor, it needed 66% + 1 to pass. This is the third strike for road repairs; voters also missed the two-thirds threshold in 2004 and 2007.

Measure G Co-Chair Guy Atwood considered the options, "There are alternatives, but none of them are particularly viable. One thing the City needs to consider is whether to let the good roads go and put all their available funds into fixing the failed roads. People living on failed roads have had to endure their roads not being fixed for many years, and they should not have to do so forever. I am not recommending this approach, as it has a greater long term financial cost to the community, but it needs to be thoroughly considered. Other options could include cutting City services."

At a recent City Council Meeting Mayor Carl Anduri discussed next steps. As part of the proposed tax, the City

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