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## Townhouse Development Moving Forward

By Cathy Tyson



View from the interior of the proposed development. The three bedroom townhouses will include a two car garage on the ground level, be screened from the street with substantial landscaping, and feature decorative elements like trellises, window boxes, and wood corbels and trim. Image courtesy of City of Lafayette Staff report and Hunt Hale Jones Architecture.

to design and propose a well thought-out development that will be an asset to the Lafayette community," noted Quaglia in a letter that listed the fourteen meetings to date with interested parties that started in June, 2010.

Because the parcel is bordered by Mt. Diablo Boulevard, Pleasant Hill Road and the Highway 24 off-ramp, there were some challenges to create a livable enclosed community. While the Planning Commission has generally supported the project all along, issues arose about the usability of the central space, viability and care of existing redwood trees, concerns of a cookie-cutter look and circulation in and out of the project.

"It's come a long way," said Planning Commissioner Tom Chastain. The project is scheduled to be heard at a January 17 Planning Commission meeting at which staff has recommended approving the project subject to conditions.

The Hungry Hunter's days are probably numbered. If all goes according to plan, the semi-subterranean decommissioned restaurant at the corner of Mt. Diablo and Pleasant Hill Road will finally be demolished and in its place twenty-three townhomes will sprout up. Signature Development is in the final stretch of getting a land use permit and Major Subdivision approval from the City that would allow them to go forward with their plans for the site.

City staff, the Planning Commission, and Design Review Commission have been reviewing the project for some time. The developer significantly revised the design multiple times in response to feedback from these groups, ultimately resulting in a modern Craftsman style in medium to dark paint colors. When complete, the project will have five three-story buildings around the perimeter and a shared central green space.

"The variety of forms, articulation, colors and materials do a good job of avoiding what could be a very monotonous, repetitive appearance," writes Senior Planner Greg Wolf in the December 12 Staff Report. "The proposed earth tone colors and natural (and) natural-appearing materials are appropriate to the design style and to the site, helping the buildings recede into the broader landscape of the site and broader East End."

Tom Quaglia, Project Manager of Signature Development, sees the project as appealing to three groups of buyers: young professionals, older "downsizing" residents and some young families. The developer has "worked closely

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