

# Zoning Decision on Controversial Development Possibly Coming This Spring

By Cathy Tyson

The proposed multi-family apartment project on the acreage known as the Christmas Tree lot will have to wait for a City decision on zoning of the parcel. The 315-unit Terraces of Lafayette was proposed in March of last year for the twenty-two acre site at the corner of Pleasant Hill Road and Deer Hill Road.

Vocal opponents had attended many prior City Council meetings, arguing that the already busy intersection near Acalanes High School would be negatively impacted by the additional traffic "Terraces" residents would create. Others complained the site is not appropriate for dense development.

The Lafayette City Council decided at a September 2011 meeting to pause to allow staff time to prepare a response to material submitted by the applicant – developer O'Brien Land Company. "Our analysis and responses should be completed in the next 30-60 days," said Senior Planner Christine Sinnette.

Meanwhile the project is going through environmental review. Ann Merideth, Special Projects Manager, expects the Draft Environmental Impact Report to be out in late February or early March.

"We have been gratified by the

level of excitement about the project, and the expressions of locals who are interested in having an opportunity to stay in Lafayette in an all-new rental community, built to a new green construction standard," said Terraces Project Manager Dave Baker. "We, too, are excited at the prospect, and are launching a new website in the next two weeks to show our floorplans, features and some new renderings: www.terracesoflafayette.com."

Possible rezoning would encompass the Christmas Tree lot, but also four additional properties on Deer Hill Road to a rural residential classification. Only the Christmas Tree lot, and a tiny sliver of land abutting Highway 24, owned by CalTrans, are currently zoned Administrative/Professional/Office/Multifamily, that would allow up to 35 dwelling units per acre.

The City proposed zoning change would bring the allowable density down to one dwelling unit per acre. These zoning changes have been discussed for years, but never officially adopted. At issue is the land use application by developer O'Brien for the apartment complex that was received by the City before any official zoning change was made. Look for the matter to be addressed in the coming months.

# Lafayette School District Wants Help Planning for the Future

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Everyone is encouraged to attend a meeting, but for those that can't make it, participation is welcomed in the online Strategic Planning Survey 2012 – four simple anonymous questions. For those that just want to read all about it, the District has also posted a comprehensive, very organized and user-friendly strategic planning portal link, front and center on the Lafayette School District homepage www.lafsd.k12.ca.us.

Feeling out of the academic loop? There's much more going on than reading, writing and arithmetic at Lafayette's five elementary schools and one intermediate school. Five priority areas are the focus of the strategic plan. The first, arguably the most important area, is student achievement - specifically higher level critical thinking. "Students are learning a different way to think about thinking," said Rachel Zinn, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, adding, "math instruction is being transformed." Audience mem-

bers were bowled over by the Power-Point presentation that explained just a snippet of how this process works.

The balance of the priority areas include: Finance – maintaining a sustainable budget, Healthy kids - healthy adults, Globalization – which includes non-English language instruction, and Technology. Part of the Character Counts program, that falls under the Healthy Kids umbrella teaches ways for students to do the right thing, just because it's the right thing to do. "We look at it as more pro-respect versus anti-bullying," said Zinn.

Through the direction of the Superintendent and staff, the point of the Strategic planning process is to support and guide the District's mission: *We embrace a rigorous, comprehensive curriculum to provide a quality education in a safe and nurturing environment. We commit to meet the needs of all students, to foster continuous learning and to promote respect.*



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| 1075 SANDERS DR    | 257 SANDRINGHAM   | 1418 CAMINO PERAL   | 2277 STAR AVE       |
| 24 FREITAS DR      | 238 SANDRINGHAM   | 1405 CAMINO PERAL   | 4255 WILSON LN      |
| 4 WANDEL DR        | 235 SANDRINGHAM   | 1437 CAMINO PERAL   | 2 AGHALEE LN        |
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