

Published January 16th, 2013

## No Love for the Terraces Project at Meeting

By Cathy Tyson



Sign taped in the window of a car parked at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center for "Terraces" meeting. Photo Cathy Tyson

joked before summarizing that it's about "determining that the city's analytical conclusions are supported by substantial evidence" and added that "the city can rely on the judgment of its experts." According to the staff report Merideth prepared for the meeting, "The Final EIR identifies potentially significant impacts that would result from the Project and mitigation measures that would reduce the significance of these impacts." The staff report also points out, "There can be disagreements amongst experts or differing opinions about the information in the EIR. As long as they are disclosed through the environmental review process, these disagreements and opinions do not make an EIR inadequate or inconsistent with CEQA."

David Bowie, the applicant's attorney, touched on the appropriateness of relying on expert testimony and described the conclusions drawn in the Final EIR as "highly suspect." He offered as an example the location of the ridgeline that could be in one of four locations, according to the EIR, but that had actually "disappeared decades ago" with the construction of BART. Although frowned upon in a public hearing, the audience broke out in laughter.

Roughly 30 residents wished to comment on the project, with concerns ranging from visual impacts, the definition of a complete and accurate report, air quality, school crowding and of course traffic impacts for the already congested intersection of Deer Hill Road and Pleasant Hill Road. There's no shortage of remarks for the "Terraces" project; the comment portion of the Final EIR on the city's website has 12 sections of comments from organizations and four sections from individuals along with comments from state, regional and local agencies. To see the entire document, visit the city website at [www.lovelafayette.org](http://www.lovelafayette.org)

Residents turned out in force to voice their opinions on the proposed 315-unit Terraces of Lafayette project at a recent Planning Commission meeting. Even after a brief introduction by Special Projects Manager Ann Merideth who explained that this is the first step in evaluating the proposed project and that the sole purpose of the meeting was to determine if the environmental impact report complies with the California Environmental Quality Act, Planning Commission Chair Karen Maggio had to caution the standing room only crowd on a number of occasions to refrain from applause and encouraged public comment to stick to the matter at hand. Maggio reminded residents of the meeting's focus and said that comments on the merits of the project will be heard at a number of future meetings. It was apparent that concerned citizens clearly wanted to express their overwhelmingly negative opinions.

No decision was made, and the commission meeting was continued until Feb. 4 to allow for the city attorney, consultants and city staff to sort through hundreds of pages of comments prior to making a decision on the compliance of the environmental report.

The city attorney was asked to briefly define what compliance with CEQA requires. "Do you have all day?" he

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