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Lafayette Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, March 11, 7 p.m.
 Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
 Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Planning Commission

Tuesday, March 4, 7 p.m.
 Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
 Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, March 11, 7 p.m.
 Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
 Arts & Science Discovery Center,
 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Acalanes Union High School District
 Wednesday, March 20, 7:30 p.m.
 Del Valle Education Center, 1963
 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek.
 www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

Lafayette School District

Wednesday, March 13, 7 p.m.
 Regular Board Meeting
 Stanley Library
 3477 School St., Lafayette
 www.lafsd.k12.ca.us

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Lafayette:

www.ci.lafayette.ca.us
 Phone: (925) 284-1968

Chamber of Commerce:

www.lafayettechamber.org

Please submit Letters and Opinions:
 letters@lamorinda weekly.com

Chief Presents Annual Report

Christensen updates city council on incidents, gadgetry and vehicles

By Cathy Tyson

One of the highlights from Police Chief Eric Christensen's annual report to the Lafayette city council was the staggering number of alarm calls, a mind-boggling 1,748 in 2012. While the good news is that 99 percent of those were false alarms, the department has to respond to each and every one, taking officers away from their other duties. One of the chief's goals for the coming year is to lower that number.

Similarly there were 680 emergency 911 calls with a hang up; because these could be a medical emergency, an officer goes to the home to check it out. Those are just a few examples of the Lafayette police department's average of 50 calls for service per day.

Both residential burglaries and motor vehicle theft went down slightly in 2012. The chief made a point of thanking the community for reporting suspicious activity, saying it's tremendously helpful. In addition, there were 293 traffic accidents, mostly clustered around the downtown area. For those always running a little late and trying to save a few

minutes by going just a little faster the police department, now with two officers on motorcycles, wrote up 1,680 citations; 93 percent of those were for moving violations.

Hankering for happy hour? Residents leaving one of Lafayette's charming watering holes should be aware there were 43 DUI arrests last year.

Notable changes for 2013 include the popular email tip line 94549Tip@gmail.com, a recently launched Facebook page—probably not a bad idea to “friend” the police—and the department's strategy for dealing with dogs on the loose. Instead of calling county animal control, police corral the wayward pooch and bring him, or her, to Pet Food Express where a chip reader scans implanted identification chips.

Recently approved by the city council are new credit card-friendly parking meters to be installed around the BART parking lot and along Mt. Diablo Boulevard from Dewing to Moraga Road. These meters still have the ability to take coins, but will also accept plastic as a convenience

to drivers. Also in the works is a plan to change the meters along Plaza Way to single space meters. There will be no increase in parking rates—just an added service for drivers making parking payment a little easier.

New technology this year includes the addition of new computers in patrol cars—the former 10-year-old versions were way past their expiration dates; and iPhones that let officers quickly pass on photos to other cops on patrol and the Mobile ID device—for people who are stopped and don't have identification on them—which virtually instantaneously does a background check to see if the individual has any outstanding issues with law enforcement.

Finally, two of the six vehicles that patrol the city are showing their age; they're over six years old and have exceeded 100,000 miles, along with a Ford Taurus that is used by the city's investigator. While the city of Lafayette contracts for service from the sheriff's department, the cars and the equip-

ment inside are the responsibility of the city. With 115,000 miles on the odometer of a 2005 Ford Crown Victoria, carburetor trouble and a trashed interior—this car will be retired, along with a 2007 Crown Victoria that shares the same issues. Although not in regular service, they will still be used by the department as decoys. “It is my experience that the act of merely placing a patrol car in an area has the effect of reducing crime in that area,” said Christensen. The investigator's car will be replaced by a truck that can tow trailers and handle lots of equipment.

Knowing the fleet vehicles eventually wear out, the city has a sinking fund with a balance of \$350,000. The chief recently requested and was granted \$130,000 to pay for three replacement vehicles. The new patrol cars must be “police pursuit” certified—a big engine, spacious interior and a trunk that can hold a substantial amount of equipment. Look for a Dodge Charger, a Chevy Tahoe and an unidentified type of pick-up truck to join the fleet.

Plans for Protecting Community Park this Summer

By Cathy Tyson

“We're looking at ways to avoid what happened last year—it was an unusual summer with two fires in the Community Park,” said Mark Poole, Chair of the Parks, Trails and Recreation Commission, about the focus of a recent meeting. The 68-acre park in Burton Valley has sports fields and playgrounds, but also lots of woodland areas and Las Trampas Creek that seems to entice local teenagers to hang out. The commission, along with

Lafayette Police Chief Eric Christensen and the Contra Costa Fire District Battalion Chief Dominic Ciotola, met to proactively discuss preventative and enforcement procedures for the park this summer.

Parks, Trails and Recreation Director Jennifer Russell started the ball rolling with a sign that contained what she called the “Reader's Digest” version of rules and regulations that is posted throughout the park. “We are trying our best to get the word

out, before school is out for the summer.” She also had notification boards spelling out what to do in case of a mountain lion sighting, information on West Nile Virus and others that are posted as needed.

“If there's a security issue, that's my problem,” said Christensen, who started the job in April of last year and admitted there was a bit of a learning curve about policing the park initially. He assured those in attendance and the commission members

that he has re-arranged personnel so there's an officer assigned to the Community Park during key problem time frames—usually Friday and Saturday nights in the summer. Officers have the option of bicycles, patrolling on foot or using borrowed motorcycles to investigate any kind of funny business. The chief also encouraged residents who live near the park to report to the police activity there after dark, when the park is officially closed.

... continued on page A9



Police Report

Feb. 3 to Feb.16

Animal:

2/7 incident 3900 block Happy Valley Rd
 2/10 cruelty 500 block St Mary's Rd

Auto:

2/4 accident Pleasant Hill @ Quandt Rd
 reckless driving Olympic Bl @ Pleasant Hill
 2/5 accident Moraga Rd @ Mt Diablo Bl
 2/6 DUI Moraga Rd @ Mt Diablo Bl
 2/7 hit & run 3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
 2/8 reckless driving Moraga Rd @ Mt Diablo Bl
 2/9 accident 1200 block Pleasant Hill Rd
 2/12 hit & run Moraga Rd @ St Mary's Rd
 2/14 accident/damage 1st St @ Mt Diablo Bl
 2/15 reckless driving Hwy 24 @ Pleasant Hill
 2/16 reckless driving Pleasant Hill @ Rancho View Dr
 hit & run 1000 block 1st St
 accident/damage La Caminita @ Reliez Valley Rd

Burglary/Theft/Robbery/Forgery:

2/4 ID theft 3300 block Oak Ct
 resid. burg. (2) 800 block Oak St
 resid. burg. 3400 block Solana Ct
 2/6 petty theft 3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
 credit fraud 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
 petty theft 3300 block Betty Ln
 2/7 resid. burg. 100 block Silverwood Dr

2/8 petty theft 3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
 stolen veh. 3400 block Silver Springs Rd
 petty theft 3400 block Mt Diablo Bl
 resid. burg. 3500 block Hamlin Rd
 2/10 stolen veh. 900 block Risa Rd
 petty theft 100 block W Creek Ct
 2/11 grand theft (2) 100 block Cosso Ct
 petty theft 3900 block Cowan Rd
 petty theft 900 block Bell St
 forgery 3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
 2/12 resid. burg. 1300 block Summit Rd
 grand theft 1500 block Hunsaker Canyon Rd
 Petty theft 3400 block Mt Diablo Bl
 2/13 forgery 3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
 petty theft 100 block W Creek Ct
 2/14 auto burg Olympic @ Pleasant Hill Rd
 2/15 petty theft 900 block Moraga Rd
 prowler 3500 block S Silver Springs
 2/16 fraud 1200 block Summit Rd

Disturbance:

2/3 party 3700 block Mt. Diablo Bl
 fight 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
 juvenile 3500 block Silver Springs Rd
 neighbor 3600 block Mosswood Dr
 2/4 threats 1000 block N Thompson Rd
 battery 3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
 fight 3700 block Mt Diablo Bl
 2/5 public nuis. Lucas Cr @ Lucas Dr
 2/7 public nuis. 3800 block Quail Ridge Rd
 public nuis. Camino Colorados @ St Mary's Rd

2/8 harassment 1200 block Sunset Lp
 public nuis. 6 reports, various locations
 2/8 drunk in pub. Glenside Dr @ Reliez Sta. Rd.
 2/10 harassment 3200 block Iris Ct
 2/11 harassment 100 block Toledo Ct
Miscellaneous:
 2/3 mentally ill 900 block Acalanes Rd
 missing adult 1000 block Serrano Ct
 2/10 suspicious circumst 3200 block Glenside Dr
 terrorist threats 3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
 2/11 surveillance 3500 block Moraga Bl
 2/12 vandalism 3300 block Sweet Dr
 vandalism 300 block Hermosa Ct
 2/13 drugs 3500 block Terrace Wy
 2/15 drugs 100 block Topper Ct

Traffic Stops over the two week period:
 50 1st week; 104 2nd week

A Message from the Lafayette Police Department:

The Lafayette Police Department is currently investigating an incident involving a homemade chemical bomb that was found the morning of Feb.10 in the front yard of a residence on the 3200 block of Glenside Drive. Police responded to the location and saw the device which was contained in a soda bottle. The device was rendered safe by officers. It is unknown how long the device was in the front yard and who placed it there. There were no injuries or property damage. Lafayette Police collected the homemade chemical bomb for further analysis. Anyone with any information on this case is asked to contact police at (925) 283-3680.