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County Supervisor Andersen Visits Lafayette

By Cathy Tyson



Jay Lifson, executive director of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, and Supervisor Candace Andersen pose at her first Brown Bag lunch event. Photo C. Tyson

A mix of local business people, concerned residents and city council members attended a recent brown bag lunch event with relatively new county supervisor Candace Andersen. In her first low key, interactive get together to update folks on what's going on with the county, the meeting was off to a positive start with the generous platter of homemade butterscotch brownies she brought to share.

The former Danville mayor was elected after the retirement of Gayle Uilkema as Contra Costa County Supervisor for District 2; she says the issues and concerns are similar on the county level to Danville, but there are more zeros in the costs.

Top on her discussion agenda was the fire station situation in Lafayette, cautioning that the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District has serious fiscal issues and that while property tax values are going up in Lamorinda, the rest of the county has not been as lucky with its tax base that supports the district, along with pension worries.

She supports the shared Lafayette-Orinda fire station concept and is looking forward to the results of two studies that are not yet complete that will provide insight into how to best deliver fire and emergency medical services. The first examines how the county responds to emergencies; the second looks specifically at ConFire's service model and how

it could work more effectively. Both studies should be complete by the fall of 2013.

Other discussion points included how the county delivers health services via its hospital and clinics - the advent of Obamacare in the not too distant future could be a huge cost savings. The board of supervisors is also working on ways to streamline the process and cost of obtaining home-based business permits from \$800 to \$100.

Dealing with the fallout of AB 109 is a challenge for the board - the bill requires realignment of thousands of non-violent state prisoners to local jails. It "seems to be going well so far," said Andersen. She commented that she enjoys her job and has been surprised at how fiscally conservative her fellow supervisors are. "We've got our work cut out for us," she said, and "we have to live within our means." Words of wisdom considering the upcoming union contract negotiations, county-wide infrastructure issues and unfunded facilities maintenance that all need to be addressed.

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