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Above all else, we are thankful for our clients, family and friends!
 Happy Thanksgiving from the Brydon & Ives Team.

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Relaxing Sprinkler Rules for New Homes and Remodels in Moraga and Orinda

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Town Council recently ratified the Moraga-Orinda Fire District's ordinance relaxing the rules regarding the installation of sprinklers in homes, large remodels and commercial buildings. In 2010 Moraga and Orinda agreed to regulations that were more demanding than the rest of Contra Costa County. The new text aligns the local guidelines with the rest of the county.

Fire Marshall Kathy Leonard explained how the 2010 rule required residential remodels to include a sprinkler system when it added over 50 percent of the existing home and reached over 2,500

square feet. "For commercial new buildings, any size called for the installation of sprinklers," she added. "Last year I granted a variance for a 750-square-foot concrete block bathroom. It would have cost more than the building was worth to add the sprinklers."

The fire marshal met with the city of San Ramon and other agencies within the county to align common practice. The new size that will trigger the installation of sprinklers for remodels is now a total of 3,600 square feet and a 50 percent addition. For commercial buildings, 5,000 square feet of new building triggers the sprinkler

requirement. "The new code also allows for flexibility in building construction," she said. "We are also allowing for alternate means in commercial building. If someone can prove to the fire district that there are detection systems, or specific construction that give a substantial amount of safety, then we will consider it as well."

The city of Orinda also ratified the new rule that will take effect in 2014. Leonard will present the resolution to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors on Dec. 3 (the board oversees the unincorporated areas covered by MOFD).

Civic News Lafayette

Standing Room Only for State of the City Meeting

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Questions ranged from an opinion that the Downtown Specific Plan is flawed, encouragement to have robust fire protection locally, perception of "ugly" structures being built, to crowding on BART and in schools. Anderson calmly explained that the city doesn't run BART or the school district, and the public is always welcome at meetings to comment on the attractiveness or concerns regarding potential development, and that they are diligently working to resolve the fire and emergency service situation.

Subsidized housing came up; one person stated there is no reason to use Lafayette's resources to bring in subsidized housing and "bring in people who can't afford to live here." The mayor replied that all of the develop-

ment going on downtown is not subsidized by the city with the exception of the Eden housing development which will provide 47 units for low-income local senior citizens.

The current surge in construction downtown is a concern of many residents. Lafayette's General Plan controls development, along with an extensive review process for all structures, said the mayor, making it clear that a Priority Development Area doesn't override that process. PDAs are eligible for capital infrastructure funds.

"People have an economic interest in developing their property," said Anderson, adding those interests have nothing to do with the PDA or Plan Bay Area. "Building is going to hap-

pen regardless;" having the PDA and obtaining grants will help keep the downtown functional. "We can't tell someone they can't build on their property."

President of the Lafayette Homeowners Council and longtime resident Jenny Kallio was pleased with the large turnout and described the meeting as constructive, bringing awareness to citizens and complimenting the mayor on how he explained these volatile issues. In her opinion, the City Council is "doing its best to contain development." She added that information on current and future construction projects is available on the city website for "all the world to see." Go to www.lovelafayette.com for information.

Civic News Moraga

Café Hacienda to Stay for Now

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Gayle Somers, owner of the Café Hacienda, said her challenge is that at the end of each business week she must pack up her supplies and store them somewhere else to make room for the caterers who come for weekend events,

such as the weddings that are a major source of revenue for the Hacienda.

Everyone agreed that café is an asset for the town and that it has attracted visitors to the lovely location, serving the quality food that

residents have been seeking for years.

The Town Council decided to extend Somers' rental agreement for three months, at no cost, while the stakeholders meet to discuss the future.

Civic News Fire Districts

Commitment to Lafayette Reaffirmed

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He is in talks with MOFD, but neither district has sufficient capital to fund the project right now, he said. Still, he is looking at all angles.

"What if we sold our current station (16) site?" he said. "We're looking at liquidating properties that we own to make this happen, even asking for a loan. We're serious."

Carman's message to Lafayette is one of commitment; a commitment to provide the city with the best possible fire and emergency service. He is aware, though, that the city feels it is not getting the service from the district that it pays for.

"If the cities want more say in

how the district provides service, they should seek a governance change. The current system doesn't allow for city input," he said. "Maybe a new governance model would allow that."

"At least, I want to make Lafayette understand fully what we are doing and why we are doing it."

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