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Bricks Fixed to Blend Better Soon

By Cathy Tyson



Image provided

For the many residents who expressed displeasure about the brick façade of the still-under-construction Merrill Gardens building at the corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Second Street, the funky chocolate and vanilla bricks will soon look different.

Folks weren't shy about telling the city manager, council members and commissioners that the color scheme was less than attractive. "The brick cladding started to go up about a month ago and it was very disappointing in appearance. I might even say it is visually discomforting," said planning commissioner Tom Chastain.

Travis McDanold, of Wattenbarger Architects in Washington, confirmed that they never received what would have been a very helpful phone call, as the bricking process commenced, regarding the abrupt color non-blend. A mock-up was presented during the planning process, and ap-

proved, but it was only a small sample of the bricks and not representative of what a larger field would look like. Entire walls of cream and brown checkerboard were not the original intention of the applicant; throughout the building permit application process, images always depicted two close shades of brown bricks. The architect acknowledged it was a mistake, and noted those happen with any large project.

"The owner wants to be a good neighbor," said McDanold. The cream colored bricks will be permanently stained a deeper brown – a tedious process as workers need to apply stain brick by brick. Four different samples were done in various shades of brown on a section of the existing brick wall; city staff, along with the project manager, agreed on a new and improved color that provides more of a "muted contrast," according to McDanold. Look for staining to start at the end of July and take about 10 days to complete.

Chastain credits the persistent work that planning staff, especially senior planner Lindy Chan, did on behalf of the town to help nudge the developer and owner to remedy the situation. He also points out that Merrill stepped up to the plate and did the right thing, an expensive fix, "just because we asked them."

A Month Long Celebration of Frozen Goodness



Photos Cathy Tyson

Celebrating national ice cream month wasn't on Jim Robinson's mind when he stopped in to Lafayette's newest ice cream parlor. Back in 1984, President Ronald Reagan declared July National Ice Cream Month, and ice cream makers have been hyping the fact ever since.

Chalk it up to a sunny weekend afternoon and wanting to support a new local business, Robinson and a friend were enjoying delicious, velvety and not too sweet freshly made

nectarine ice cream at Smitten recently. Just down the street at Yogurt Shack, there was an equally large crowd lined up to make self serve custom creations. Sisters Bridgette and Marlowe were out with their mom digging into some yummy-ness. Surely the former president, a fan of sweet treats, wouldn't mind that the official ice cream month could be expanded to include yogurt and enjoyed year round, now that July is almost a goner? C. Tyson



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