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School District Asks for Rent-to-Own Deal for Old Library

By Cathy Tyson

Starting on Jan. 1 the Lafayette School District will rent the old library building and adjacent parking area from the City of Lafayette, at a monthly rate of \$8,229, if its request is approved. The lease will be on a month to month basis for a maximum of 28 months, expiring on April 1, 2017. The district will have the option to purchase the facility at any time, for the then-appraised value; accrued rent would be deducted from the purchase price.

City Manager Steven Falk was directed by the City Council at its Nov. 24 meeting to negotiate with the school district superintendent. He made it clear that, "The district would lease/purchase the building as-is, and therefore be responsible for any demolition or renovation needed."

The Old Library Reuse Task Force sought the highest and best use for two properties owned by the city - the old library property and the parcel across the street at 949 Moraga Road. Ultimately the task force recommended that the old library building be used for a public purpose - either as a new location for the city offices or by the Lafayette School District. The property was purchased in 2013 for \$1.97 million and is currently uninhabitable.

City staff recommends clarification of a number of steps in order to move forward. First, review the modifications the district needs to make and determine whether they are acceptable to the City Council. Next, get approval from the county to sell the property to the district. Finally, due to government regulations, offer the property to other public agencies; if there's no interest, draft a Lease-Purchase Agreement for consideration by the City Council and the school district governing board.

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