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Measure C Supporters Want Money to Stay in Lafayette

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"If Measure C passes, the city may have the opportunity to obtain a large downtown park site near the library, consistent with developing downtown parks," another use of Measure C funds included in the ballot language, he said. While the council has studied the option of a civic building for that site, the city already has more than \$5 million

in notes and assets reserved for its construction, he said.

"So, to be crystal clear: no Measure C funds are necessary for the construction of a city office building."

As controversial as the opponents are finding Measure C, the Contra Costa Taxpayers' Association has decided to take no position on this tax. President Jack Weir

says, "During our board discussion, and my own conversations around the Lafayette community, there are clearly mixed feelings about the measure."

"In general, (we) feel Lafayette is one of the better-governed and managed cities in the county," Weir says. "Their policies on fiscal matters are generally frugal and pru-

dent. Their contract with the sheriff's department for police services is smart; they have largely avoided the unfunded pension obligation that is now crippling so many municipalities."

The process in which the tax measure came about is also getting positive reviews. "Although the city council can't promise the

money raised by the sales tax be used for specifics, the city has done a great job of giving the community a chance to tell them what they want to see in Lafayette's future," Lifson says. "And they are willing to pay for it. Our city council has demonstrated in the past that they take a responsible and conservative approach to keeping the city fiscally sound."

Lafayette Pool Dives into Dispute With Neighbors

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The Sun Valley Swimming Pool club. Photo Cathy Dausman

Additional concerns about handling garbage and light pollution were also raised.

SVSP club president T.J. Grossi says the city was alerted to the pool's increased use "mostly when we began playing amplified music at our meets, and the neighbors of our pool were affected by this enhancement." Cheering crowd noise and electronic starting beeps are different than the loud amplified pop music SVSP has requested; Grossi says; "one is tenable (to the neighbors), the other is not."

The city of Lafayette and SVSP neighbors responded with concerns about noise and limited onsite parking. Pool grounds have only six parking spots; overflow parking uses a nearby daycare center and a church by agreement. Grossi said the pool funded an environmental review "at great expense" and the board hosted a series of four outreach meetings to bring pool leadership, neighbors and the city together.

"We found that there was intense organized opposition to our permit as applied for by a very small number of adjacent neighbors," Grossi said, and the largest and most complex issue was noise. The city received three written comments about the matter from individuals who suggested the city apply "reasonable parameters" to any changes. The fourth letter (unsigned) from "adjacent neighbors of Sun Valley Pool" opposed the land use permit "entirely," raising concerns about excess traffic, pedestrian safety, buildings not to code, potential alcohol abuse, sanitation deficits and excess noise resulting from a proposed membership increase.

SVSP members themselves have complained to Grossi about other pools being able to use amplified music when they can't. Grossi says even their pool attorneys cannot find a legal argument favoring its use, but adds "as far as I know, no other (Lamorinda)

pool permit lists amplified music as a condition of operation."

Grossi says he has been working closely and amicably with Lafayette city project planner Adam

Foster. At the Sept. 19 planning commission meeting, the pair was

in and out in a matter of minutes when the item was granted a continuance to the Oct. 3 meeting. Foster

says the city wants details about just when the pool would use amplified sound. Grossi hopes to make the end result "better for the neighbors and more enjoyable for the swim team."

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Recent Crimes Stir Concern About Corridor's Safety

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The local police departments have a great deal of informational material with suggestions for protecting residents against becoming victims of robberies, car thefts, burglaries and associated acts of violence. As far as what communities can do to solve crimes and prevent their occurrence, they agree that one solution stands out: more cameras. After the city's recently installed surveillance camera system captured images of a car involved in an Orinda home invasion and assault last year, the suspect was quickly tracked to Oakland and arrested within days.

By comparison, solving the Brown crime will require old-fashioned police work, Nagel says, because there are no surveillance

camera images. This means looking for home surveillance videos and eyewitnesses, a much slower and less reliable process.

As for prevention, after cameras were installed in Orinda, the number of auto burglaries committed by outsiders dropped from 12 last year to 0 so far in 2016.

Residents may also be able to do more to prevent crime from happening. "If you see something, say something," the Lafayette crime bulletin reminded residents.

"When we moved here at the time of cityhood more than 30 years ago, Neighborhood Watch was big," agrees one Orinda resident, who preferred not to give his name. "We ought to revive that."

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