

Lafayette

Conflict of interest in commissions is causing trust issues in Lafayette

By Pippa Fisher

The integrity of Lafayette's boards and commissions is currently under scrutiny for perceived conflict of interest.

For instance, can a member of the Planning Commission or Design Review Commission represent his or her own paying client when seeking approval for a project? What if they recuse themselves from meetings in cases when the firm they work for is involved?

This was discussed at the July 10 Lafayette City Council meeting, following a year of concerns about integrity within these commissions.

It's obvious that changes need to be made to Lafayette city policy regarding the question of conflict of interest within the city's commissions to provide clarity and to ensure no ethical boundaries are

crossed.

City Attorney Mala Subramanian reminded the council that although the city's draft resolution goes above and beyond what is required by the Political Reform Act, the regulations do not completely prohibit commissioners from representing clients and provide guidelines for such cases. For example, no commissioner may use his or her city position to influence the outcome of an application.

In fact currently, DRC Chair Bob Cleaver's firm is employed in the development of Woodbury Highlands and initial site planning work there was done by LPC member Thomas Chastain's firm. However, both commissioners recused themselves during presentations to the boards so are not technically in violation.

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'Aging By Design': the 9th annual Senior Symposium is set for Aug. 5

By Pippa Fisher

Lamorinda residents will soon have the chance to attend the Senior Symposium for an informative morning of presentations, discussions and vendors with the theme of "Aging by Design," organized by the Lafayette Community Foundation.

As LCF board member Anne Grodin noted, the main focus of this event is to make people aware of the diversity of services available for seniors in this area.

The symposium is co-sponsored by John Muir Health and many senior-related businesses and providers in collaboration with the Lafayette Senior Services Commission.

Now in its ninth year, the event is always popular. It takes place at Lafayette Elementary School, 950 Moraga Road in Lafayette from 8:30 a.m. to noon, Saturday, Aug. 5. There will be plenty of parking

behind the school with some mobility parking in front.

This year the symposium will include presentations from stroke program coordinator for John Muir Health, Jennifer Cave-Brown, and senior fitness consultant David Garcia. It will also feature a panel discussion by service providers. There will be breaks between the speakers to allow attendees to visit the resource fair.

LCF is providing Communication Access Real Time Translation captions for people with hearing loss.

The free annual event can accommodate up to 300 attendees. Those interested are encouraged to register in advance online at www.lafayettecf.org or by calling (925) 284-8214. Advanced registration also qualifies for a chance to win a gift card to Diablo Foods.

Upper Happy Valley Road work nears completion, but more to come

By Pippa Fisher



EBMUD installing a new pipeline.

Photo Pippa Fisher

Residents who have become used to the delays and the slow, bumpy crawl over steel trench plates on Upper Happy Valley Road can look forward to some smoother rides in the near future.

EBMUD is in the process of installing a new 12-inch pipeline along Upper Happy Valley Road. The company expects to have the work completed by mid-August, at which time the steel plates will be removed and some reconstruction work on the pavement will begin.

City Engineer Tony Coe updated the Lafayette City Council members at the council meeting July 10. He cautioned that although EBMUD will be repairing the pavement under Lafayette's most stringent repair standards - Lafayette requires restoration of the road up to four feet beyond a road cut as opposed to the county's requirement of only four inches beyond - the road surface will still require further work.

In his report Coe says that, "This measure alone would restore the pavement to be equal to, if not exceeding, the conditions prior to the pipeline work." But, he added that the utility company is responsible only for restoring the road to the same condition as before and that "we can't ask them to do more than that."

However the city is planning to surface seal the mile-long stretch of road next summer, which Coe says will restore a smooth and uniform appearance, as well as fill cracks, level low spots and repair any potholes. This work is already budgeted for under capital improvements.

Council Member Ivor Samson commented that it is important for the city to get word out to residents that further repairs are planned, even beyond EBMUD's work and that the "patchwork" effect along that stretch of road, will be addressed at that time.



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