

Residents raise flag to show city pride



Erling Horn shows the 5-foot by 8-foot Lafayette flag. Photo provided

The Lafayette Chamber of Commerce is selling special Lafayette city flags. Residents and businesses are being encouraged to show their Lafayette pride during this year of the city's 50th anniversary by flying the flag proudly.

The digitally printed flags have the Lafayette city logo boldly displayed in color on a white background. Made from heavy nylon, the flags are bound around the perimeter and fitted with brass grommets on one end. They are designed to be flown on home or business

flagpoles and have approximately a one-year outdoor lifespan.

The flags, available in either a 3-foot by 5-foot size for \$55 or a 5-foot by 8-foot size for \$110, can be purchased only from the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce and must be ordered by April 3.

Residents should either mail a check to the Chamber of Commerce at 250 Lafayette Circle, Ste. 150, Lafayette CA 94549 or call the Chamber for credit card payment at (925) 284-7404.

- P. Fisher

City continues to hash out conflict of interest policy

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Lafayette resident and attorney Scott Sommer reminded the council of specific instances of reciprocal voting and pointed to the involvement of Planning Commissioner Thomas Chastain and ex-Design Review Commissioner Bob Cleaver's firms in current Lafayette developments. In his opinion he said that concerns are exaggerated over finding qualified commissioners.

"The bigger concern here is that many citizens have no confidence in the fairness of the land-use process in Lafayette and will probably never vote in a majority for any bond or sales tax measure you propose until you clean this kind of thing up," warned Sommer.

Ex-Mayor Brandt Andersson disagreed and said he'd prefer to see the more lenient Version B.

He spoke of the importance of the many volunteers who give so much to the city, spending many hours of their time for no pay in what he called the "virtuous cycle." He said Version A was a "direct assault on the virtuous cycle."

Burks and Samson both agreed with Andersson that volunteerism is very important to the city but said that it is precisely because of that, that the integrity of the government must be restored.

Council Member Mark Mitchell said that the violations in 2004 and 2016 were troubling and noted that erosion of trust in governance is a problem.

With Council Member Mike Anderson absent, the council decided to hold their vote until the March 26 meeting.

Traffic relief in downtown inches closer

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Consulting firm Arup spokesperson Mike Iswalt explained the benefit of such a strategy, saying that simplifying the junction would reduce travel time by up to 10 percent on Moraga Road and would provide a direct bike and pedestrian connection across Moraga Road to the (proposed) School Street pathway (strategy number 6).

And that is exactly what most of the public comments addressed. Almost all speakers voiced their concern over increased traffic through the narrow residential streets in the Brook Street neighborhood, citing cut-through traffic and danger to pedestrians as well as increased exhaust. Iswalt spoke of possible calming measures but nonetheless almost all favored another option - that of building a pedestrian footbridge.

To that end, Iswalt explained that they had done analysis showing that travel time and delay on Moraga Road would improve by

only 5 percent with the footbridge as a result of the removal of the existing scramble phase signals at Brook Street and the crosswalk at School Street, compared to 10 percent with the realignment. However several members of the public expressed that safety of the school children trying to cross should come first.

Mayor Don Tatzin reminded everyone that just because it's on the plan doesn't mean it has to be implemented. "Tonight is not the night to do final design work," he said.

According to city staff, upon plan adoption the city will be better positioned to take advantage of grant funding opportunities for strategy implementation. Furthermore, prior to implementation each project would be subject to a whole new public review process, including potential coordination with external stakeholders such as school districts.

Lafayette's Police Chief moves on

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Christensen says he is accepting a captain's job at Oakley PD, pointing out that it will cut his commute from an hour and a half to 15 minutes. "It will make a big difference for me and my family," he said.

Falk says that he is in contact with Sheriff David Livingston's office and will be receiving resumes from lieutenants interested in the police chief job. As Mayor Don Tatzin announced at the March 12 city council meeting, a group of

people from the community will interview the candidates and then, since the police chief reports to the city manager, Falk will make the final selection.

Falk expects to be able to make an appointment near the end of this month.

Christensen's retirement party will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday, March 29 at the Veteran's Memorial Center, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette.

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