

Teachers union and LAFSD reach two-year agreement

By Nick Marnell

The Lafayette School District board approved a labor contract between the Lafayette Education Association and the district at its April 18 meeting. The two-year contract covers all district employees.

Under terms of the agreement, employees receive an 0.5 percent salary increase for the 2016-17 school year effective July 1, 2016, plus a 2 percent salary increase for 2017-18, ef-

fective July 1, 2017. The district also covers the full cost of employee health benefit premiums, whether for an employee personally, an employee plus a dependent or an employee's entire family. LAFSD also provides full-family dental coverage and single-employee vision coverage.

"We are happy that we were able to come to an agreement, through mediation," said LEA

President Carol Kerr, noting that it was the first time the parties had ever used a state-appointed mediator during labor negotiations.

"It was difficult. We would have liked to have given more, but we simply do not receive adequate funding from the state to support our budget," said LAFSD Superintendent Rachel Zinn. "The teachers deserved the raise. No one thinks more highly of our

teachers than our board or I do." In order to fund more than \$460,000 of employee compensation increases, the district had to cut personnel and services, including one K-5 teacher and the district technology coordinator, out of its 2018-19 budget.

"It was heartbreaking that we had to get to that point," Zinn said. "It's so disheartening that we had to resort to the cuts we did. Any time you have to dis-

mantle a program and affect people's lives, it's painful. There was no good choice."

Employees will receive retroactive payments for the past year and a half by the end of June, but Kerr said that the checks should arrive before the end of May.

"We have to negotiate, but our focus is always on the students," Kerr said.

Deer Hill Road – Pros and cons of Measure L debated

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Photo Pippa Fisher

Q: Will there be a serious health risk to children at the proposed children's play area and sports field from fine and ultra fine particulate matter and other air pollutants?

No on L: The City mismanaged analysis of air pollution risk at the play area/field. The EIR reported Deer Hill exceeded Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) thresholds for cancer and 2.5 micron particulate matter (PM), but addressed only 2.5 micron and larger PM. It ignored 0.3 micron and ultrafine PM widely considered more toxic because it penetrates the lungs, bloodstream, and blood/brain barrier – causing a much greater health risk. Active children would breathe 4 million 0.3 micron PM per minute when the Air Quality Index is Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups, per James Leach, 2017 City of Lafayette Environmental Award of Excellence recipient, a level found at sites by busy roadways in Concord and Oakland monitored by BAAQMD.

Mr. Leach commented: "My objection to constructing a sports field and play area at the Deer Hill project is that the level of air pollution ... is unhealthy for such activities. These conditions are especially hazardous to children. ... It is well established that being close to such heavy traffic presents a serious health risk from exposure to fine solid and liquid particulates."

BAAQMD recommends placing "sensitive land uses ... such as schools, playgrounds" away from busy roadways.

'Yes' argues a sports field is not a school site subject to SB 352, Ed. Code 17213. Incorrect. The legislature's definition of school site (Ed. Code 17609(f)) includes "playgrounds, athletic fields ..."

There was no complete health risk analysis for children. Voters should be guided by state law restricting new school sites within 500 feet of busy roadways and BAAQMD and Leach recommendations.

Yes on L: No. The independent Environmental Impact Report studied potential impacts and determined there is no significant risk and required no mitigation. In response to additional community concerns this spring, O'Brien Homes ordered an expanded Health Risk Assessment from an outside expert that focused on the users of the park and sports field using the latest air quality guidelines from the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment and Bay Area Air Quality Management District which confirmed that there is no significant cancer-related, chronic, acute or particulate matter related health risk to park visitors and sports field users. Any air quality impacts are well below the established BAAQMD threshold. You can read both reports on the campaign website at www.YesOnL2018.org

Q: What happens if Measure L doesn't pass? What happens with the 315-apartment project?

Yes on L: If Measure L fails, the property remains privately owned and zoned for development. The zoning on the property would remain "APO," which allows multi-family housing at 35 units/acre for a maximum of 770 units. If Measure L fails, O'Brien Homes has a process agreement in place with the city to restart the 315-apartment project, which is well within the allowed zoning. New state laws have made it more difficult for local government to deny an affordable housing project such as this. Moreover, approval of the apartment project will not be subject to a vote because it falls within allowed zoning and doesn't require the adoption of a new ordinance. The public open space, sports field, dog-park, playground, and intersection improvements would return to the community's wish list.

No on L: The developer "suspended" the 315-apartments application without a vote (1/13/14) after the EIR was certified with 13 significant unavoidable impacts, including air quality and traffic. Those unavoidable health and safety impacts are a firm legal ground for denial under the Housing Accountability Act, Government Code 65589.5(d)(2). The property is low density and a general plan amendment would be subject to referendum.

**Are you interested in learning more about the Lafayette School District?
Would you like the unique opportunity to see classroom instruction in action?**

Lafayette community members are invited to join Superintendent Rachel Zinn and Principal Ann Kim for a school visit on Monday, May 21st from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. at Lafayette Elementary School, 950 Moraga Rd., Lafayette. We do ask that you RSVP for this event by Wednesday, May 16th if you are planning to attend. Please email Sharon Carman at: scarman@lafsd.org or call (925) 927-3502.

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