

## City Council Candidates Night

5 Candidates-Introductions and Q & A  
**Come, Listen, Question & Decide!**  
 Meet the School Board Candidates, too  
**September 20 • 7 p.m.**  
 Veterans Memorial Hall, Lafayette  
 Presented by Lafayette Homeowners Council  
 Annual Meeting – [www.LafayetteHomeownersCouncil.org](http://www.LafayetteHomeownersCouncil.org)

## Will Lafayette become a straw-free community?

By Pippa Fisher



From left, Darby Witherspoon and Chloe De Lancia. Photo provided

When will Lafayette reach the final straw? For co-founders of Central Contra Costa's Last Plastic Straw, Darby Witherspoon and Chloe De Lancia, they are hoping sooner rather than later.

The two are taking their message of education about the dangers and their goal of elimination of plastic straws to local city councils. In July Witherspoon and De Lancia spoke during the public comment period at the Lafayette City Council meeting, urging the city to place a discussion about plastic straw legislation on an upcoming agenda. To this end they will be presenting again to the September Environmental Task Force meeting.

De Lancia noted that the issue is tentatively expected to be on the Oct. 2 Walnut Creek City Council agenda. They will be talking at city council meetings this fall in Moraga and Orinda as well.

Both De Lancia and Witherspoon work at Crestwood Healing Center, a mental health facility in Pleasant Hill and 2016 Green Business of the Year award winner. De Lancia, who also serves as the sustainability coordinator at Crestwood, said that three and a half years ago the center started to take actions to reduce waste and save water and energy. Looking for both a bigger impact and also for ways to get residents involved and for them to give back to the community, De Lancia and Witherspoon decided on the issue of straws.

"Simple changes will reach more individuals," De Lancia says.

Given that the two only started working on this campaign in December 2017, less than a year ago, they have been remarkably impactful.

Currently De Lancia says that 12 locations in the county, including Buttercup Diners and Zachary's Pizza, have gone to either providing straws only upon request or by using compostable (paper) straws, or a combination of both of those.

Locally several businesses are on board, including the 2015 Cool California Award winner, Rising Loafer.

De Lancia and Witherspoon started their campaign by going door-to-door in the spring but quickly found it more effective to communicate with businesses via email. In April the two took the decision to push for local city and town ordinances.

In addition to talking to city councils, Witherspoon and De Lancia have been presenting their campaign to rotary clubs and schools. "Children are very receptive to the message," says De Lancia. In fact at the Walnut Creek city meeting, she said, a couple of 7-year-olds also spoke, noting that Crestwood residents also attend the meetings.

De Lancia and Witherspoon are among the nominations for this year's Sustainable Contra Costa award.

## Developer pulls out – what's next for Park Theater?

By Pippa Fisher

City staff learned late Aug. 29 that developer Madison Park has decided against going further with a deal involving the purchase of the Park Theater and a density transfer, that could potentially have been the answer for saving the historic theater. The city council has placed the issue on the Sept. 10 meeting agenda in order to discuss options.

As reported in the last issue of Lamorinda Weekly, the developer who owns property at 3483 Golden Gate Way was considering an option to buy the theater, deeding it to the city in exchange for the theater's allowable residential units that he would then apply to the Golden Gate Way property.

However, in an email Madison Park Chief Financial Officer Simon Chen said that the company has de-

ecided not to move forward with the purchase and will instead focus on a smaller scale project on a property it owns in downtown Lafayette. The email noted several factors that led the developer to decide against the purchase and a density transfer.

A press release from the city quoted the developer saying that the scale of any development on its property would be a significant issue given the feedback from both the community and city council.

"The community's expectations," the developer wrote, "would result in the additional density no longer being accretive, and that this would present an additional financial hurdle to overcome."

With the matter on the next city council meeting agenda, the discussion on future options will continue.

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