

Mitchell Ridge named in honor of Lafayette's native son



Photo Pippa Fisher

From left, Former Mayor Don Tatzin, Mayor Cam Burks, Lauren Mitchell (daughter), Mike Mitchell (brother) and Anita Mitchell (mother)

By Pippa Fisher

As a fitting tribute to the memory of a man who was loved and respected by so many in the community, the city council adopted a resolution to name one of Lafayette's ridges in honor of former mayor and council member Mark Mitchell.

Following Mitchell's sudden passing last November, former mayor Don Tatzin approached Mitchell's wife, Anne, for suggestions on how to honor his legacy. The family determined that naming the as-yet unnamed ridge near their family home would be appropriate given Mitchell's dedication to preserving the city's hillsides and ridgelines and his advocacy for open space preservation.

Mitchell served on the Planning Commission from 2001 until 2012 when he was elected to the city council. He served as mayor from 2015-16. He is the only council member born in Lafayette, raising his family in the city.

Parks, Trails and Recreation Director Jonathan Katayanagi explained that Mitchell's many contributions to the community, especially his accomplishments in ridgeline and open space protection, make him a suitable candidate for the United States Board on Geographic Names naming process. While USBGN policy man-

dates that a formal application cannot be submitted until after a five-year waiting period following a death, the city can still adopt the name locally in the meantime.

The ridge spans just over a mile, following part of Solana Drive, Solana Court, Sweet Drive and Jennie Court in Lafayette. The council also authorized payment up to \$5,000 from the general fund to install a plaque in the public right of way near the summit location.

Speakers including Tatzin, former mayor Brandt Andersson and several residents shared memories of Mitchell, many mentioning his ready smile and his gift for listening.

Mayor Cam Burks also recalled Mitchell's warm smile and spoke of his love of family. "I learned so much from Mark about how to be a city council member and leader in the community," said Burks. "He was a true mentor to me ... he absolutely loved our city and wanted to support our community more than anyone I've ever met."

Mitchell's mother, brother and daughter were at the meeting to receive the proclamation. Mitchell's wife, Anne, was out of town and unable to attend, but Burks says the city is planning to hold a special plaque placement ceremony in the near future, making sure that she will be able to attend.

Don Tatzin - Citizen of the Year



Don Tatzin and his wife Ellen Reintjes

Photo provided

By Pippa Fisher

It's official – Don Tatzin, former mayor and longtime city council member, is the 2019 Lafayette Citizen of the Year.

A dinner will be held in his honor at the Lafayette Park Hotel and Spa on Friday,

March 22. To register for the event, which is expected to sell out quickly, go to the Chamber of Commerce website – see below for link.

An in-depth article featuring Tatzin will be in a future issue of Lamorinda Weekly.

Info: <https://lafayettechamber.org/>

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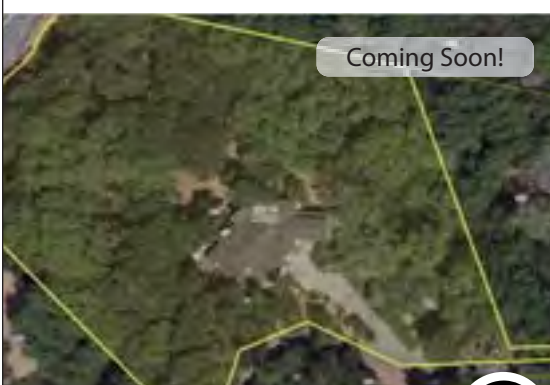
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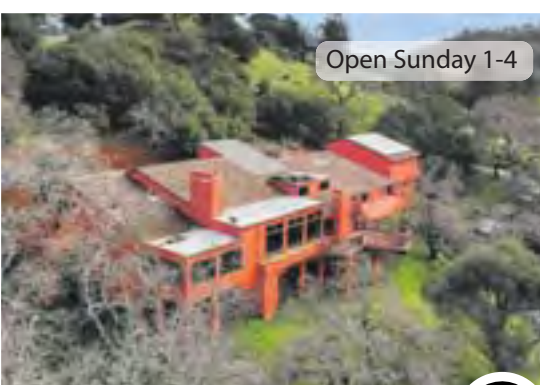
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