

Hillside Memorial vigil honors those who served



Photo Pippa Fisher

As the sun went down Nov. 11, members of the community joined together beneath the imposing swath of crosses at the Lafayette Hillside Memorial to hold a vigil marking Veterans Day with poetry, music and reflection.

Amongst those in attendance were Lafayette Mayor Mike Anderson, County Supervisor Candace Andersen, and a representative from the office of Congressman Mark DeSaulnier who all thanked veterans for their service and noted the price those men and women have paid.

Formerly known as the Crosses of Lafayette, the Lafayette Hillside Memorial is preserved by a recently formed nonprofit organiza-

tion, with a board of directors and an advisory group comprised of a diverse group of community members. They describe the memorial as "A sacred place of reflection and remembrance; a protest against forgetting. It is a place to recognize, honor, and commemorate individual national service contributions. The memorial is also a place that encourages individual and public reflection on those contributions, and the otherwise unintended, unseen, and unexamined costs of war."

More information on the memorial can be found at <http://www.lafayettehillside-memorial.org/> - P. Fisher

PG&E no-show at Lafayette city meeting

... continued from Page A1

PG&E Spokesperson Tamar Sarkissian explained in emailed comments that they purchased the adjacent property, details of which were not made public due to a non-disclosure agreement, to facilitate the upgrade of the station.

"The purpose of this project is to improve safety for the community by removing the old regulator station, building a new regulator station and installing automated valves. PG&E will be installing a receiver for an inline inspection testing tool (also known as a pig) which will allow easier and less invasive testing of the condition and integrity of the pipeline that runs through the station," Sarkissian said. "We also will be installing automated valves at the location which will enable PG&E to turn off the flow of gas remotely."

In a letter dated Oct. 30 to PG&E and the city of Lafayette, Gas Safety Task Force Members Michael and Gina Dawson ask why this particular site was chosen. "Why has PG&E ruled out an automated valve location in a more central location to three transmission lines that may expedite gas release containment to expanded areas of the city?"

Preliminary work, including vegetation removal, demolition of the existing house and grading began the week of Nov. 4 with removal of four trees on the east end. Construction work on the station is expected to start in early 2020 and is projected to conclude in the third quarter of the year.

Council Member Cam Burks asked Planning Director Greg Wolff when the city first asked the utility to reach out to residents. "Last year," replied Wolff. When Burks then asked when the utility actually reached out to residents, Wolff replied "Last week."

Burks has been heavily critical of PG&E. In an email dated Oct. 25 Burks urged PG&E, "Please, try to start being good neighbors and re-

spect what a true relationship could accomplish for all parties. Just go out and engage neighbors and tell them what you are doing."

Council Member Steven Bliss noted that of all the meetings not to come to, "It's incredible to me that they're not here tonight."

When asked why they did not attend the meeting, Sarkissian referred to talks they have had with city staff and the two meetings they have had recently with the neighbors. "Since January of 2018, PG&E has been meeting closely with the city of Lafayette regarding the Reliez Station safety and reliability project. Additionally, we have had multiple meetings with the local community and HOA, including earlier this month. We also shared an updated fact sheet with the city of Lafayette earlier this month. There was no new information to share at this point."

Andreasen Drive Homeowners Association president Aron Rosenberg explained to the council that they have given a list of "non-negotiable" requests to PG&E concerning a second emergency egress, construction of a wall matching that of the neighboring Olympic Oaks development, a study into vehicular safety of the intersection and said that in exchange for the utility holding off on tree removal other than the four that have already been removed, the association will hold off litigation. "We have not yet filed any legal action against PG&E," said Rosenberg. "Although we reserve the right to do so." He said that the utility had promised to get back to them within two weeks.

Saying that it showed negligence for PG&E to not come to the meeting, Burks said he wants to document all concerns and that a letter should be sent to the utility and to the California Public Utilities Commission. "If there's one community they could endear themselves to it would be this one," he said.

"It was their opportunity and they missed it," agreed Anderson.

CORRECTION: In the article "Cancer Support Community shares plans at public information meeting" published in the Nov. 13 issue of Lamorinda Weekly, the Cancer Support Center was listed incorrectly as the Cancer Support Center. Our apologies for this error.



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