

Published February 19th, 2020

## An evening of community issues

By Pippa Fisher



Mayor Mike Anderson gives the State of the City address at the Homeowners Council meeting Feb. 6. Photo Pippa Fisher

The Sequoia Room at the Community Center was full Feb. 6 for a Lafayette Homeowners Council meeting. The crowd was engaged for an evening of three presentations on "community issues."

Up first was Mayor Mike Anderson who gave a State of the City address, prefaced with a brief reminder of Lafayette's background. He recalled that the city started without taxes before Prop 13, and it maintains its 15 commissions and committees with volunteers. He noted that it is a small city where people know each other and are friendly and he asked, given our topography nestled into the hills but with a BART station, freeway and only one main drag through town, "How do we deal with state legislature who wants a cookie-cutter solution to the housing crisis? We are different - tighter, friendlier," he said.

Anderson gave a presentation full of budget facts and figures, noting that the city's operating costs are around \$17 million annually. The city maintains a 60% reserve and has done for the last five years. He drew the audience's attention to budget vulnerabilities, such as wildfire prevention, police costs, downtown maintenance, stormwater pollution and legal exposure.

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With the state pushing for more housing, reduced green house gases and reduced vehicle-miles traveled, Anderson once again said that just providing housing alone isn't going to help. "The jobs/housing balance is key." But he noted that even if it is not happy to be losing local control, Lafayette is a subdivision of the state, and as such it has to work with the state. In fact he and City Manager Niroop Srivatsa had just returned from a series of meetings on the subject of housing in Sacramento with State Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, and State Sen. Steve Glazer, amongst other housing-focused lawmakers.

Next up for the evening was Lafayette School District Superintendent Richard Whitmore who discussed the state of funding for Lafayette schools. Joined by Yes on L Campaign Co-chairs Tom Mulvaney and Danielle Gallagher, they presented their case for the measure on the March 3 ballot, for a parcel tax to benefit the local schools. (See separate article on Measure L, page A2.) Finally, Contra Costa County Transportation Board Member Don Tatzin presented his case for why residents should support Measure J, which would levy a half-cent sales tax for 35 years to raise an estimated \$103 million for transportation and road projects in the incorporated and unincorporated areas of Contra Costa County.

According to the measure, money would be used to reduce congestion and fix bottlenecks on highways and roads. Tatzin made the point that the county can't build its way out of the traffic issues. "You can't just add lanes to 24 or 680," he said, noting that 55% of the money would go toward transit improvements. Tatzin said that they would be able to further explore bike lanes, increase school bus services and use funds to make BART cleaner and safer.

Time was allowed following each presenter for questions and answers. The evening was a chance for conversation about each of the three issues.

Mulvaney even commented at a city council meeting several days later to the mayor that he had learned more about how the city is run in the mayor's 20-minute presentation than he had known in his previous 32 years of living here.

The mayor's State of the City PowerPoint presentation is available on the city website at [www.lovelafayette.org/Home/ShowDocument?id=6076](http://www.lovelafayette.org/Home/ShowDocument?id=6076)

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