



Published October 14th, 2020

Civility and respect mark Lafayette city council forums

By Pippa Fisher

Election season means several candidate forums - opportunities for residents to hear the various opinions and plans of each of the candidates for city council. This year, because of COVID restrictions, all forums were held virtually, giving residents the advantage of being able to watch the recordings if they missed the live events (see links on Page A16).

Three seats are up for grabs on the city council. Four candidates are vying for election - Carl Anduri, Cam Burks (incumbent, running for his second term), Gina Dawson, and Farschad Farzan.

The Chamber of Commerce kicked the series of discussions off with its monthly Coffee with the Mayor dedicated to meeting the candidates in a forum moderated by Chamber Board President John McCormick Sept. 18.

Inclusive Lafayette partnered with Sustainable Lafayette for its candidates forum, Lafayette Forward, on Sept. 24, facilitated by Jeremy Levine of Inclusive Lafayette and Mike Rohde of Sustainable Lafayette.

The Lafayette Homeowners Council held its traditional forum, usually held at the Veterans Memorial Center, via Zoom on Oct. 1, moderated by Board President Bill Bucher.

Last, but not least, the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley held a forum Oct. 6 moderated by Sharon Burke.

While questions tended more toward commerce and how best to support local businesses at the Chamber's forum, the discussion hosted by Inclusive Lafayette and Sustainable Lafayette focused on making Lafayette more bike and pedestrian friendly, along with housing issues - the Terraces, zoning, affordability and the definition of 'semi-rural.'

LHC questions included discussions on desired outcomes of the General Plan Advisory Committee, how best to handle downtown development while meeting state housing requirements, and questions on schools, and bike safety. And while the LWV forum touched on many of the same issues it included discussion on the city's potential role in the restoration of the Park Theater, traffic in the Pleasant Hill Road corridor, police funding and a discussion about the conflict of interest ordinance passed by the city council in 2018.

Levine says feedback was positive following the Lafayette Forward event, with over 50 household participating via Zoom live and many more viewing after the event. The numbers were similar for the LHC forum according to Bucher.

The tenor of every meeting was one of civility and respect and, in fact, the candidates appeared to agree on most, if not all, issues.

Bucher and Levine agree that Lafayette has a strong field of candidates. "Good thoughts by all four candidates," said Bucher after the forum.

"I'm happy that the entire field has indicated they would like to promote more housing development in our downtown corridor," said Levine. "I'm also excited by the candidates' enthusiastic support for improving biking and walking infrastructure. All of the candidates demonstrated that they hold nuanced positions on complex issues about Lafayette's future, and they clearly care deeply about listening to our community."

Recordings of the forums can be found at the links listed below:

Chamber of Commerce forum:

<https://lafayettechamber.org/lafayette-city-council-meet-the-candidates/>

Inclusive Lafayette/Sustainable Lafayette forum:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEu2QDwmBwQ&fbclid=IwAR1KiBFVvpLJq9Ogen2yHBlad8QgZtCwDbsEOttbdMznuiNENqJzfYurT0Q)

[v=fEu2QDwmBwQ&fbclid=IwAR1KiBFVvpLJq9Ogen2yHBlad8QgZtCwDbsEOttbdMznuiNENqJzfYurT0Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEu2QDwmBwQ&fbclid=IwAR1KiBFVvpLJq9Ogen2yHBlad8QgZtCwDbsEOttbdMznuiNENqJzfYurT0Q)

LHC forum:

<https://lafayettehomeownerscouncil.org/>

LWV forum:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SfOEKjYivYo>

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