



Lafayette Volunteer Opportunities

Lafayette has openings on the following Commissions and Committees

- Capital Projects Assessment (CPAC)
- Community Center Foundation
- Citizen Advisory Committee to CCTA
- Downtown Street Improvement (DSIMPIC)
- Environmental Task Force
- Parks, Trails & Recreation Commission
- Public Art Committee
- Transportation & Circulation Commission

For additional information on these volunteer positions visit the city's website www.lovelafayette.org

Hot Topics

Or e-mail City Clerk Joanne Robbins, jrobbins@lovelafayette.org

Positions open until filled.

Single-income renters

... continued from Page A2

To be on time before she had access to a car, Shameka departed before sunrise. During the pandemic when Shameka's hours were cut, she lost her apartment and found herself couch surfing and in some cases sleeping in her car.

"It was hard. It was really hard," Shameka recalls. "Some days I broke down and cried and then I thought about my children. That's what kept me going."

While Shameka would love to have the option of living in a community like Lafayette for the sake of her kids' education and the close proximity to her job, it's a nearly unimaginable idea for her. Shameka's hopes are simple yet profound: "Just to be stable."

Natalie Oleas, the Family Justice Center's central director, says struggles like these are commonplace in the Bay Area: "We've seen a lot of single parent households struggling and a lot of people staying in situations where DV (domestic violence) is a factor and where their safety is at risk simply because they have no place to go."

The Family Justice Center is a hub where clients can get resources and support relating to anything from legal services to counseling to assistance applying for and accessing health and human resources benefits like food stamps. In the housing realm, outside of connecting clients with low-income listings that often have long waitlists and in some cases offering temporary financial assistance, Oleas says finding a long-term solution is complicated.

"We try to get creative and explore ways that clients can be resourceful like staying with family members (if they have family in the area) or renting along with another single parent," Oleas says.

Jeremy Levine is the director of Inclusive Lafayette, a volunteer community group

that focuses on local inclusive housing. Levine says it's tragic that the people who teach children, provide service and care for the community can't afford to live in the community.

While Levine says there's not necessarily an immediate solution for renters who are being priced out, he's hopeful about the city's commitment to bring more housing to Lafayette in the years to come. "The more people we have of different backgrounds (and life experiences) living in Lafayette, the better the community will be," Levine says.

Lafayette City Council Member Wei-Tai Kwok says accessible and affordable housing is a cornerstone to building an inclusive Lafayette, but it is not necessarily an easy issue to tackle.

"Homeowners no doubt are delighted by rising home values, but existing renters are not fans of rising rents," Kwok says. "The growing economic gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' is not good for society and so personally I favor efforts to achieve a more diverse housing supply from low to median levels."

Kwok and Levine agree that while addressing housing insecurity in Lafayette is of the utmost importance, figuring out the best way to do it is the challenge. With \$400 per square foot construction costs, even a 500 square foot unit with free land would cost \$200,000 to build.

"Success will require multiple funding sources, including federal, state or local monies, nonprofit contributions, and private enterprises," Kwok says.

For now, housing advocates are looking at ideas ranging from raising local taxes to implementing vacancies taxes or partnering with nonprofits. Meanwhile, people like Shastri and Shameka are doing their best to hold onto jobs in Lamorinda with dreams of a stable place in the community to lay their heads each evening.

Bookmark contest returns to LLLC

The Friends of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center invite all Lafayette K-8 students to create an original bookmark illustrating a favorite book. Entry forms will be distributed to Lafayette public schools and St. Perpetua School. Additional forms will be available at the Lafayette Library and the

Friend's Corner Book Store. The contest opens on Feb. 11 and all entries are due at the Library by March 4. Winners will be announced on April 27 at the Library and winning bookmarks will be on display at the Library and bookstore as well as handed out to Library patrons.



Lafayette Public Meetings

City Council

Regular Meeting
Monday, Feb. 28, 7 p.m.
Teleconference via City of Lafayette's YouTube Channel:
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

Planning Commission Meeting

Tuesday, Feb. 22, 7 p.m.
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

Design Review

Wednesday, Feb. 23, 7 p.m. Zoom
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

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