



See public meetings schedule on this pages and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Lafayette:

www.lovelafayette.org

Phone: (925) 284-1968

Chamber of Commerce:

www.lafayettechamber.org



COMPASS

Hidden Valley Charmer | 876 Revere Road, Lafayette

5 Bed + Attached In-Law Unit | 4 Bath
3066± Sq. Ft. | .23 ± Acre Lot

876RevereRoad.com

Offered at \$2,485,000

Lafayette's #1 Real Estate Team
Since 2008

DanaGreenTeam.com

925.339.1918 | DRE 01482454

Dana
Green
Team

Mayor focuses on accomplishments during State of City address

By Lou Fancher

Relegated to an online delivery of the Feb. 10 State of the City Address, Lafayette Mayor Teresa Geringer spoke of school safety, wildfire prevention, PG&E PSPS events, emergency response capabilities, new inclusive and diversity initiatives, and funding from regional, state and federal sources the city is pursuing to support businesses, nonprofits and individuals as the city emerges from the pandemic. She also talked about General Plan updates and acknowledged city staff and her fellow council members for continuing to provide high quality services to residents. Geringer made note of the long hours logged by city staff and their contributions to what makes Lafayette great.

During a Q&A with leaders of several departments, City Manager Niroop Srivatsa, who assumed her position as city manager in 2019, said she has the privilege of leading the 44 full- and part-time staff members who often go above and beyond to fulfill their roles serving residents.

Administrative Services Director Tracy Robinson, Greg Wolff, Lafayette's Planning and Building Director, and Director of Engineering and Public Works Mike Moran all spoke about challenges they have faced during the pandemic,

with Robinson noting that there are currently four engineering jobs alone to fill at the city.

Parks Trails and Recreation Director Jonathan Katayanagi, who has been with the city for 24 years, talked about the Lafayette Spirit Van for seniors, in-person and Zoom classes available for seniors, adults and children, after-school childcare and summer camps, and room and picnic area rentals at the community center. Events returning to the department include a Father-Daughter Dance (now called a Family Dance) on March 11 and a Youth Commission outdoor movie night (date TBD).

Katayanagi said the Lafayette Senior Services Commission is working on a new action plan and residents are welcome to email advice at love-lafayette.org. "They are working the AARP's eight domains of livability to improve the age friendliness of the city." Also on tap, a project with the Senior Services Commission and the Youth Commission called "Lafayette Rocks." Older adults and youth in the community will be joining forces to paint rocks and spend time talking to one another.

Katayanagi also brought up the three Lafayette pickleball courts located at the community center hockey rink and the free program that includes instruction from volunteers. Katayanagi

said he sees people of all ages on the courts.

Moran said keeping the roads, drains, streetlights, traffic signals, Lafayette Library and Learning Center and other physical structures means Public Works has "a lot going on." Recent projects completed or in progress include paving a large portion of Moraga Road coming down from Moraga, reconstructing and paving a large portion of Reliez Valley Road, implementing traffic calming and safety measures around schools and more.

Police Chief Ben Alldritt said partnerships with the Chamber of Commerce such as the Rez Run continue and indicated a close collaboration between the department and the city. When asked about wildfire safety, Alldritt noted the collaborative effort between the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District and the Police Department, and highlighted the Alert Wildfire camera system that now has over 30 cameras in and around the Lafayette area for early detection of wildfires. He invited people to visit alertwildfire.org to learn more about the program. The AM 1670 radio station he said is "alive and well," and he mentioned that the Board of Supervisors, acting on behalf of ConFire, approved a plan to apply for up to \$5 mil-

lion in state grants to extend the MOFD shaded fuel break into Lafayette and Walnut Creek.

Increased levels of attention have been implemented to improve safety and traffic awareness around schools in the area, and Alldritt noted that cameras have helped minimize criminal activity. "If you come to Lafayette to commit a crime, we will come find you," he said.

Other questions from the public involved Vision Zero, which focuses on street safety, and the desire for sidewalks, which Moran says the Local Roadway Safety Plan will address, but "we need a funding structure."

When asked about how the city is working to reduce its carbon footprint, Geringer spoke about the push to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and mentioned the work being done by the Environmental Task Force, which is looking into ways the city can convert from using gas-powered leaf blowers and other gas-powered equipment to electric. The ETF plans to bring a draft ordinance to the council and is also researching EV charging standards in new developments.

After questions from the public were answered, Stanley Middle School Music Director Bob Athayde introduced a video recording of the Stanley Symphonic Band to close the event.

Some single-income renters struggle to stay afloat in Lafayette



Photo J. Wake

By Sharon K. Sobotta

When Sunita Shastri's apartment manager suggested she leave her name off the lease of her unit when she and her husband and two children downsized from a two to a one-bedroom place in 2019, it seemed like no big deal. But when Shastri, who is in the final stages of divorce, tried to take over the lease in 2021, management told her she'd first need to vacate and reapply. "I asked my manager where we should go with my kids and my stuff while I waited and she shrugged her shoulders," Shastri recalls. "She seemed to think 'it's not my problem.'"

Shastri reached out to the apartment in Lafayette that has low income

units and placed herself on the waiting list. When she recently checked on her waitlist status, she was number 200. Shastri has also reached out to the Contra Costa County Family Justice Center, which can waitlist her for housing in places like Concord, Martinez or Antioch, but not Lafayette.

"It's easy for people to say that you should just leave Lafayette if you can't afford it," says Shastri, who is a preschool teacher in Moraga and whose children attend Lafayette Elementary School. "As a single mom, I can't just pack up and move. It's taken me a long time to build a support network in this community, who help me with caring for my kids, and my job is very important to me." Shastri doesn't think she

should have to leave a community that she loves.

"I've been looking at two-bedroom units in Lafayette. Most of the leasing agents say I have to prove that I earn two to three times more than the cost of the rent," Shastri says. "I've tried negotiating a few times and the landlords tell me that it's fixed (and that their hands are tied because of the market rate)."

Shameka, a single mom of three who asked that we not use her full name, has been a catering manager in Moraga for over a decade, but has never been able to live in the Lamorinda area. Pre-pandemic, Shameka lived in a two-bedroom apartment in Antioch with a total of nine other people.

... continued on Page A3

An Open Letter from the Lafayette Homeowners Council Board of Directors to Save Lafayette

To: All Lafayette Residents, Business Owners, Workers and Land Owners. Lafayette Homeowners Council Board of Directors sent the following letter to Save Lafayette with copies to the City Council and City Manager with respect to a productive alternative to continuing litigation over the Terraces Project. Please see below.

Save Lafayette

Mr. Michael Griffiths, President

February 6th

Re: The Terraces- Appeal of Superior Court Decision

The Board of Directors of the Lafayette Homeowners Council requests that Save Lafayette seek a productive alternative to the continuing litigation over the Terraces Project. As an advocate of homeowners' interests, we find that the Terraces Project significantly helps the City in meeting its housing RHNA goals and obligations, particularly those for lower income groups. The Terraces' 315 apartments are being counted on by the City in the current *General Plan Housing Element* update, which will be submitted to the State of California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for review.

After reading the Superior Court ruling, we find that the City has fully complied with CEQA. The developer worked closely with the Design Review Commission, the Planning Commission, and the City Council to reduce visual impacts of the project. The currently approved project is attractive and with its commitment to sustainability, will be an asset to our community.

We respectfully request that you consider using your group's time, money, and resources to support the expansion of the project's current shuttle service to include the nearby schools and the downtown. There are other initiatives relating to traffic mitigation and safe routes to Acalanes High School and Springhill Elementary School that would benefit the neighborhood and which the LHC and Save Lafayette could work on, together.

The Board of Directors of the LHC asks that you drop your appeal of the Superior Court ruling that upheld the City of Lafayette's approval of the Terraces project. We invite you to collaborate with us and the City staff to improve the area near the Terraces in lieu of expensive and contentious litigation.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,
Bill Bucher, President, Lafayette Homeowners Council

CC: Lafayette City Council

Niroop Srivatsa, Lafayette City Manager

<https://lafayettehomeownerscouncil.org/>

 **lafayettejuniors**

**LOOKING TO GET INVOLVED
AND MEET PEOPLE?**

JOIN LAFAYETTE JUNIORS

**GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1953**

lafayettejuniors.org



Ashley Battersby

Broker/Partner

(925) 323-9955

DRE# 01407784

ashley@ashleybattersby.com

@ashleybattersbyhome

www.ashleybattersby.com



**Village
ASSOCIATES**

It's Village. Of Course.