

Two recipients, Thomas and Fraser, awarded Lafayette Citizen of the Year

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The citizen award recognizes a Lafayette resident – or in this case, residents – who demonstrate a commitment to improving the health, wellbeing and lives of people in the community. Special emphasis is placed on individuals whose actions, time and energy brings people together; uniting the community in ways that crosses generations and rises above or actively works to mitigate false divisions related to economic status, education, race, religion or other factors.

Lifson says both award winners this year were selected in part due to their many years of service. “Janet had been nominated so many times, we had a lot of historical documents,” he said. About Fraser, he said, “Bill Fraser grew up here in Lafayette. He graduated from Acalanes in 1975. He is described as a Champion of coaching. It doesn’t matter if its football, lacrosse, Boy Scouts or Little League, Bill gives from the heart. He does it for the greater good for young men and women in our community.”

Fraser has held leadership or coaching positions in the Lamorinda area for over 20 years. Referring to his work with youth in the Lafayette Little League, MOL football, Acalanes girls lacrosse, Acalanes football programs and Scouts, people who nominated Fraser said he is tireless, generous, positive and empowering. His volunteer activities on various boards and commissions receive equal praise and earnest statements about the under recognition of his role and impact as a mentor to people of all ages.

Thomas has been a galvanizer for decades and proves in a long list of achievements to be foundational to Lafayette as a progressive city when it comes to the environment, healthy living and well-being. Having established a long career at Campolindo and Acalanes as an Environmental Science and Chemistry teacher, she retired, but Lifson says “she got her second wind and has not stopped.” Not stopping had Thomas working to create the Lafayette Community Garden & Learning Center, championing the Lafayette Farmers’ Market and volunteering as a founding member of Sustain-

able Lafayette. She with others created the city’s Environmental Task Force and is currently chairing the city’s Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Committee.

Asked to share perspectives on the last few years during the pandemic and thoughts that bring hope into the picture of the future, Thomas says, “This has been a difficult past two years for most, especially families with children and service workers. Not only have we all been faced with concerns about COVID, but growing political polarization, social inequities and climate change are very real. I am so glad that schools have opened again but know that teachers, families, healthcare workers, many businesses and others need our continued support as they get back to a new normal. Our community of Lafayette – neighbors and friends, the natural environment, the community garden, my family – continue to be dependable sources of peace, joy and grounding for which I am very grateful. I’m thrilled that we’ll be opening the community garden to the public again March 12th.”

Fraser says, “After two years of what we’ve all been through, together and separately, it strikes me as almost poetic to receive this award. Being with young people who had been basically locked in their houses, starting camps of 12 young people and one coach, outdoors, gathering once or twice a week for an hour – immediately I and the other coaches realized how important psychologically this was for kids. We played by the (county) rules and the sheer joy on these kids’ faces was not lost on any of us. I remember coming out of that and going into the winter of 2020, when it wasn’t clear if in spring 2021 the state would allow high school sports to play at all ... and then they did. It wasn’t a normal season, but it was something. Now, a year after that with the lacrosse team right now, it’s important that every girl athlete has the best season ever. It’s poignant to me, because you just don’t know what will happen.”

Hope it seems, for the two award-winning citizens, arrives in looking back just long enough to gather energy and excitement for continuing the good work they do in the community.

Lafayette Town Council authorizes subcommittee to pursue purchasing property for public use

By M.D. Jones

For several years the Lafayette City Council has been searching for a potential property that could be developed for use as city offices and other civic purposes without success, according to a staff report presented by Administrative Services Director Tracy Robinson at the Feb. 14 council meeting. The city has been leasing their city offices and has held \$5.2 million in reserve as part of the City Offices Fund. During its Dec. 13, 2021 meeting, the council discussed the possibility of using the Fund to purchase a property – or several properties – in downtown that could be used for a public purpose and potentially appreciate in

value.

At the Feb. 14 meeting, staff recommended that the council authorize a subcommittee consisting of Mayor Teresa Geringer and Vice Mayor Carl Anduri, who would work with the city manager, the administrative services director and a real estate consultant to identify potential properties and discuss options with owners before returning to the council to seek approval for an offer.

The purpose of the recommendation, according to the staff report, is for the city to not lose its purchasing power as the price of real estate increases and interest rates are low, currently between 1%-2%.

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Lafayette Public Meetings

City Council

Regular Meeting
Monday, March 14, 7 p.m.
Teleconference via City of Lafayette's YouTube Channel:
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

Planning Commission Meeting

Monday, March 7, 7 p.m.
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

Design Review

Wednesday, March 9, 7 p.m. Zoom
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>



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