

## THE PIONEER STORE REOPENS!

In a wonderful moment for Lafayette and all of its resident historians, the old Pioneer Store on Lafayette Plaza recently reopened in its newest incarnation as Sideboard Restaurant.

Now, just about everybody knows the story about Elam Brown – how he wagon trained across America, “borrowed” \$900 from wife-to-be Margaret Allen to purchase the land, and settled Lafayette in 1848. Brown also served as a delegate to the first state convention and sat in the first class of California legislators, and for those reasons old Elam has been rightly heralded. He even has a street named after him.

The often overlooked hero of our formation story, though, is the late Benjamin Shreve, who built the Pioneer Store shortly after Brown arrived, and operated it for thirty years from 1857 to 1887. Shreve also served as the postmaster during those years, and it was he who named our fair city.

Prior to Shreve’s arrival, the little settlement was referred to, alternatively, as Dog Town, Brown’s Corner, Brown’s Mill, and (when Milo Hough was postmaster in 1854–1855) Acalanus. As the story goes, given its prime location smack dab in the center of Contra Costa County, the new postmaster Shreve decided that the town should, logically, be named Centerville. That name, however, had been selected, just two years earlier, by a nearby postmaster in what is now Fremont.

It’s not entirely clear how “Lafayette” emerged as the preferred runner-up to Centerville. Shreve, of course, was in daily conversation with people who purchased goods in his store on their way to San Francisco, many of who had travelled through other communities named “Lafayette” on their long journeys, so perhaps that’s how the seed was planted. Or perhaps the name was familiar because Shreve’s wife’s family hailed from Fayette County, Illinois. In any case, Shreve presumably admired General Lafayette, that courageous Frenchman and hero of two wars, and so when he applied for a post office permit in 1857 he wrote the town’s name as “La Fayette.” That spelling was officially changed to the more familiar *Lafayette* in 1932.

Looking back, it turned out to be a good choice for the community because, otherwise, our favorite five-star house of lodging would now be known as the DogTown Park Hotel & Spa.

Anyway, we share this with you now because it is entirely reasonable to assume that all of this important local history happened inside that old Pioneer Store, which today stands proudly along Plaza Way in all its gleaming white renovated glory.

In a stroke of great fortune, the space has been leased to Erin and Ford Andrews, longtime Lafayette residents who, in 2008, opened the original and wildly successful Sideboard Neighborhood Kitchen and Coffee Bar in Danville. The atmosphere in the new Lafayette Sideboard is casual (you order at the cash register) and the menu choices range from fresh California cuisine (kale chips, ceviche salad) to pure comfort food (from meatloaf to macaroni and cheese). We’ve heard raves about Sideboard’s coffee and homemade English muffins, and the bacon has been described as the best in the county.

What’s particularly exciting is how the busy-all-day restaurant is activating the adjacent Lafayette Plaza, which, too, is historic.

In 1864, Elam Brown deeded the plaza area, then about four times its present size, to the Lafayette community. Given that the State was only fifteen years old at the time, the Plaza is certainly

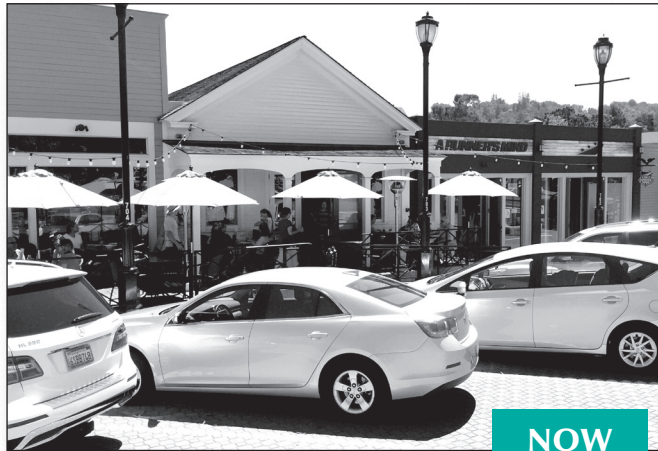
one of California’s oldest public parks. For many years it was an informal patch of grassy land where townsfolk met and kids ran footraces. During the 1900’s, suburban growth pressures led to its shrinking as roads encroached into the park from all four sides. But in 2001, the City reclaimed a large portion of the original Plaza and the park was formally rededicated. It has since become Lafayette’s centerpoint, hosting rock concerts, farmers markets, solemn vigils, political protests, food truck festivals, and free family movie nights.

(continued on page 2)



THEN

No known photo exists of Benjamin Shreve but the center figure with the mustache may be him.



NOW

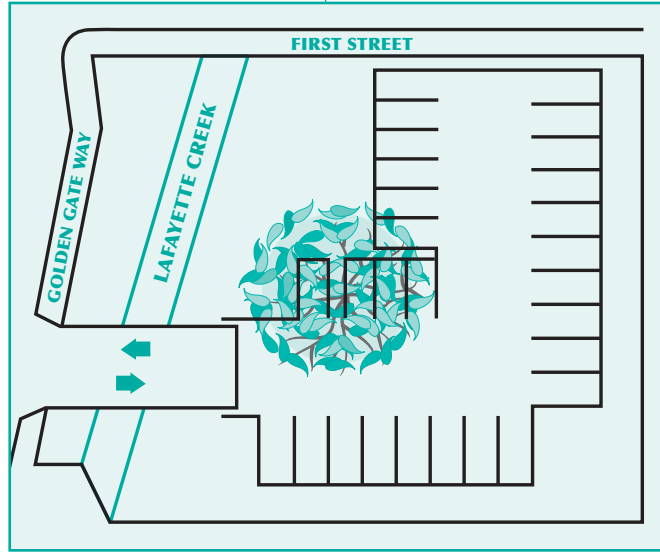
# CITY BUYS OAK BRIDGE PARKING LOT

Here's some good news for library users and customers of the busy stores and restaurants on Plaza Way: the City has purchased the 28-space Oak Bridge parking lot, located at the corner of First Street and Golden Gate Way.

Given chronic parking shortages in that area, Lafayette has eyed the little-used private lot for years. Twenty years, to be exact! In fact, City staffers had, for two decades, made a practice of annually phoning up the owners to inquire about their willingness to entertain a purchase offer. That persistence finally paid off this summer when the partnership agreed to sell the half-acre parcel to the City for ~\$1.56M. The City Council jumped on the offer and ordered a short escrow period.

The purchase is entirely funded by those quarters you dropped into Lafayette's parking meters over the years and parking citation fines. It adds up! No general fund monies were used. While we realize that nobody likes the meters – and that everybody positively *hates* parking citations – there is some satisfaction in knowing that those monies are now being used to provide additional public parking in downtown Lafayette.

The City hopes to open the lot for public parking as soon as possible, but is also working on a plan to spruce up the aging facility with new fences, striping, landscaping...and more meters! Look for these improvements sometime later this year.



## The Pioneer Store Reopens!

(continued from front page)

To take advantage of the grassy square out in front of the restaurant, Sideboard offers its customers picnic baskets and blankets to go. And so it is that, on several warm evenings this summer, families have been spotted sitting cross-legged on the lawn, enjoying a bucket of delicious – and we mean *delicious* – Sideboard fried chicken, while their kids are (once again) running footraces around the lawn.

.....  
"It is entirely reasonable to assume that important local history happened inside that old Pioneer Store"  
.....

While we doubt that Postmaster Shreve ever sat outside his store munching fresh kale chips with parmesan and lemon, it's just flat out cool that, 160 years after the Pioneer Store was built, we can visit the same exact spot, in the same exact building, where Yankee settlers birthed our city.

The entire Lafayette community owes a tribute to those who worked to make this project successful, but especially to the Poy family – the property owners and former operators of the Squirrel coffee shop – who could have razed the building and built something entirely different but instead chose to invest their hard-earned savings to bring this great and historic building back to life. Tributes also to out to Branagh Construction for bringing an intense interest in historical accuracy to the reconstruction efforts, and to Mary McCosker and the Lafayette Historical Society for serving as a guiding light for the redevelopment and for providing the information in this article.

## "BLOSSOMS" INSTALLED



Lafayette's newest example of public art, called *Blossoms*, was recently installed. The piece, by sculptor Gordon Heuther of Napa, sits in front of the new office building located at the corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Risa Road near the Veterans Memorial Building. Like many other cities, Lafayette has a so-called 1%-for-art program, wherein downtown developers are required to spend the equivalent of 1% of their construction budget on art that is available to the public. In this instance, Lafayette's Public Art Committee worked cooperatively with the developer of the office building and the Woodbury condominiums to select the artist and deliver his *Blossoms* concept. The piece is dramatically lit in the evenings, and its discs of dichroic glass cast colored shadows on the sidewalk on sunny days. Check it out!



# TWO YEARS IN THE MAKING:

## The Roadmap To A Sales Tax Measure

On July 25th, Lafayette City Council members chose to place a sales tax measure on the November ballot. Here's how they got there.

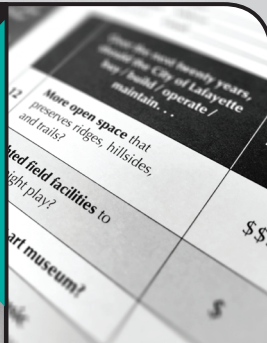
**Autumn 2014**

With the new library completed and the roads well-funded, Council seeks input from residents regarding their twenty year vision for Lafayette.

**Winter 2015**

**Spring 2015**

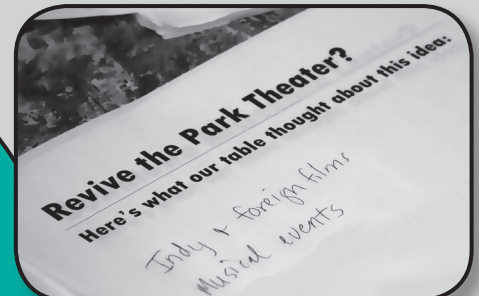
Council convenes community conversations throughout town. In addition to earlier feedback, people call for better downtown pedestrian and bike paths, and a new downtown park.



725 people participate in an online and mail survey. Top priorities include: preserving open space, enhancing public safety, revitalizing the Park Theater and improving parking and traffic.

**Summer 2016**

City councilmembers vote unanimously to place a 1% sales tax measure, for 29 years, on the November ballot for consideration by voters. If approved, 100% of proceeds will stay and be used in Lafayette.



**Fall 2015**



Council forms sales tax exploration committee and hires professional pollster Brian Godbe.

**Spring 2016**

A representative sample of 436 likely voters suggests that 81% of residents are satisfied with municipal

services, and that 64% would support a sales tax increase if all of the funds were guaranteed to be used in Lafayette only.



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## LAFAYETTE BRIEFS

### Fire Station 16 Update

ConFire Chief Jeff Carman met recently with local residents to deliver some very good news about Station 16, the old firehouse on Los Arabis Drive in western Lafayette that was shuttered years ago due to mold and budget problems. Carman said that the County budget is sufficiently improved to allow the construction of a new fire station on that site. As a result, the County has hired an architect and is moving forward with a design development plan for the site. The purpose for the neighborhood meeting was to hear from people who live on the street regarding what architectural style they would prefer for the new station. Several examples were displayed, and most of the people seemed to like the drawing that looked like a woody / contemporary Tahoe cabin. Over the next few months, the architects will work something up for consideration by the City's Design Review Commission. All in all, it will be two years before the new fire station is open and operating.



### Tigers Never Change Their Stripes

But cities do! This summer the City issued \$60K in work for contract painters to freshen up street markings and colored curbs throughout Lafayette. Most of the work occurred downtown, where the lines really take a beating.

### City Wins One Lawsuit; Another Pending

It wasn't unexpected, but in June the City of Lafayette prevailed against local residents who sued regarding the City Council's rejection of a petition demanding a voter referendum on the approval of a single-family home development for the 22-acre property at the east end of Deer Hill Road. The ruling denied Save Lafayette's case, stating that the referendum, if passed, would have created an inconsistency between the City's general plan land use designation and its zoning code. That's not allowed by State law. Meanwhile, the City still faces a second lawsuit related to the same property, this one by the San Francisco Bay Area Renters Federation.

### Street Name Sign Project is Complete!

It's a project we started three years ago: replace every street name sign in Lafayette. In 2013, the Lafayette City Council approved a new design spec for the City's street name signs and directed staff to replace every single one of Lafayette's street name signs. The first two phases – downtown Lafayette and the neighborhoods south of the freeway – were completed between 2013 and 2015. This summer, under the management of Public Works Technician Alexandra Majoulet, the City completed the third and final phase, which included all the neighborhoods north of the freeway. The new signs knit the community together with a clean design that uses the Rawlinson "National Park" font on a brown background to evoke and amplify Lafayette's character as a semi-rural hamlet nestled among vast parks and open spaces.



## CITY DIRECTORY

For Council Members call: 284-1968

### Council Members

Mark Mitchell	<b>Mayor</b>
Mike Anderson	<b>Vice Mayor</b>
Brandt Andersson	<b>Council Member</b>
Traci Reilly	<b>Council Member</b>
Don Tatzin	<b>Council Member</b>

Messages to **all** Council Members:  
[cityhall@lovelafayette.org](mailto:cityhall@lovelafayette.org)

### Administration

<b>General Reception and</b>	<b>284-1968</b>
<b>Steven Falk, City Manager</b>	<b>Fax: 284-3169</b>
Tracy Robinson, Admin. Srv. Dir.	<b>299-3227</b>
Jennifer Wakeman,	
Financial Srv. Mgr.	<b>299-3213</b>
Joanne Robbins, City Clerk	<b>299-3210</b>
Tony Coe, City Engineer	<b>299-3203</b>
Niroop Srivatsa,	
Planning & Building Dir.	<b>299-3206</b>
Mike Moran, Public Works Dir.	<b>299-3214</b>
P.W. Hotline (to report problems)	<b>299-3259</b>

*If you observe illegal dumping in creeks & storm drains or accidental spills on roads, call Contra Costa Hazardous Materials Division 646-2286.*

### Lamorinda School Bus Program

Juliet Hansen, Program Mgr.	<b>299-3216</b>
	<b>or 299-3215</b>

### Parks, Trails and Recreation 284-2232

Jennifer Russell, Director

### Senior Services 284-5050

### Police Services

Emergency: 24 Hours	<b>911</b>
Police Dispatch: 24 Hours	<b>284-5010</b>
Police Business Office:	<b>283-3680</b>

*Anonymous tipline, traffic enforcement, suggestions & LEARN (Laf. Emergency Action Response Network), 299-3230*

**Fax** 284-3169

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Lafayette, CA 94549

**Website** [www.ci.lafayette.ca.us](http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us)

**E-MAIL:** Council/staff members can be reached via e-mail using this address format:

**First Initial + Last Name @lovelafayette.org**

**Example: SFalk@lovelafayette.org**

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