

IN A

Nutshell

No. 128

Official community newsletter of the City of Walnut Creek

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2007



The ice is twice as nice

Parents helped their kids navigate the hard, white stuff on Nov. 17 as "Walnut Creek on Ice" opened for its second successful season in Civic Park. The enlarged rink was made possible again by a generous contribution from Long's Drugs Stores, along with donations from the City of Walnut Creek and several downtown businesses. The ice rink will remain open until Jan. 15; for hours of operation and other details, go online to www.iceskatewalnutcreek.com

Council moves to next phase of downtown library

The City Council is moving ahead with the next important phase of the downtown library project after endorsing the final schematic designs for the facility.

While enthusiastically approving the designs prepared by Group 4 Architects, the Council on Nov. 21 also directed the firm to prepare construction drawings for the 42,000-square-foot library and the underground parking garage that will be built on the site of the current library.

The City is planning to break ground on the \$27 million library and \$16.5 million parking garage in April 2008 and open the library in spring 2010.

"It's exciting to see the concepts evolve into a real design that gives the new library an attractive identity," said Assistant City Manager Lorie Tinfow, project manager.

LIBRARY DESIGN, see back page

Watch City Council meetings online

Walnut Creek will begin offering live streaming video of its City Council meetings on the Internet in January.

On Jan. 16, online access to the live broadcast of the City Council meetings will be available for the first time on the City's website, walnut-creek.org.

All meetings will be shown live online, and within 24 hours thereafter will be available online for future viewing. Further, all Council meetings dating back to Aug. 1, 2006 will be available in an archive that can be viewed online.

The agenda of the meeting will be posted alongside the video screen, and a user may click on a particular agenda item

and watch it instantly in streaming video.

The new service, provided by Granicus of San Francisco, will work with PCs and Macintosh computers, although best viewing of the video is available on broadband Internet browsers.

"This is the first step — we are going to be continually enhancing this feature," said City Clerk Patrice Olds. "I am thrilled to make this service available. It will provide improved efficiency and meet the City's mission to provide better and more convenient access to government decision making."

In the coming months, the City also plans to link documents and staff reports



Web users will find the City Council agenda beside a small screen showing a video of the meeting.

in this new online video format.

Persons wishing a permanent copy on disk of a meeting may purchase one for \$5 from the City Clerk's Office.

For details and more information, contact Olds at 925-943-5818.

City Event Calendar

January

1-2
New Year's Day holiday observance
City offices are closed

15
Martin Luther King Day observance
(See *What's Happening*)
City offices are closed


February

6
State of the City luncheon
(See *What's Happening*)

through 11
Anatomy of a Hot Rod
Bedford Gallery
(See article at right)

19
Presidents' Day holiday
City offices are closed

City Meeting Calendar

City Council 
Jan. 9 (6 p.m., no TV), 16;
Feb. 6, 13 (6 p.m., no TV),
20
7 p.m.
City Council chamber
City Hall, 1666 N. Main St.


Planning Commission
Jan. 11, 25; Feb. 8, 22
7 p.m.
City Council chamber

Arts Commission
Jan. 16, Feb. 20
4:30 p.m.
City Council chamber

Transportation Commission
Jan. 18, Feb. 15
7 p.m.
City Council chamber

Design Review Commission
Jan. 3, 17, 31; Feb. 21
7 p.m.
City Council chamber

Park, Rec & Open Space Commission
Jan. 8, Feb. 5
7 p.m.
City Council chamber

 **City Council meetings are televised live on Comcast Channels 6 and 26 (unincorporated), and on Astound Channel 29. They are repeated the following Saturday at 1 p.m. on all.**

Vroom, vroom...Hot rods on display at Bedford

Functional design transformed into art is what drives the current exhibition at the Bedford Gallery, *Anatomy of a Hot Rod*, through Feb. 11.

Guest curated by hot rod owner, builder, and enthusiast Phil Linhares, this unique showcase of 12 vintage and customized Ford vehicles illustrates how showroom stock cars are artistically transformed into hot rods.

Visitors to this exhibition will observe the radical creative departures from the stock versions of early Ford Model T's and roadsters. The Ford



1932 Ford Deluxe V-8 Roadster, left, and a 1932 Ford Roadster Hot Rod

was the desired raw material: light in weight and easily modified.

Hot rod enthusiasts will revel in the display of these select examples, which represent a hobby that has been a major source of enjoyment for car connoisseurs of all ages.

The Bedford Gallery, located in the Leshner Center for the Arts, is open Tuesday-Sunday, noon-5 p.m.; Thursday-Saturday, 6-8 p.m. General admission is \$3 (free on Tuesdays). For information, call 925-295-1417.

What's Happening

Martin Luther King Day observance

Civil rights activist Lester Cobb will be the keynote speaker at the Martin Luther King Day Observance on Monday, Jan. 15 at noon in the Civic Park Community Center assembly hall, 1375 Civic Dr. This free public event will be presented by the Social Justice Alliance of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County, in cooperation with the City of Walnut Creek. For details, call 925-933-6030.

Mayor to give State of City address

Mayor Sue Rainey will speak at the Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce's annual State of the City luncheon on Feb. 6, 11:30 a.m., at Blake's at Boundary Oak. Cost is \$25. To make a reservation, visit www.walnut-creek.com call 925-934-2007.

Antique appraisals at the Gardens

Learn the monetary value of your treasures from professional appraisers at the annual Antique and Collectibles Appraisal event on Sunday, Feb. 25, 1-6 p.m. at the Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Dr. There will be a nominal fee for admission and appraisal of up to three items; call 925-947-1678 or visit www.gardenshf.org for details. All proceeds benefit the Gardens at Heather Farm, a nonprofit organization that promotes an appreciation and understanding of ecology and horticulture.

Time to recycle your Christmas tree

Allied Waste Services will collect your unwanted Christmas tree for composting the week of Jan. 2-5. Simply leave your tree at the curb on your regular trash collection day. Remove ornaments, tinsel, and other trimmings, and don't leave stands. Call 925-603-1144.



Free tax prep help for low income earners

Limited to moderate-income residents and seniors can get free tax preparation assistance Feb. 5 - April 16 from AARP Tax-Aide, which will again be providing services at two locations in Civic Park: Park Place, 1395 Civic Dr., Monday-Wednesday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. (call 925-335-8749 for an appointment); and Civic Park Community Center, 1375 Civic Dr., Thursdays only, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. (call 925-943-5851). Appointments may be made starting Jan. 2. In 2006, 1,027 residents were assisted in Walnut Creek; over 11,000 total were assisted throughout Contra Costa County. This service is made possible with a grant from the IRS and private donations.

Recycle your old batteries in WC

In February 2006 it became illegal to throw any type of batteries into commercial and residential garbage or recycling containers. All batteries must, by law, be properly recycled. The Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority has arranged with local retailers to provide battery recycling. Those merchants in Walnut Creek who now accept single-use household batteries are: Long's Drugs stores at 1123 S. California Blvd., 1914 Tice Valley Blvd., 738 Bancroft Ave., and 2222 Oak Grove Rd., and Rite Aid Drugs at 1526 Palos Verde Mall. (Retailers of rechargeable batteries are required by law to provide free recycling for those types of batteries.) For more information, email Lois Courchain at lois@wastediversion.org

Correction

It was incorrectly reported in the *State of the City* report in the last issue of the *Nutshell* that the average annual rainfall in Walnut Creek is less than 14 inches. It actually averages 20 inches per year.

Dog park underway; Mt. Diablo Blvd. repaving work done

Work has begun on a new, permanent dog park at the north end of Heather Farm Park.

The one-acre dog park is expected to be opened by summer. The park will be fully accessible and include fenced off lawn areas separating small/senior dogs from larger dogs, new sycamore and flowering pear trees, and benches to be donated by WCDOG.

In other news, the City completed downtown repaving work on Mt. Diablo and California boulevards and Alpine Road in October. The City installed new landscaping on the median on Olympic Boulevard at the I-680 onramp.

Following are updates on other projects:

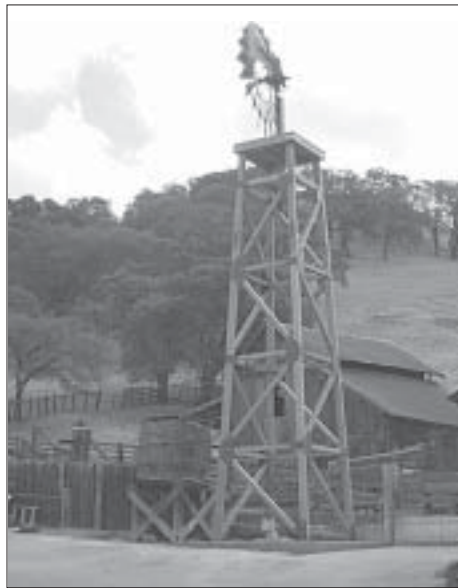
Downtown kiosks installed

Two new informational kiosks were installed by the City in front of the Leshner Center for the Arts and at the corner of Main Street and Mt. Diablo Boulevard.

The handsome, forest green kiosks showcase maps of downtown Walnut Creek and a directory provided by the Walnut Creek Downtown Business Association that indicate where stores and restaurants are located.

Locust St. Garage mural unveiled

A new mural adorns the interior wall of the Locust Street Garage adjacent to the Leshner Center for the Arts.



Borges windmill is back

Open Space Ranger Dan Bylin and his wife, Debi, (above) inspect the vintage windmill that was restored in October to its traditional spot at the 1899 Borges Ranch, located in the City's Shell Ridge Open Space. The original wooden tower, built in the 1970s, was removed in 2005 for safety reasons.

Photos by Steve Waymire

The piece, *Treadmill*, created by artist Josh Keyes of Oakland, depicts a deer grazing on a treadmill of grass and traffic signs and is a comment on the intricacy of the earth as a system and the complexity of our response to the natural world. The project, organized by the Bedford Gallery Advisory Council and the Art Commission, is dedicated to the memory of Susan Booth, a long-time Bedford employee.

Arts education classrooms removed

Three 1960s-era Civic Arts Education studio classroom buildings on the east side of the creek in Civic Park were removed in December as the City continued the process of enhancing the park.

Citizens Institute sign-ups being taken for spring 2007

Get the inside scoop on how the City runs! Sign up for the Spring 2007 Citizens Institute.

Now in its seventh year, the Citizens Institute is dedicated to bringing people who live or work in Walnut Creek together with City staff to explore how the City sets and meets its priorities. The Spring 2007 Institute begins March 31 and concludes May 19.

Sessions are led by staff from various City departments as well as the City Manager, Council members and community leaders. Highlights include behind-the-scenes visits to the police department, the Leshner Center for the Arts, and the Public Services Corporation Yard, as well as presentations, discussion groups and interactive exercises.

The Spring 2007 Citizens Institute kicks off the morning of Saturday, March 31 with an introductory community bus tour led by Public Information Officer Brad Rovanner.

Subsequent sessions will be held from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Thursdays, April 5 through May 17, with a graduation celebration the morning of Saturday, May 19. There is no cost to participate.

Information and an application is available on the City's website, www.walnut-creek.org, or by calling Community Relations Manager Gayle Vassar at 943-5899 ext. 189 or email her at vassar@walnut-creek.org.

Applications sought for City commissions

The City Council will be accepting applications for six vacancies on three advisory commissions until Jan. 31.

The Council needs to find replacements for the following commissioners whose terms will expire:

- Arts Commission — Lisa Hotchkiss and Jim Pezzaglia (3-year terms)
- Planning Commission — Cindy Silva, Robert Pickett, Barry Slavin (4-year term)
- Transportation Commission — Dan Lawrence (3-year term)

Five commissioners will be considered for reappointment to second terms on their respective commissions. They

are: Joseph Gorny, Design Review; Bob Jorgensen, Planning; Bob Brittain, Park, Recreation & Open Space; and David Powell and Brian Krcelic, Transportation.

The Council will interview the second-term candidates for reappointment on Jan. 9. Interviews for first-term candidates will be Feb. 13. The new commissioners will be sworn in on March 6.

Applications are available online at the City's website, walnut-creek.org, or from the City Clerk's Office, 3rd floor, City Hall, 1666 No. Main St.

For details, call 925-943-5818.



Residents learn how to use fire extinguishers in the City's CERT training program.

2007 CERT training dates

Feb. 6 – March 13
 April 18
 July 24
 Sept. 19

Get ready for next emergency with CERT training offered by City, County fire district

Get ready to help yourself and your community in 2007 – sign up for Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training.

The six-week course includes lessons on suppressing small fires, shutting off utilities, light search and rescue, disaster psychology, disaster First Aid, triage, and many other response techniques.

Upon graduation, people will be assigned to a CERT Area. If a disaster strikes, CERT team members are encouraged to check on their own families and home first, and then assemble at a pre-designated site to work together to respond to the needs of the neighborhood.

Safety is the most important goal of CERT teams, and no one is asked to put him or herself in danger. In fact, the CERT motto is to “do the greatest good for the greatest number while protecting yourself from becoming a victim.”

More than 325 people in Walnut Creek have taken the training since its inception in 2004.

CERT is a partnership of Walnut Creek’s Citizen Corps Council and the Contra Costa Fire Protection District.

CERT will be offered four times in 2007. The first series of classes will be held Tuesday evenings, Feb. 6 – March 13. Other six-week sessions begin April 18, July 24 and Sept. 19. All classes take place from 6 – 9:30 p.m. at the Fire District Training Center, 2945 Treat Boulevard, Concord.

To register, email Community Relations Manager Gayle Vassar at vassar@walnut-creek.org or call her at 943-5899 ext. 189.

More information and the complete calendar may be found on the City website, www.walnut-creek.org, by choosing “Emergency Preparedness” from the Quick Links menu.

City helps maintain low flood insurance for WC residents

For the second straight year, residents will continue to enjoy a 15 percent discount on their flood insurance premium rates thanks to another high rating for Walnut Creek based on a 2006 FEMA audit of its community floodplain management activities.

Based on the City’s activities to reduce the frequency and severity of flooding events in certain affected areas, Walnut Creek received a rating of 7 from the National Flood Insurance Program, which translates to a 15% discount in the flood insurance premiums (an average savings of \$800) paid by local homeowners.

Walnut Creek is one of 1,049 communities nationwide receiving the discounts based on its efforts to reduce flood losses, ensure accurate insurance ratings, and promote awareness of flood insurance that go well beyond the National Flood Insurance Program’s minimum requirements.

For more flood control information, visit the City’s website, walnut-creek.org, and use the top navigation bar to go to Services>City>Flood Control.



Tony's 100 reasons to celebrate

Tony Silva, a popular, longtime Walnut Creek Seniors’ Club member, was the guest of honor at a special Seniors’ Club celebration of his 100th birthday on Nov. 28 at Civic Park Community Center. Tony, a Walnut Creek resident who was born on Nov. 25, 1906, danced the rhumba with Barbara Steck of Walnut Creek (right) and shared a laugh with Barbara and friend Carmen Barrett (above).



A Look Back: History of WC's electric railway

Twenty years after the first steam trains chugged into Walnut Creek, the first electric rail service was inaugurated to provide new transportation links through Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

On Dec. 31, 1910, just weeks after electrical service was introduced to businesses on Main Street, the first train on the Oakland, Antioch & Eastern (OA&E) Railway rolled into Walnut Creek. The depot was located at the site of what is today the Leshar Center for the Arts at the southeast corner of North California Boulevard and Civic Drive.

The electric railway initially connected Walnut Creek with Concord and Bay Point, and soon thereafter with Lafayette, Orinda, Oakland, and San Francisco. An eight-mile Danville branch line left the Saranap station (where Olympic Boulevard and Tice Valley Boulevard meet today) — named for Sara Naphtaly, wife of the vice president of the railway, Samuel Naphtaly. In 1928, the service was renamed Sacramento Northern.

Among its virtues, the railway provided clean, reliable transportation for Walnut Creek students to Mt. Diablo High School in Concord for nearly 30 years.

However, the popularity of automobiles and bus service, along with the opening of the San Francisco-Oakland



The Walnut Creek depot of the Oakland, Antioch & Eastern Railway in the 1930s (above), and the same view as it looks today, with the Leshar Center for the Arts (below).



Bay Bridge and Caldecott Tunnel in the mid-1930s, spelled the end of passenger service in 1941. A commemorative

passenger run occurred in 1964 prior to the tracks being removed and the creation of California Boulevard in 1967.

Historic preservation ordinance up for planning review

A draft historic preservation ordinance crafted by the Walnut Creek Historical Society, local business owners, and residents last fall is scheduled to be reviewed by the City's Planning Commission in January.

The draft ordinance establishes standards for determining which structures, sites, and districts may be of historic value, and also sets the rules for preserving those historic resources.

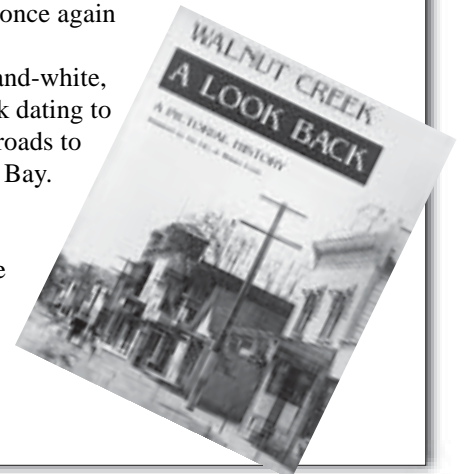
The Commission is expected to make its recommendations to the City Council in late February for final approval of the first historic preservation ordinance for Walnut Creek.

City's pictorial history of Walnut Creek available from Shadelands Museum

After being out of print for several years, the City's popular pictorial history, *Walnut Creek: A Look Back*, is once again available to the public.

This 24-page booklet features 68 black-and-white, mostly vintage photographs of Walnut Creek dating to 1872, depicting its growth from a dirt crossroads to the commercial and cultural hub of the East Bay.

Recently reprinted by the City's Public Information Office, *Walnut Creek: A Look Back* is available for \$6 (tax included) at the Shadelands Ranch Historical Museum, 2660 Ygnacio Valley Rd., which will reopen Feb. 4. The museum's hours are Wednesdays and Sundays, 1-4 p.m.



City Council Update

Council welcomes new member, selects new mayor for 2007

The City Council on Dec. 5 welcomed as its newest member former Planning Commissioner Cindy Silva, who garnered the second highest number of votes in the Nov. 7 municipal election.

Sue Rainey, who won re-election to her second full term on the Council, was selected by her colleagues to serve her second term as mayor for 2007, succeeding Kathy Hicks. Gwen Regalia was chosen as mayor pro tem for the new year.

Rainey, who served as mayor in 2001-02, has been on the Council since 1997. She served as mayor pro tem in 2006.

Hicks, who did not seek re-election, retired from the Council on Dec. 5 after 17 years of public service, during which she served three terms as mayor and as a member of the Planning Commission and Park, Recreation & Open Space Commission.

In November Hicks received the Elected Official of the Year Award from the California Association of Library Trustees and Commissioners in recognition of her longtime support for a new downtown library.

Council recognizes 2006 Employees of the Year

The City Council on Nov. 21 recognized Sonja Cheshareck and Scott Harriman as the City's 2006 recipients of the Rosie Coan Award, honoring them as Employees of the Year for exemplifying the highest standards of public service.

The pair received their honors from City Manager Gary Pokorny at the City Employee Awards ceremony on Oct. 23. Each received a plaque and \$500.

Cheshareck, an employee since 2002, is an Office Specialist-Confidential in the Police Department who uses her Spanish language skills to assist the department on special projects.

Harriman, a Senior Planner since 2003,

Request tee times on new golf course website

Boundary Oak Golf Course has introduced a new website at www.boundaryoak.com that gives golfers the opportunity to request tee times online.

It also enables golfers to join the



Mayor, Council honors local Iraq veterans

Mayor Kathy Hicks presented City Council commendations to U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Joe Stein, left, and U.S. Army Warrant Officer 2 Jon Ternstrom at the City's Veterans Day ceremony on Nov. 11, which featured songs performed by the Walnut Creek School District Chorus (including, at right, Brittany Martin and Briana Stokes). The two military veterans, both from Walnut Creek, were honored for their recent service in the Iraq war. The City has presented the commendation to 22 men and one woman since 2004. If you know someone from Walnut Creek who has returned from military duty in Iraq or Afghanistan, please call 925-943-5895 and leave your contact information.



Employees of the Year: Sonja Cheshareck and Scott Harriman

was recognized for overseeing many challenging projects through the decision-making process.

The Rosie Coan Award, first given in 1989, is given in memory of the City's late Administrative Services Director who worked for the City from 1977 until her passing in 2004.

Former city attorney dies

Daniel J. Curtin, Jr., who served as Walnut Creek's city attorney from 1965 until 1982, died Nov. 30.

An attorney for 48 years who was renowned as the top land use lawyer in the state, Curtin, 73, had been in private practice in Walnut Creek.



Dan Curtin



There are 10 teaspoons of sugar in a typical can of soda. That is more sugar than in a chocolate candy bar. Simply cutting out a couple of cans of soda can save you 360 calories or more each day. Try ice water with lemon and orange slices for a refreshing and colorful beverage with a twist.

Wellness Tip is a new feature by Kendra Luke of the Wellness City Challenge.



CopTalk

By Officer Joe Donleavy

Rules of the road

I've been a Walnut Creek Police Officer for six years. For the last three years I've been assigned to the Traffic Division as a motorcycle officer. During that time I've discovered that there are an awful lot of rules of the road. The California Vehicle Code is over 680 pages long and we are expected to comply with all of its provisions.



One area that I see drivers consistently struggling with is the proper use of a two-way left-turn lane. 21460.5 (a) of the vehicle code defines a two-way left-turn lane as "a lane near the center of the highway set aside for use by vehicles making left turns in both directions from or into the highway."

The proper use of a two-way left-turn lane consists of observing the following:

- All left-turns or u-turns must be made utilizing the two-way left-turn lane.
- It is illegal to make a left-turn or u-turn from any other lane when a two-way left-turn lane has been designated.
- It is illegal to drive in the two-way left-turn lane for more than 200 feet while preparing for and making a turn or while preparing to merge into the adjacent lanes.

• When turning left onto a roadway with a two-way left-turn lane from a driveway or alley you must first turn into the two-way left-turn lane then merge into the adjacent lanes of traffic when clear.

The most confusing aspect of the two-way left-turn lane is that it can be used by vehicles in opposing directions. For that reason it is important that drivers are alert and use the lane safely. It would be tragic to have a head-on collision in a two-way left-turn lane simply because the drivers forgot the rules of the road.

CopTalk is a regular column in the Nutshell prepared by members of the Walnut Creek Police Department's Community Policing Team. To contact Officer Donleavy, call 925-943-5899, ext. 7516.



Attractive new signs herald Free Ride trolley service

Traffic Maintenance Workers Sean Coloma, left, and Dean Day installed 22 distinctive, new Free Ride trolley signs at 22 locations throughout the downtown in November to better identify the Route 104 stops for the City-subsidized free shuttle service. For more information on the Free Ride, visit walnut-creek.org

Get in the swim with Aquatics Gift Cards

Looking for a unique gift for someone? The City is now selling Aquatics Gift Cards that can be used to purchase any number of services offered by the Aquatics Division.

The gift card is easy to use, has no expiration date, and is good for nearly all recreational and community center activities within the City Of Walnut Creek, including: 15 swim punch passes, monthly swim passes, daily lap and weekend recreational swimming fees, swim lessons, stroke clinics, and classes conducted at the community center.

To purchase a gift card, call the City's Aquatics Department at 925-943-5856. The City accepts cash, check or Visa/MasterCard.

When the recipient is ready to use the gift card, he or she will already have an account set up in the City's reservation system with his or her name, phone number, address, and gift card amount imputed. That way it just takes one phone call, or log in to the City's website at walnutcreekrec.org to register for a class or program. Any balances can be applied to the next program.

How you can become a bicycling advisor

Are you interested in and enthusiastic about improving the city's bicycle facilities? In April there will be two vacancies on the City's Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC).

The BAC advises the City's Transportation Commission on the planning, development and maintenance of bicycle facilities and is composed of nine voting members, seven of whom are at-large members of the community. These persons must either live or work within

the city's "sphere of influence."

Terms are for three years. Meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of every month and are held in City Hall.

If you are interested, or know someone who is, please contact Julie Iamele, of the City's

Transportation Division, at 925 256-3529 or iamele@walnut-creek.org for applications.

The application filing deadline is 5 p.m. on Friday, January 19.



Library design

From page one

She added that the City has selected artist Christian Moeller to create public art for the library.

The new library will be accessible from a new civic plaza at the corner of Broadway and Lincoln Avenue, from the formal entrance on Broadway, from the surface parking lot, and from a Civic Park entrance. The underground parking garage will be built to serve library patrons, community center users, and others visiting downtown.

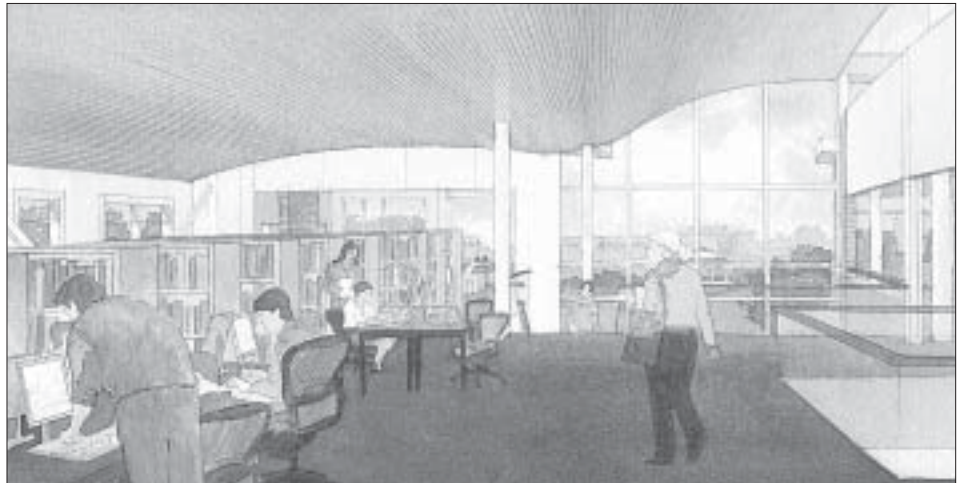
On Jan. 16, the Council will learn more about cost benefit tradeoffs of various elements of “sustainability” — the concept of using design and building materials to conserve energy and reduce operating costs for the life of the building.

City staff at that time will also present an overall funding plan to the Council, said Tinfow.

For more information on the library project, visit walnut-creek.org and click on the “Replacing the downtown library: What’s next?” box on the homepage. The Library Update links include the latest design drawings, a history and timeline of the project, and a 3-D animation of the new library.



The final schematic designs for the north entry from Civic Park into the new library (above) and the periodicals area (below) were prepared by Group 4.



CITY COUNCIL
Sue Rainey, Mayor*
Gwen Regalia, Mayor pro tem
Charlie Abrams
Gary Skrel
Cindy Silva

* For appointment: Call 256-3504

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

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CITY ATTORNEY
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CITY CLERK
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PUBLIC SERVICES
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IN A **Nutshell**

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Editor:
 Brad Rovanpera

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 Please call 943-5895 or 943-5800
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For past issues, go online at walnut-creek.org



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