

Nutshell

No. 134

Official community newsletter of the City of Walnut Creek

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2008



Ted Holeman of Walnut Creek, the last patron to check out books before the Walnut Creek downtown library closed its doors on Nov. 30, chats with Library Clerk Barbara Karl.

Venerable library turns its final page

Then it opened on March 19, 1961, the Walnut Creek Library on North Broadway replaced the city's first permanent library, a cozy, bungalow-styled building at the corner of Main and Civic that had served the community for 44 years.

On Jan. 13, the Broadway library will

join its

predecessor as

Thanks for the **Memories**

Sunday, Jan. 13 2-5 p.m., free **Downtown Library** 1644 No. Broadway

Live entertainment, children's storytelling, wall signing, refreshments

a warm memory when the community celebrates nearly 47 years of service with a special closing event called, appropriately, "Thanks for

the Memories."

The City is joining forces with the Friends of the Walnut Creek Library and the Walnut Creek Library Foundation to give the venerable building an

LIBRARY MEMORIES, see page 5

City explores library parcel tax renewal options

The City is exploring options with L Contra Costa County to create an expanded library funding area that would include unincorporated areas of Walnut Creek to maintain regular, consistent operating hours at the City's two libraries.

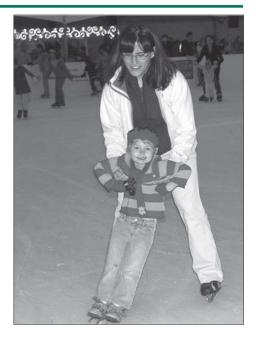
The current funding mechanism – Measure Q — will sunset in 2010. The City is looking into ways to renew this voter-approved parcel tax to help the City meet an annual \$1.5 million funding need to continue current hours of service at the downtown library and the Ygnacio Valley library.

Because the City has no authority to impose taxes on areas outside the city limit, the City Council on Nov. 20 voted unanimously to authorize City Manager

LIBRARY, see back page

Skaters rejoicing in third season of Walnut Creek on Ice

Three-year-old Kathryn Temple of Walnut Creek gets some help from her nanny, Laura Lorenz of Lafayette, on the opening day of Walnut Creek on Ice on Nov. 8. The third season of the popular ice rink in Civic Park is made possible by contributions from Longs Drug Stores, PG&E, and several other local businesses, along with the City of Walnut Creek. Walnut Creek on Ice will run through Monday, Jan. 21. Open 7 days a week -Monday - Thursday, 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.; Friday - Saturday, 10 a.m. - 11 p.m.; Sundays, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. For more information, go online to www.iceskatewalnutcreek.com



City Event Calendar

January

Dec. 31 - Jan. 1 New Year's Day holiday observance City offices are closed

21
Martin Luther King Day
observance
(See What's Happening)
City offices are closed

February

5

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

through 13 Contemporary Warrior Bedford Gallery (See article at right)

18 Presidents' Day holiday
City offices are closed

City Meeting Calendar

City Council

Jan. 8 (no TV), 15; Feb. 5, 12
7 p.m.

City Council chamber

City Hall, 1666 N. Main St.

Planning Commission
Jan. 10, 24; Feb. 14, 28
7 p.m.
City Council chamber

Arts Commission Jan. 22, Feb. 19 4:30 p.m. City Council chamber

Transportation
Commission
Jan. 17, Feb. 21
7 p.m.
City Council chamber

Design Review Commission
Jan. 16; Feb. 6, 20
7 p.m.
City Council chamber

Park, Rec & Open Space Commission Jan. 7, Feb. 4 7 p.m. City Council chamber

City Council meetings are televised live on Comcast Channels 28 and 26 (unincorporated), and on Astound Channel 29. They are repeated the following Sunday at 1 p.m. on all.

Large Chinese figures on display at the Bedford

During the Chinese New Year celebrations, Bedford Gallery will be inhabited by a grouping of larger-than-life ceramic figures by Chinese artist Wanxin Zhang in a new exhibition, Contemporary Warrior: Modern Day Tomb Soldiers by Wanxin Zhang, which runs through March 9.



Wanxin Zhang Photo by Jake Watling

Inspired by the 8,000 clay figures discovered in the tomb of China's first emperor, Zhang's warriors forge a remarkable visual passage from past to present.

Zhang, an instructor at the Academy of Art, will speak about his work at the gallery Feb. 13.

The Bedford Gallery, located in the Lesher Center for the Arts, is open Tuesday-Sunday, noon-5 p.m.; Thursday-Saturday, 6-8 p.m. Call 925-295-1417.

What's Happening

Martin Luther King Day observance

The Martin Luther King Day Observance will be held Monday, Jan. 21 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 Gwen Regalia and Chairman of the Board Brad Kofoed will speak at the Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce's annual State of the City luncheon on Feb. 5, 11:30 a.m., at Sunrise at Boundary Oak. Cost is \$35. To reserve a seat, visit www.walnut-creek.com or call 925-934-2007.

WC Farmers' Market moving Jan. 6

After 25 years in the downtown library parking lot, the Walnut Creek Farmers' Market on Sunday, Jan. 6 will move to its new location on Locust Street between Giamonna Drive and the Target store. Cooking demonstrations, live music, clowns, and John Muir Women's Health Center will be featured. Validated parking will be available in the North Locust Garage next to the Lesher Center for the Arts. Hours through May 1 are from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sundays. For details visit www.cccfm.org.

Time to recycle your Christmas tree

Allied Waste Services will collect your unwanted Christmas tree for composting the week of Jan. 14-18. Simply leave your tree at the curb on your regular trash collection day. Remove ornaments, tinsel, and other trimmings, and don't leave stands. Flocked trees will be collected for a \$10 fee. For details, call 925-603-1144.

Action for Beauty luncheon Feb. 15

The Walnut Creek Action for Beauty Council will hold its annual awards luncheon on Feb. 15, 11:30 a.m., at Sunrise at Boundary Oak. For details, call Terry Camp, 925-941-6488.

Free tax prep help at City locations

Low and middle-income taxpayers of all ages, with special attention given to seniors, can get free tax preparation assistance for basic federal and state tax returns Feb. 5 — April 15 from AARP Tax-Aide. Services will be provided at three locations in Walnut Creek (walk-ins are welcome, although appointments — call 925-335-8749 — can be made beginning Jan. 2):

- Tice Valley Gymnasium, 2055 Tice Valley Blvd., Tuesdays, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Club Room at Heather Farm Park Community Center — Wednesdays, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Civic Park Community Center, 1375 Civic Dr. Thursdays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. (appointments are required at this location; call 925-943-5851).

Men's Golf Club signups for 2008 begin

The Walnut Creek Men's Golf Club at Boundary Oak Golf Course is accepting membership signups for 2008 renewals and new members. The 602-member club conducts 25 annual tournaments at the City-owned, 18-hole course. Membership applications are available in the Pro Shop at Boundary Oak on on the club website: www.golffusion.com/walnutcreekmgc/login. For more information, call Chuck Schreiber, 925-932-3443 or Jan Allaway, 925-283-5360.

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. 24, 1-6 p.m. at the Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Dr. The \$15 admission fee includes three appraisals; additional appraisals are \$5 each; call 925-947-1678.

Donors thanked for Holiday Tree Lighting

The City and Downtown Business Association thank Longs Drug Stores, Saxby's, Safeway, and Consignment Plus Home Furnishings (for its donation of Santa's chair) for supporting the City's Holiday Tree Lighting event on Nov. 23.

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Public input sought on open space areas

The Open Space Vision Task Force will hold two more public meetings to seek input from Walnut Creek residents about the City's Open Space areas.

The next meeting will be held Thursday, Jan. 17, 7-9 p.m. at the Civic Park Community Center, 1375 Civic Dr.

A final meeting is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 9, 9-11 a.m. at Heather Farm Park Community Center, 301 N. San Carlos Dr.

Information gathered at these meetings will be presented to the City Council to determine the future operational direction of the Open Space.

City again providing free sandbags to residents

With the rainy season upon us, the City is again providing free sandbags at stations located at the north end of Heather Farm Park on North San Carlos Road and at the Larkey Park parking lot, as well as on Lancaster Road near Orchard Lane.

Sand and bags will be available, although users must bring their own shovel. Call (925) 943-5855 for details.





Doggone good time at debut of City's Dog Park



Hundreds of residents and dogs celebrated the Nov. 17 opening of the off-leash dog park in Heather Farm Park. Animal Rescue Foundation founder Tony La Russa, bottom left, addresses the crowd holding his pet, Willow, and Charlene Wisman, bottom right, pets her dog, George.

Sign ups taken now for Spring 2008 Citizens Institute program

Ever wonder just how things get done around Walnut Creek? To find out how your City runs, sign up for the Spring 2008 Citizens Institute.

Now in its eighth year, the Citizens Institute is dedicated to bringing people who live or work in Walnut Creek together with City staff to explore how

PAY
HERE

Paying for parking with plastic now possible

Walnut Creek resident Matt Adams uses one of the six new parking pay stations on North Main Street, which made their debut on Nov. 13. The solar-powered electronic devices, the first of their kind in Contra Costa County, accept coins, paper currency and credit cards. Eventually the City will replace all parking meters with the pay stations.

the City sets and meets its priorities. The Spring 2008 Institute runs March 1 to April 19. There is no cost to participate.

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 Lesher Center for the Arts, and the Public Services Corporation Yard, as well as presentations, discussion groups, and interactive exercises.

The Spring 2008 Citizens Institute kicks off the morning of March 1 with a fun, fact-filled bus tour of Walnut Creek.

Subsequent sessions will be held from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Thursdays, March 5 through April 16, with a graduation event the morning of Saturday, April 19.

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

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HOW WE'RE GOING GREEN TOGETHER

More than 350 citizens and business owners participated in *Sustainable Walnut Creek: Going Green Together* on

Going GREEN Together

Oct. 20 at the Lesher Center for the Arts.

The City hosted the program/Eco-Fair to share information and creative ideas on the various ways the community can improve the local and global environment, and to plant

a seed of inspiration so that citizens and businesses might take action on their own.

Bay Area Backroads host Doug McConnell talked about things the City is already doing and ways citizens and businesses are being green at home and at work. Jan Berman of PG&E also spoke.

More than 80 citizens then broke into small discussion groups to discuss ways the community can be more sustainable.

For a collection of stories about what citizens and local businesses are doing, go online to www.walnut-creek.org and click on the "Going Green Together" logo.



More than 80 people participated in the community conversation on sustainability, including (from left) Paul Matamoros of Pleasant Hill, Bart Simmons of Walnut Creek (back to camera), Alex Taflya of Walnut Creek, and Beth Eckl of Danville.



KGO-TV news anchor Dan Ashley emceed the event, which included an Eco-Fair that featured sponsor booths such as PG&E's exhibit on light bulbs, right.



What folks said they're willing to do to go green

ollowing are the results of some of the survey questions posed to the 350 attendees at the City's Going Green Together event on Oct. 20:

- 61% said they attended the event because they were concerned about the environment.
- 98% said they are willing to make a change in their personal behaviors to protect resources for future generations.
- 77% said they have already

- switched from traditional lightbulbs to CFIs
- 53% said they are already hiking, walking, bicycling or using public transit to work, school, or the store once a week.
- 11% said they already own a hybrid or alternative fuel vehicle.
- 70% said they will purchase a hybrid or alternative fuel vehicle at some point
- 54% said they either are already or would be willing to send their kids to school on a bus.
- 42% said they would be extremely likely to consider the impact of a product or service on the environment when buying a product or service.
- 87% said a vendor's efforts to protect the environment and/or conserve energy influences their consideration of buying a product or service from that vendor.

(To see more of the results, go to www.walnut-creek.org and click on the "Going Green Together" box.)

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Library memories

From page one

affectionate farewell before it is razed in February to make room for Walnut Creek's next library.

The Jan. 13 event, which runs from 2 to 5 p.m., will include live music by the Rossmoor Big Band, Foothill Jazz Band, and Indian Valley Children's Chorus.

Beginning Jan. 2, limited library services will be available at Park Place, at the corner of Civic Drive and North Broadway, while the new library is under construction.

Perhaps the most remarkable memory is of Sept. 19, 1965, a warm Sunday evening when jazz legend Duke Ellington and his band performed in the library to launch the City's Art Forum Series for 1965-66. A capacity crowd paid \$2.50 a ticket to witness the historic event.

The library also provided a venue for Concord jazz pianist Dave Brubeck and celebrated Bay Area sculptor Beniamino Bufano as part of the Art Forum Series.

After years of planning, ground was finally broken on June 14, 1960. Romley Construction Co. of Walnut Creek built the 9,234-square-foot facility in only nine months at an under-budget cost of \$176,180.

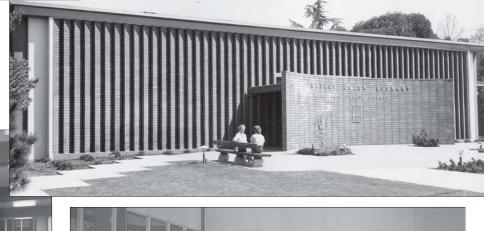
When the library was finally dedicated on March 19, 1961, little did anyone realize it would end up serving the community nearly half a century.

Thanks for the memories....



Looking over the design plans for the Walnut Creek Library in 1959 were, from left, architect Floyd Comstock, Mrs. Robert Nelson, and Mrs. Arthur Larson. Below is Comstock's design and how it actually looked when it opened in March 1961. At lower left is Duke Ellington, who performed at the library on Sept. 19, 1965







County library workers prepared the shelves for books in the new library in March 1961, above. At left, the library as it looked in 1969.

City Council Update

Council OKs campus expansion for Contra Costa Christian School

The City Council on Nov. 20 upheld Planning Commission approval for an expansion at Contra Costa Christian School at 2721 Larkey Lane that calls for a new gymnasium, a library/computer room, and three new classrooms.

The commission voted Oct. 11 to approve a conditional use permit for the expansion, which includes a new parking lot with 123 additional spaces.

New mayor, mayor pro tem chosen

Gwen Regalia, a 20-year veteran of the City Council, was selected by her colleagues on Dec. 4 to serve an unprecedented fifth term as mayor of Walnut Creek, succeeding Sue Rainey.

Gary Skrel, who has been on the Council since 2000, was chosen as mayor pro tem for the new year.

Regalia, who is also serving her fifth term on the Council, was mayor in 1991, 1996, 1999, and 2003. She is the 46th person to serve as mayor of Walnut Creek since it became a city in 1914. In the 50 years since the mayor position was first rotated among council members on an annual basis, she is the first person to serve a fourth and a fifth term in the post.

A 49-year resident of Walnut Creek, Regalia was formerly a member of the Walnut Creek School Board (1978-87) and president of the Association of Bay Area Governments (2002-04).

City dedicates Lar Rieu Park

Barry Lar Rieu, right, son of the late Miriam Lar Rieu, addressed more than 80 residents at his mother's former 10-acre estate on El Camino Corto, which on Nov. 3 was dedicated by the City as Lar Rieu Park, the City's 22nd park.



Pair selected as 2007 Employees of the Year

They exemplify the highest standards of public service. For that City employees Mary Scott and Steven Schmidt were recognized Nov. 6 as the 2007 recipients of the Rosie Coan Award, honoring them as the City's Employees of the Year.

The pair received their honors from City Manager Gary Pokorny at the City Employee Awards ceremony at the Lesher Center for the Arts. Each received a plaque and \$500.

Scott, an employee since 1985, is executive assistant to Assistant City Manager/Administrative Services Director Lorie Tinfow. She was recognized for her can-do spirit and positive attitude.

Schmidt, the City's Building Mainte-



2007 Employees of the Year: Mary Scott and Steve Schmidt

nance Supervisor since 2006, was recognized for the outstanding support he provides City staff and for being an active participant on several City task forces.

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

Applicants sought for City commissions

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

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

- Park, Recreation & Open Space Tracy Murray (3-year term)
- Design Review Tom Bassett and Brian Kilian (4-year term)
- Transportation Laurie Kozisek (1-year remaining of unexpired 3-year term)

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

are: Robert Simmons and David Powell, Planning; Jacquelyn Smith and Carol Fowler, Arts; and Rick Underwood, Park, Recreation & Open Space.

The Council will interview the second-term candidates for reappointment on Jan. 3. Interviews for first-term candidates will be Feb. 12. The new commissioners will be sworn in on March 4.

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.

City ready to host 29th Shellie Awards

The City will host the 29th annual Shellie Awards on Saturday, Jan. 12,



Shellie Award

7:30 p.m. in the Hofmann Theatre at the Lesher Center for the Arts.

This year's event will honor over 100 individuals and their work in musical and non-musical theatrical productions, which took place between Sept. 1, 2006 and Aug. 31, 2007.

The Shellie Awards are sponsored by a generous donation from the Diablo Regional Arts Association.

Tickets are \$25; call 925-943-7469.

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By Officers Beth Hopkins and Mark Kan

WC children engaged in Character Counts!

Three years ago, WCPD implemented CHARACTER COUNTS! in Walnut Creek Elementary schools in replacement of the DARE program. CHARACTER

replacement of the DARE program. CHARACTER COUNTS! is based on *The Six Pillars of Character*; Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship. Using these qualities of good character as a foundation, CHARACTER COUNTS! Officers teach a 12-week curriculum to fifth grade students. The curriculum includes lessons on drug and alcohol awareness, bullying, building selfesteem, avoiding violence, and making good choices.

In October 2007, 11 WCPD officers attended a day-long in-service training to freshen up on their teaching skills. Buena Vista Elementary Principal Heather Duncan and Instructional Coach Stacy Freeman presented training on teaching techniques and classroom management. The training was held on board the USS Hornet in Alameda.

This school year's classes will begin in January 2008. CHARACTER COUNTS! will be taught in all Walnut Creek School District elementary schools, the three Mt Diablo Unified School District elementary schools in Walnut Creek, and four independent schools. A graduation is held in May to celebrate the students' hard work.

For more information about CHARACTER COUNTS!, go to the website at www.charactercounts.org or contact WCPD.

Council approves Civic Pride Grant funding

Performing in Civic Park on holidays is the usual routine for the Walnut Creek Concert Band. But thanks to a \$5,000 Civic Pride Grant from the City Council, the band will be giving a free American History concert for middle school through 12th grade students in 2008.

The Council disbursed \$40,800 in Civic Pride Grant funds on Oct. 16 in the latest round of the 18-year-old program, which is designed to assist groups with projects that promote civic pride.

Among the other recipients were:

- Friends of the Walnut Creek Library, \$7,500, to operate the Friends Bookstore at 1910 Olympic Blvd. while the new library is under construction.
- Life Garden, \$5,000, to design, build, and install an interpretive kiosk along the Iron Horse Trail.
- Mount Diablo Mother's Club, \$4,000, to publish a local resource book for new families in Walnut Creek with children under 5 years of age.



Music Director Harvey Benstein leads the Walnut Creek Concert Band in Civic Park

- Ruth Bancroft Garden, \$5,000, to install new signage.
- Walnut Creek Historical Society, \$1,500, to install a wind pump at the Shadelands Ranch Historical Museum.
- Walnut Creek on Ice, \$3,300, to purchase audio equipment
- The Wellness Community, \$5,000, to remodel and expand areas of a home cancer facility for library activities.
 - World Rainforest Fund, \$4,500.

CCWD to replace water pipe along trail

The Contra Costa Water District will be replacing an aging 12-inch diameter water pipeline along the Iron Horse Trail between Treat Boulevard and Walden Road from February to September 2008.

District spokeswoman Gina Oltman said this project will ensure continued reliability of drinking-water service to customers in the Oak Road and Treat Boulevard area.

The Iron Horse Trail will remain open and accessible to the public for the majority of the project. Temporary

fencing will be installed between the trail and the project area for public safety.

While the project is underway, trail users and nearby residents can expect:

- Construction activity from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- Construction traffic entering and exiting from Walden Road.
- Trail use restrictions and reduced accessibility as necessary.
- Noise and dust control in accordance with City of Walnut Creek requirements. Contact Oltman at (925) 688-8010.

Public input needed on Bike Master Plan

Re-Cycli

As it works towards adopting a
Bicycle Master Plan, the Bicycle
Master Plan Advisory Committee invites

public participation at its next meeting on Jan. 28, when it will review additional bicycle routes, existing or proposed, that were previously identified as needing further study.

The meeting will be at 7 p.m. in the 3rd Floor Meeting Room at City Hall, 1666 N. Main St.

This past summer, the Committee

reviewed a list of goals which are to be included in the new master plan.

Other topics the Committee will tackle

in 2008 will include the review of design criteria and priorities for new and improved bike routes.

If you would like to provide input or would

like additional information on the Bicycle Master Plan, please contact Senior Planner Jeremy Lochirco at (925) 943-5899, ext. 251 or via email at lochirco@walnut-creek.org.

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20th anniversary City Bus Tour takes center stage

The stage of the Hofmann Theatre was one of several special and entertaining places discovered by the 21 participants of the 20th anniversary City Bus Tour on Oct. 27. The City first conducted the popular bus tour of Walnut Creek on Sept. 12, 1987. It is offered twice each year, in April and October.

Get ready with CERT emergency training

Get ready to help yourself and your community in 2008 – 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 integrated into a CERT team. If a disaster strikes, CERT members are encouraged to check on their own families and home first and then assemble at a predesignated site to work together to respond to the needs of the neighborhood.

Safety is the most important goal of CERT teams. No one is asked to put him

2008 CERT training dates

Feb. 5 – March 11
(Morning & evening sessions offered)
April 15 – May 15
(Evening sessions only)

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."

For a full schedule and to register, go to walnut-creek.org and click on the Emergency Preparedness Quick Link or call (925) 256–3556.

Library

From page one

Gary Pokorny to enter into discussions with the County to explore more fully two options: 1) expanding the boundary of an existing County Service Area or 2) forming a City/County Joint Powers Agreement.

The City is also considering forming a new single purpose library district that would fund both libraries, although such a district would require the approval of the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), which historically has been unsupportive of creating new districts.

"The City is looking at creating a new library funding area that is fair and equitable and which would generate an adequate and stable source of funding to support both Walnut Creek libraries," said Assistant City Manager Lorie Tinfow.

Measure Q, passed by voters in 2002, approved a \$22 per household parcel tax that generates approximately \$900,000 a year, levied within the city only. If Measure Q is not renewed, the result would likely be a severe reduction in the number of hours both libraries could remain open.

City staff will return to the Council for further direction once the actual costs of a preferred option are known.



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

* For appointment: Call 256-3504

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

CITY MANAGER
Gary Pokorny
CITY ATTORNEY
Paul Valle-Riestra
CITY CLERK
Patrice Olds
CITY TREASURER
Ronald Cassano

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
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PUBLIC SERVICES

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Nutshell

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For past issues, go online at walnut-creek.org



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