

Check out our **BIG**
Holiday Gift Section
Starts on B1

CLAYTON PIONEER

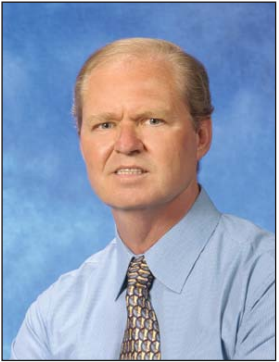
IT'S YOUR PAPER

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BILL WALCUTT
MAYOR'S CORNER

*Never too early to
plan ahead*

Thank you for all the emails regarding the proposed farmers market and everyone who has volunteered to help get it off the ground. Based on your response, there seems to be a lot of enthusiasm and community support for fresh vegetables in Clayton. I know I am ready for a farmers market.

After you are finished dreaming about buying all your fresh vegetables at Clayton's new farmers market, you should start thinking about getting prepared for the next emergency. No, I don't mean a veggie emergency.

Although we cannot predict the next emergency, we all know we are going to have one. We also know that if we have a major disaster in the Bay Area, emergency service personnel will not be able to help everyone immediately.

No matter what type of emergency we face, whether it is big or small, it is important to be prepared. We just had another reminder a couple weeks ago that we live in earthquake country.

See Mayor, page A17

See
Page A10
For
Home
Decorating
and
Cookie Contest
Entry Forms

What's Inside

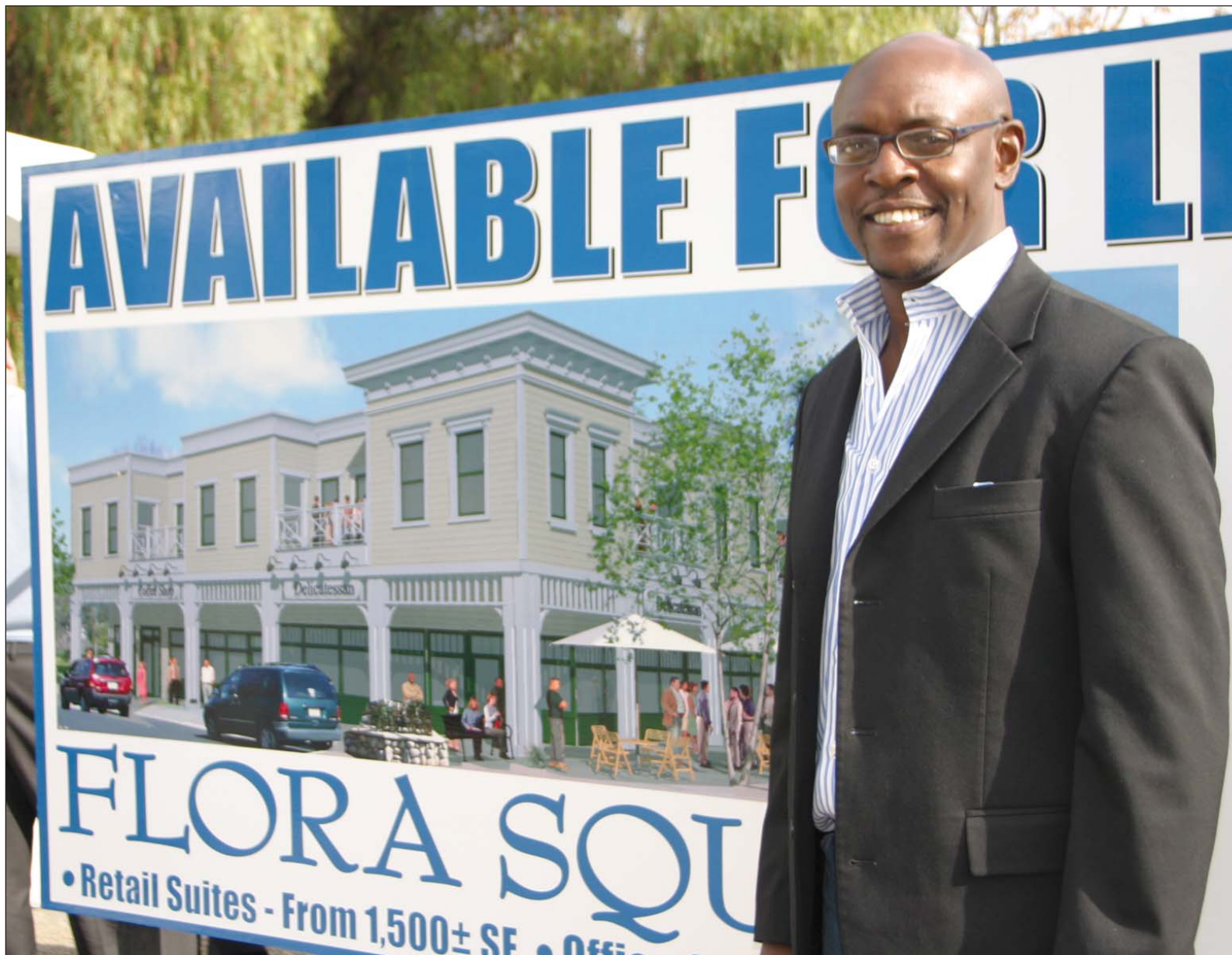
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Old West flair meets 21st century



Tamara Steiner/Clayton Pioneer

CLAYTON RESIDENT AND DEVELOPER UZOMA NWAKUCHE is proud of his vision for Flora Square in downtown Clayton at the corner of Oak and Center Streets. The building will be complete in the fall of 2008.

*Flora Square plans
include eateries,
small art gallery*

TAMARA STEINER
Clayton Pioneer

Clayton developer Uzoma Nwakuche and city officials picked up golden shovels last week and dug into the ground at the corner of Oak and Center Streets, signaling the start of construction on the newest old building in town.

Nwakuche heads a development group that includes the Robeson Family Trust from San Jose and Colliers International Commercial Real Estate. Previously called Oak Center, the new Flora Square has been renamed in honor of Nwakuche's late mother.

The 14,000 sq. ft., Western-themed building will have retail on the ground floor and offices upstairs. The design includes reproductions of historical architectural elements, such as the crossbar railings on the balconies found in some of the old buildings downtown.

The building will sit close to the street to encourage pedestrian access and will cover the ground from property line to property line. There are areas set

See Flora, page A17

Council OKs updates for Community Park

*Meanwhile, The
Grove is set to
open on Dec. 1*

TAMARA STEINER
Clayton Pioneer

It was all just "a walk in the park" for the City Council at the Nov. 6 meeting, when a major renovation plan for the Clayton Community Park was approved along with a fees schedule and regulations for use of The Grove, the new downtown park.

The Community Park, on the hill above the ball fields, has been a popular spot for kids' birthday parties and family bar-

becues. But it has one serious drawback - there is very little shade, discouraging use on hot days.

The upgrades approved by the City Council will solve the shade problem with a 50 foot by 50 foot Ramada-style structure which will cover a new barbecue grill and seating for 120 at square picnic tables.

"I really like the square tables," said Councilwoman Julie Pierce. "They are more conducive to conversation."

For smaller groups, there will be individual picnic tables, many covered, and new pedestal-style barbecue grills.

The playgrounds will also undergo major changes, with a

new tot lot (for kids up to 5 years old) separate from a larger structure for the older children. All play areas will have new resilient floor covering.

Additional improvements will include an iron railing atop the retaining wall at the tot lot, shaded bench seating at the playgrounds, new drinking fountains and trash and recycling containers.

Of primary consideration was the antiquated and unreliable underground irrigation system, which will be repaired or replaced during the remodel. "There will be no irrigation stuff under concrete," promised project manager John Croswhite.

Preliminary estimates place

the cost of the improvements at \$325,000 to \$350,000. Possible sources of funding include \$250,000 from the recent refunding of the Oakhurst Assessment District, \$47,000 remaining in the city's Parkland Dedication Fund and the

\$850,000 proceeds from the sale of the Longs parcel.

The project will go out to public bid early in January and is scheduled for completion by the end of April.

See Park, page A7

Town Center land use public hearing draws big crowd

*At issue is new regulation
changing permitted land*

TAMARA STEINER
Clayton Pioneer

It was standing room only at last week's Planning Commission meeting, when a measure amending the Land Use chapter of the Town Center Specific Plan (TCSP) was up for a public hearing.

The amendment, which modifies the permitted uses in

the Town Center, was passed by the Planning Commission at the Oct. 23 meeting. However, a subsequent staff review revealed that affected property owners had not been notified of the proposed amendment prior to the vote. This error required that the public hearing be rescheduled after proper notifications were mailed.

The changes proposed by the amendment include a revision to the list of permitted land uses in the Town Center. Among the uses deleted by the

amendment are "meeting halls and theaters." According to the staff report prepared by Community Services director Jeremy Graves, "the community's needs for assembly facilities such as meeting halls or theaters are met by the city-owned Endeavor Hall, The Grove public park and Black Diamond Plaza..." More meeting halls or theaters "could overwhelm the desired mixture of retail, restaurant and civic uses."

See Center, page A17



Tamara Steiner/Clayton Pioneer

IF YOU WERE PASSING BY THE GROVE LAST WEEK, you might have seen this Gary Lee Price sculpture, Ring Around the Rosy, hovering above the ground, waiting for workers to finish pouring the concrete pads that would be its permanent home on the Marsh Creek/Center street corner of the park. The park is due to open Dec. 1