



La Clínica to offer health care in Oakley

by Samie Hartley

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Applause is discouraged at Oakley city council meetings, but members of the audience as well as the council and city staff couldn't resist celebrating after the council, acting as the Redevelopment Agency board, voted in favor of a resolution that brings La Clínica de La Raza, Inc. one step closer to opening a public health clinic in Oakley.

The board voted 4-0 (board member Bruce Connelly was absent) last week to authorize Executive Director and City Manager Bryan Montgomery to enter a guaranty agreement with S&R Associates-Cypress Square regarding the lease for the health clinic.

Through this agreement, Montgomery said, La Clínica commits to three years of a seven-year lease at 2021 Main St. La Clínica has obtained funding commitments for only three years. If La Clínica decides to close the clinic after the first three years, the Redevelopment Agency will cover the rent for the remaining four years by finding another tenant or paying the rent itself.

Montgomery said that as La Clínica has yet to terminate any of its leases since opening its first clinic in 1971, the council's resolution is merely a precaution. La Clínica operates 25 sites throughout Alameda, Contra Costa and Solano counties; the Oakley establishment will be the first in far East County.

Montgomery said La Clínica will be of great service to the Oakley community, as no medical doctors' offices are located within the city, which is home to more than 36,000 residents. A large number of those residents are uninsured or have no access to transportation out of town to receive care.

La Clínica will lease an approximately 2,880-square-foot location within Cypress Square Plaza near Raley's. La Clínica offers an array of services including medical, dental and optical care, health and nutrition education, mental health and behavioral health services, radiology and laboratory services, preventative medicine and women's health care, including prenatal and postnatal care.

La Clínica's mission is to provide affordable, quality health services in a manner that is culturally and linguistically accessible to the community. It serves patients with the ability to pay, and subsidized those who cannot.

Father Olman Solis, pastor of St. Anthony Catholic Church, spoke before the agency at the meeting, thanking the board members for their continued support of the project that has been a work in progress for five years. He presented the board with a poster inscribed with signatures of many of the church's congregation as a thank you for its efforts.

Redevelopment Agency Vice Chair Jim Frazier reaffirmed Oakley's commitment to La Clínica, informing the audience that Radback Energy, Inc., a company seeking to build a power plant in Oakley, has pledged \$5,000 to La Clínica. If the power plant proposal is approved by the California Energy Commission, Radback will donate an additional \$20,000 to support the cause.

Frazier, whose construction company has offered to help renovate the building into a medical office, said La Clínica would be an important addition to Oakley, and its services would benefit many in need of affordable health care.

"This is a good day," said Chair Pat Anderson. "The community is definitely benefitting from this."

Now that the lease agreement has been established, La Clínica may move forward with its plans to move to Oakley. The health clinic is expected to open its newest clinic by the end of the year.

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I feel proud to be a resident of such a forward-looking city. This is very welcome news!