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Orinda Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council
Tuesday, May 17, 7:00 pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC)
Monday, May 16, 7:00 pm
Community Room, City Hall,
22 Orinda Way

Planning Commission
Tuesday, May 24, at 7:00 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements
City of Orinda:
www.cityoforinda.org

Chamber of Commerce:
www.orindachamber.org

The Orinda Association:
www.orindaassociation.org

Council Deals with Road Repairs and Woes

By Andrea A. Firth

Urgent and emergency road repairs were the main topics of discussion at last Tuesday's Orinda City Council meeting. The Council continued to grapple with how to best apply the City's limited funds for road repairs and what to do about the growing reality that the City's streets will turn to gravel without significant intervention. "We need to engage in communicating with the residents [about the infrastructure problem] in an ambitious way," stated Vice Mayor Steve Glazer. Council Member Amy Worth concurred, "It's a two-part message. We need to communicate the poor condition of Orinda's infrastructure and the financial realities, that is, our capabilities to address this and the limitations we face."

When it came time to authorize expenditures, the Council focused on the repair of major arteries and unsafe road conditions. The Council authorized \$1.16 million for the City's annual pavement rehabilitation program to repair eight of Orinda's main feeder streets. The Council also took the first step to fund the repair of a section of El Toyonal Road that was damaged by a slide during the heavy rains in March. The total cost of this road repair is expected to reach \$220,000. "This project will deplete our slope stabilization fund [monies set aside for urgent slide repairs], and the likelihood that we will be able to replenish that fund in the next couple years doesn't look good," said City Manager Janet Keeter.

Another \$63,750 was set aside for urgent repairs on six Orinda streets. Council members Glazer and Worth questioned how these six street repairs were chosen over the many streets in desperate need of fixing and requested that staff and the Citizen's Infrastructure Oversight Committee (CIOC) formalize the criteria and rationale for urgent repair program. "We strongly support this program," said Richard Nelson, Chair of the CIOC. "It's preventative. We can't let our roads go to gravel. We need a solution to this problem."

To move forward toward solutions to address the roads problem, Glazer advocated the formation of a Council subcommittee. "If we hope to do some-

thing in 2012, we need to start now to review the process and research choices," said Glazer, noting that the deadline for placing a tax measure on the June 2012 ballot is in February. After a lengthy discussion regarding the composition of the subcommittee, the Council voted four to one to have two Council members form the committee and liaison with staff, the CIOC, and the Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) to develop a list of options for the full Council to discuss in the fall. Worth dissented, preferring a broader participation on the subcommittee with members of the CIOC and FAC. Subsequently, Glazer and Council Member Sue Severson were appointed the Council Roads Subcommittee.

Orinda Sign Makes a Move

By Andrea A. Firth



The historic Orinda sign has found a new home, at least for now. After residents of the Country Club neighborhood objected to the placement of the sign in the small, triangular garden at the bottom of Camino Sobrante, the sign's fate remained in limbo. Recently the sign appeared in the landscaped hill in front of the Community Center. The location may be temporary however, the sign's stand still has wheels in place. Stay tuned. *A. Firth*

Orinda Council and Planning Commission Review 2010

By Aleksandr Auzers

Orinda's City Council and Planning Commission met recently to review the performance of the Planning Department and the status of pending projects, and to discuss the downtown planning efforts. Planning efficiency and customer satisfaction improved in 2010, and the Council and Commission emphasized the need for comprehensive public outreach regarding the downtown planning process.

According Planning Director Emmanuel Ursu, the Planning Commission examined 50 project proposals in 2010—a net increase from 2009's 37 projects—and approved 46. Wilder, a 245-home luxury home development off Gateway Boulevard, represented over half of the applications submitted. Ursu separately reviewed 55 minor projects, all of which were approved.

The average time from application completion to a decision by the Planning Commission decreased by 58%, to 11.1 days. (A minimum 10-day public notification period is required for development projects.) City staff also highlighted results from the Planning Department's client surveys. 83 responses have been received since the program's inception in 2007, and performance scores have increased steadily year-over-year.

Ursu provided an update for four housing projects that are currently in the planning and development process. Construction at Wilder is underway, though it is likely the developer will be unable to complete two ball fields by June and a maintenance facility by October as originally planned. Ursu said he believes the developer of Pulte Homes, a mixed-use village style development of 73 homes on Altarinda Road, is waiting for the housing market to improve before proceeding further. J & J Ranch, a 13-home development and the site of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe, and the Lamorinda Lane project, which includes 8 residential lots, are expected to go before the Planning Commission for approval in June. And, the Eden senior housing project, a 71-unit affordable housing facility planned for the old Library site on Orinda Way, is expected to undergo design review shortly; overall funding for the project has not yet been fully secured.

City officials noted that younger people and families have been underrepresented at City planning meetings regarding Orinda's Downtown planning process. Planning Commissioner Nick Kosla said only two people under 45 years of age were present at a community meeting that he attended.

Regarding the status of the Planning Process Review Task Force (PPRTF) recommendations, which were developed to simplify the planning approval process, Ursu reported that 30 of the PPRTF's 61 recommendations have been adopted, one rejected, and 30 await evaluation.

Orinda's City Council will meet next on Tuesday, May 17th, at 7:00 p.m. in the Library auditorium.



Police Report

That's my wallet, 5/5/11 Police arrested a suspect found in possession of a wallet which had been stolen moments before in a commercial burglary on Altarinda Way. After a short pursuit on foot, the two lookout pals that just happened to be waiting in car, along with the suspected thief who had the wallet, were taken into custody.

Warrant arrest, 5/05/11 The chef at a well known local Asian restaurant was picked up on a \$300,000 arrest warrant for allegedly stalking at the restaurant. No mention of who he was stalking.

Robbery, 5/02/11 An Estates Drive resident left home in the morning and returned later to find the back door and the garage door smashed. The homeowner is not sure if anything was stolen at the time of the police report besides two jars full of coins. Thoughtful thief didn't trash the place. Damage to two doors, approximately \$800, missing coin jars valued at \$150.

Burglary, 4/22/11 Unknown suspects broke into a Charles Hill Road home via a lock garage door and took a laptop, two cell phones, a jewelry box and half an ounce of medically-approved marijuana. No suspects or leads at this time.

Hand grenade at Grampa's house, 4/25/11 The son of an older gentleman who had passed away in the Sleepy Hollow area found a hand grenade at his dad's home. He wisely called the police, who summoned the Walnut Creek Bomb Squad to collect it for disposal. Heck of a souvenir from back in the day.

D.U.I. 4/24/11 On Easter Sunday a driver had a solo accident with a concrete pillar on Rheem Boulevard in Orinda. Air bags deployed and the car rolled over on its side. The police report cuts to the chase and said he was arrested for driving under the influence, no mention of injuries.

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