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Orinda Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, July 5, 7:00 pm Auditorium, Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way

Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission

Wednesday, July 13 at 6:30 PM Community Room, City Hall 22 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

Tuesday, June 28, at 7:00 p.m. Orinda Library, Garden Room 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 Struggles with Denser Vision for Orinda

By Andrea A. Firth

Martin Engelmann, Deputy Executive Director of Planning for the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, recently presented the Orinda City Council with an initial plan for integrating land-use, housing, and transportation in the Bay Area in order to address global warming and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from cars and small trucks—the federally-mandated goal is a 15% per capita reduction by 2035.

Termed the Initial Vision Scenario, this is the first step in preparing a “sustainable community strategy” to manage the region’s growth in a reasonable and eco-friendly way. According to this vision, by 2035, the Bay Area is projected to grow by 903,000 households and 1.2 million jobs. Almost 40% of this growth will be in Contra Costa County, with Lamorinda absorbing 3% of the load.

On a positive note, the Bay Area is already 2/3 of the way toward

meeting the GHG emission reduction goal based on an adjusted forecast that reflects the impact of the economic decline, according to Engelmann. “We are a smaller Bay Area than we had planned to be, and that has helped us a lot as a region trying to meet this goal.”

However, this preliminary proposal, which was created by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, falls short of further reducing the area’s GHG emissions an additional 5% over the next 25 years. In fact the Initial Vision, which projects a growth of 663 new jobs in Orinda coupled with the addition of 1,305 housing units downtown, will yield higher GHG emissions in the Bay Area by 2040. “[The initial plan] was really kind of a dud,” admitted Engelmann.

“These numbers are not realistic or achievable and completely out of

balance for growth in Orinda based on the City’s past,” stated Vice Mayor Steve Glazer. The plan allocates a total of 1,920 households to Orinda by 2035, which compares to the addition of approximately 740 housing units since the City was incorporated 25 years ago said Planning Director Emmanuel Ursu, and he added that under the City’s current General Plan, the City could accommodate a maximum of 580 new housing units in the downtown districts.

Council Member Amy Worth asked Engelmann about the City’s obligations and if the Initial Vision is linked to the City’s housing element. [The State requires all cities to carry their fair share of housing at all income levels in order to meet the region’s housing needs; this mandate is tied to the City’s receipt of road repair funding.]

“It’s complicated,” said Engelmann, “[ABAG is] saying don’t

worry about it, [the initial plan] is just a vision. But if it sticks, it will make it very difficult for cities to meet their housing element requirements.”

The Initial Vision as outlined triples the size of the existing public transportation system, which Engelmann also finds problematic. “We can’t afford to triple our transit system. We can’t afford to run or maintain the system we have today.”

Engelmann acknowledged that this initial vision of future growth required revision and a reality check. The next step in the process will be the development of five new scenarios that will project growth more closely tied to historic benchmarks and incorporate other strategies for reducing GHG emissions, such as higher bridge tolls, open road tolling, and revised parking policies. “We need to move back toward reality,” said Engelmann.

Orinda Supports Skatepark Lot

By Andrea A. Firth



Lamorinda Skatepark on Moraga Road

Photo Andy Scheck

Orinda’s City Council recently agreed to contribute \$62,500 toward the construction

of a 29-space parking lot on Moraga Road alongside the Lamorinda Skatepark, which is located

in the Moraga Commons Park. Through a cost-sharing agreement, Orinda and Lafayette will cover ¼ of the parking lot construction costs each, and the town of Moraga will kick in the other half of the estimated \$250,000 total. Currently, skaters and parents parallel park on the gravel outside the park’s fence. Orinda’s Parks and Recreation Commission agreed with representatives from Moraga that safer access to the skatepark and additional parking is warranted.

“The idea to have a local skatepark built started in Orinda,” stated Parks and Recreation Director Todd Skinner. The request was made about ten years ago and Council member Amy Worth was

already serving on the Council. “I remember the chambers were filled. About 75 or 80 young people came to the City Council meeting to request that a skatepark be built,” said Worth noting when a suitable location could not be found in Orinda, the search was extended to neighboring Lafayette and Moraga. The site in the Commons was ultimately chosen, and the three communities equally funded the building of the park.

Orinda’s share of the parking lot construction will be funded with park dedication fees, which are assessed when homes are built or enlarged. These fees can only be used to support capital or rehabilitation projects related to parks or recreation activities.

The Council voted four to one in favor of contributing to the parking lot for the skatepark. Vice Mayor Steve Glazer dissented indicating that he did not have a sufficient sense of the “proportionality” of the expenditure or how many Orinda teens use the skatepark. According to Skinner, 15 to 20 kids at any one time are using the skatepark on a good-weather day, but numbers specific to where users reside are not available.



Police Report

Drop the fake money and run, 6/8/11 A suspect attempted to cash a forged check at the Orinda branch of Citibank. Chalk it up to nerves, or perhaps a bad taco, but the suspect ran out of the bank before the check was cashed. He fled the scene in a silver Dodge.

Stolen car returned, 6/16/11 A gray Nissan was stolen from the North Berkeley BART parking lot. It was found at an undisclosed location in Orinda with the front and rear license plates missing. The car was released to its appreciative owners.



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