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MOFD Board Will Consider Building Purchase Tonight

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Aerial view www.maps.google.com modified by Andy Scheck

estimates for the retrofit of Station 41 span a broad range from \$500,000 and up depending on the size and scope of the project.

At the July meeting, Fire Chief Randy Bradley presented his concept for purchasing an existing building at 1150 Moraga Way. Bradley said he saw this as a cost effective option that would have long-term benefits, stating he believed it would serve the District well as an administrative office because of its central location, adaptability to fire services needs, and improved efficiency as duplicative services would no longer be necessary. Bradley estimated the cost of purchasing and renovating the structure to range from \$1.7 million to more than \$2.2 million.

Public comment regarding this issue was mixed. Several members of the audience disagreed with the idea of purchasing a building and suggested those funds could be put toward MOFD's unfunded liability. Those in favor saw it as a sound investment.

The Board was equally divided. Dick Olsen voiced concerns about earthquake safety and possible mold resulting from the water used to extinguish a relatively recent fire. He would also like to have an outside consultant review the purchase documents.

Brook Mancinelli spoke about 'cost creep,' where prices are beginning to move up and how that could change the overall cost. He went on to directly state that he does not support the purchase of the building. The other three Board members, while not as adamant as Mancinelli, agreed that more discussions were necessary.

Tonight's meeting will be held in the MOFD Board Room, 1230 Moraga Way, at 7:00 p.m.

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Faced with facilities in need of retrofit and having its administrative operations split between two stations, the Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) Board of Directors will hold a Special Meeting tonight to discuss the possibility of purchasing a building to be used for MOFD administration. Board representatives were also scheduled to meet in closed session last night with the City of Orinda to discuss the price and terms of a possible lease or other agreement for use of office space in Orinda's City Hall (after press time).

The Board held preliminary discussions on this topic at its July 20 meeting.

According to a recent facilities report, Station 41 on Moraga Road is in need of upgrades with regards to size, seismic and gender issues. Station 41 includes space for some of the district's administrative activities, including the Board Room - Station 45 in Orinda currently houses the MOFD's formal headquarters.

The report contained options for Station 41 that included retrofitting the existing building and expanding the space to accommodate both firefighters and administration, or combining administrative offices in an off-site location by either leasing space or buying property. Cost