



Orinda Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, January 31, 7:00 pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

Tuesday, January 24, at 6:00 pm
Workshop Garden Room,
Library, 26 Orinda Way

Historical Landmark Committee

Tuesday, January 24, 3:00 pm
Gallery Room, Library
26 Orinda Way

School Board Meeting

Orinda Union School District
Monday, February 13, 6:00 pm
OUSD Office

8 Altarinda Road, Orinda
www.orindaschools.org

See also AUHSD meeting page A2

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

ORINDA POLICE

Police Report

A jewel of a heist, 12/8/2011 Perpetrators used a stone to smash a window and gain entry into a house on Oak Drive. The damage alone was estimated at \$700; missing items have not been tallied. Suspects fled in a White Ford Taurus. Police are coming up empty handed even after running the vehicle's address.

Trouble brewing, 12/11/2011 One young man found his stop at a local Starbucks cost him more than just a cuppa Joe. Police made a pedestrian stop and arrested him on an outstanding warrant. They took him to Ellis Juvenile Hall and informed the father of his son's arrest. No word whether Dad bailed or bawled junior out...

Door to door to deputy, 12/14/2011 Two women were cited for soliciting without a permit. One also had a warrant trailing her unsullied name. The pair was cited and released and their sales call paperwork confiscated.

Front door pick-me-up, 12/23/2011 One man and one woman were charged with petty theft when it was discovered they took packages from a Moraga Via doorstep. Police interceded as they drove away. Although claiming the packages were "purchased from the store," the pair could produce no receipts, and a field lineup ID'd them both. The man was driving on a suspended license and the woman was on probation. Both were taken to Martinez Detention Facility for booking. There was no stopping for other packages on front doorsteps on the way.

Under age and under the influence, 12/23/2011 An 18-year old male driver had an argument with a stationery fence, and lost. Could he have been influenced by the marijuana found in his car? He was transported to Contra Costa County Regional Medical Center, which, conveniently, is just minutes away from the Martinez Detention Facility.



Maureen Wilbur

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Orinda Residents to Answer the Call, Yet Again

Roads polling calls to begin shortly

By Laurie Snyder

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) will launch its fourth telephone survey of Orinda residents since 2006 within the next several weeks, said a representative of the firm during a special meeting held by the Orinda City Council on January 11.

The firm is being paid approximately \$16,350 from the City's general reserves to gauge the level of support by Orindans for a potential sales tax increase or bond measure that would raise funds in support of road and infrastructure repair. The poll will also assess residents' moods regarding the quality of City services provided to the community.

The potential sales tax increase would be one-half cent; the bond measure may ask to raise as much as \$20 million.

The City Council held the special meeting in order to review the proposed questions that will be used during the poll. Several Council members asked FM3 to make significant revisions in order to ensure that residents are not only asked for their feelings regarding the proposals, but are given information about the continuing deterioration of the City's drains and roads.

Council Member Sue Severson, who serves on the Council's Roads Subcommittee with Mayor Steve Glazer, observed that "There is no perfect vehicle to accomplish what we need, especially because the problem is so great."

Several community members also commented in writing in advance of the meeting and in person during the public forum portion of

the program also recommending changes to the questions, with one urging that residents be given a clear idea of how much a sales tax increase could bring in to City coffers.

Rather than trying to fund the entire \$60 million that has been estimated will be required to fix both Orinda's drains, which are reaching the end of their lifespan, and roads that need to be brought from poor to fair or good condition, City leaders are now looking at tackling the problem incrementally.

Council Member Victoria Smith urged that FM3 include in its polling an explanation to residents of what levels of repair can be achieved with the funds raised by the proposed measures. Vice Mayor Amy Worth also suggested replacing several of the questions about community serv-

ices with additional questions and information relating to the condition of the roads to get as much detailed feedback from residents as possible.

Orindans may also be asked about how frequently they use various communication tools that are available to them currently, or which may be made available in the future. This is being done, said City Manager Janet Keeter, to help City staff determine the most effective ways for staff to communicate with residents.

Four hundred residents will be called during the polling period. The callers have been instructed to identify themselves as representing "FM3, a public opinion research company."

The analysis will be presented by FM3 to the Council by early February.

Orinda Weighs Blight vs First Amendment

By Laurie Snyder

Signs – visual clutter or free speech? This question was on the minds of the Orinda Planning Commission recently as it discussed amending the City's Sign Code to ensure that area signage will not diminish the community's character – an issue made thornier since the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California (ACLU) advised City leaders in 2010 that their efforts to avert the proliferation of temporary signs were unconstitutional.

"To prevent visual clutter, the Ordinance No. 10-05 only permits one temporary sign on a residential property without a permit," accord-

ing to the detail-rich staff report available on the City's web site: www.ci.orinda.ca.us. This ordinance also "restricted the placement of temporary signs in the public right-of-way to Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday between the hours of 8:00 am and 6:00 pm and only in residential districts."

Those regulatory specifics, among others, did not sit well with several Orindans during the 2010 campaign season, prompting the ACLU to advise the City:

"This severe limitation on Orinda residents' right to engage in political speech violates the First Amendment. Speech through resi-

dential signs is a 'venerable means of communication ... the Supreme Court has accordingly afforded it a high level of First Amendment protection.' The ACLU also noted that "the court invalidated [a Virginia] ordinance that was in fact more permissive than Ordinance 10-5."

In response, the City Council directed staff to draft new regulations. Those were presented to the Planning Commission on January 10. The proposed ordinance would create a new one-day sign category and place temporary signs in a separate category including sandwich boards and other signs for political campaigns, garage sales, and real estate.

For temporary signs in the public right-of-way, reads the proposed ordinance, "any number of portable temporary signs can be posted at the eight key intersection [sic] designated by the City" – as long as those signs comply with 13 general restrictions relating to the signs' size, construction and design, and location. Content would not be regulated for non-commercial signs.

Planners were mindful of the need for businesses to advertise and expressed support for the free speech process, but were also concerned about the possible implications of Council's decision to allow the unlimited placement of signs in designated areas, citing not only the potential visual impact to public and private property but also the possibility that backers of a single political candidate or ballot initiative could actually hinder freedom of speech because they would be permitted to take over a public right-of-way to exclusively promote one candidate or issue.

The City Council will formally review the draft ordinance at its February 7 meeting.

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Rainy weather?

Getting ready for ski season?

Avoiding accidents?



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