



Orinda Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Wednesday, November 7, 7:00 pm
Tuesday, November 27, 7:00 pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

Tuesday, November 13, at 7:00 pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission

Wednesday, November 14, at 6:30 pm
Sarge Littlehale Community Room, 22
Orinda Way, Orinda

School Board Meeting

Orinda Union School District
Monday, December 10, 6:00 pm
OUSD Office

25 Orinda Way, Suite 200
www.orindaschools.org

See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Orinda:

www.cityoforinda.org
Phone (925) 253-4200

Chamber of Commerce:

www.orindachamber.org

The Orinda Association:

www.orindaassociation.org

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Old Yellow House Progresses through Historic Landmark Designation Process

By Laurie Snyder

The new owner of Orinda's Old Yellow House continues to clear hurdles in his bid to "preserve the historic character of the structure," confirmed Orinda Planning Director Emmanuel Ursu recently. Members of the City's Planning Commission unanimously agreed at their October 23 meeting to recommend that the Orinda City Council approve the application by James P. Wright to designate the building at 209 Moraga Way as a Historic Landmark.

Ursu noted that Orinda's Historical Landmarks Committee has also approved architect-owner Wright's request, adding that Wright has spent a significant amount of time researching the structure's history. According to the staff report for the Planning Commission's meeting, the home was built "in 1894 by Alexander Jenkins, a retired sea captain who sailed

with Samuel Merritt from the Bay Area to Alaska to collect ice for San Francisco residents," and later purchased by Moraga School Board Trustee Charles A. Nelson in 1918.

When Nelson's "family moved to Orinda to the historic 'old yellow house,'" reads Muir Sorrick's "The History of Orinda" – "Moraga Road was still an unpaved wagon road. Nelson often had to harness a team of horses at night to pull a stuck motorist out of the mud during the winter months, while the oldest Nelson boy held a lantern for his father." (Nelson's younger son, Ezra, shared his own recollections of growing up in the house in the June 6 edition of the Lamorinda Weekly.)

The staff report explains that the "structure is historically significant since it is largely preserved as originally built and remains one of the oldest ex-

isting homes in Orinda. The house will be repainted to reflect its original yellow color, which is thought to be the same color as the old railroad stations. The house was built near the graded track bed of the California and Nevada railroad and has doors and windows similar to those of the old railroad stations... The structure represents a unique visual feature of the neighborhood in that it is located adjacent to a major thoroughfare and serves as a visual reminder of the historical heritage of the City."

The Orinda City Council is likely to act on Wright's Landmark status request sometime in the next several months. For more about the project, check out Cathy Dausman's June 6 article, "Greening the (Pink) Old Yellow House" – available through the Lamorinda Weekly's online archives: www.lamorindaweekly.com/html2/archive.html.

Orinda Planning Commission Moves Adobe Project Forward

Orinda City Council to hear appeals November 27

By Laurie Snyder

Orinda's Planning Commission has unanimously approved plans to subdivide a 20.33 acre site into 13 lots. That site, commonly referred to as the J&J Ranch (Moraga Adobe) Project, will be graded to repair existing unstable soil conditions and to construct the subdivision. The plans also call for "the planting of native trees, in excess of the 29 replacement trees required by the OMC [Orinda Municipal Code], and rehabilitation of the historic Moraga Adobe."

Those final six words of that description – long-smoldering embers among Adobe fans and some

Orindans living near the historic site – have flared up yet again, fanned via recent appeals filed by Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe and a newer spin-off advocacy group, PAL (Protect Adobe Lane). As a result, the Orinda City Council has scheduled a public de novo hearing for November 27 to review the Project in its entirety, determine whether or not to allow it to move forward, and determine what modifications – if any – can and should be made to the plans.

The structure at the heart of the debate – the Moraga Adobe – is described in the action state-

ment as "a one-and-a-half story dwelling built by Joaquin Moraga, a member of one of the most influential and well-established families in pre-statehood California. The adobe walls of the building date back to 1841, but have been completely covered with stucco. Two rectangular additions dating from the 1940s have been attached to the rear (south) wall. Several structures occupy a portion of the site behind the Moraga Adobe, including adobe and concrete walls, a concrete pool, a large wooden barn (removed in 2009), a one-story house, and a small garage." ... continued on page A8

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ORINDA POLICE

Police Report

An illuminating conversation. 10/28/12 Orinda police pulled over a 20-year-old female driver for failing to have her license plate properly illuminated. After the stop, the officer realized her eyes of blue were redder than normal. The woman failed her field sobriety test; she was arrested and transported to Martinez Detention Facility for booking.

Unsafe at any turn, 10/26/12 A 45-year-old male was pulled over at Hwy 24 and Oak Hill for exhibiting unsafe turning. Turns out he carried an expired California driver's license, and failed a subsequent field sobriety test. He was taken to the nearest police station (Lafayette) where he registered .18 BAC. He was cited for driving on a suspended license, transported to Martinez Detention facility and booked. His vehicle was towed.

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