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Published 3/27/2013

## Next Move is ConFire's

By Nick Marnell

At a March 26 special meeting the Moraga-Orinda Fire District board of directors voted 3-2 in favor of continuing negotiations to purchase the property at 1035 Lorinda Lane in Lafayette, to be used as the site of a potential fire station 46. The fire station would be built as a joint venture with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District.

The district's \$15,000 deposit on the property was to become non-refundable March 28, but MOFD fire chief Randall Bradley told the board that the owners agreed to take \$7,500 on that date, with the balance due 30 days later. The district will have until May 25 to close on the property.

Bradley said that MOFD's first ownership option was to form a Joint Powers Authority with ConFire and have the JPA purchase the property, but ConFire chief Daryl Louder said that the negotiations between the MOFD and ConFire on the JPA agreement are still in progress.

The Orinda audience was far less contentious than at the March 20 public workshop, but the majority still spoke against the consolidation. Directors Alex Evans, Steve Anderson and John Wyro again voted in favor of moving forward with the plan, citing the district's long-term financial sustainability since the deal would save the MOFD about \$1 million annually. Board president Frank Sperling and director Fred Weil voted against.

"A JPA is not good. We'd only have 50 percent say so," said Sperling. "It's difficult for me to join up with a partner who is having financial difficulties," added Weil.

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