



# Orinda Civic News

## Public Meetings

### City Council

Thursday, May 30, 8:30 a.m.  
*Special Meeting*  
Community Room, City Hall  
Thursday, June 4, 7 p.m.  
Auditorium, Orinda Library,  
26 Orinda Way

### Planning Commission

Tuesday, May 28, 7 p.m.  
Auditorium, Orinda Library,  
26 Orinda Way

### Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission

Wednesday, June 12, 6:30 p.m.  
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,  
22 Orinda Way

### School Board Meeting

**Orinda Union School District**  
Monday, June 10, 6 p.m.  
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



**Orinda Police**  
Department crime statistics will be published as new monthly data becomes available. Look for the May compilation in our June 19 issue.

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## Plan Bay Area Riles Some Orinda Residents

By Laurie Snyder



Orinda residents and others from around the Bay Area continue to fill the Orinda Library Auditorium for the special city council meeting May 13. Photo Ohlen Alexander

A glossy flyer with an Association of Bay Area Governments logo alerted Orindans to a “town hall” at the Lafayette Veterans’ Memorial Building. Robocalls warned of “a plan to bring massive high density apartment complexes to downtown Orinda.” Neighbor to neighbor emails prophesied an Orinda forced to rezone large portions of the downtown area to low income housing, with retail on the ground floor in structures that could be up to 55 feet high.

After months of being on the receiving end of maddening missives, Orindans recently expressed fears to the Orinda City Council regarding the impact “Plan Bay Area” may have, and also demonstrated concern and confusion over the jumble of development-related state laws with which Californians must comply.

The simmering discontent began during the public forum of a more than four-hour-long council meeting May 7. Rusty Snow, of the citizens’ group Orinda Watch, and 13 others criticized Plan Bay Area and its draft Environmental Impact Report. Deanna Engl, Kathleen Jenkins, Bill Legler, Bruce London, Heather Pruett, and 2012 city council candidate Linda Dehunt were among those who commented.

Then, the kettle of concern boiled over at a specially scheduled council session a few days later. A lengthy report by Orinda Watch was directed to the council in advance, along with roughly 60 letters and emails—all are posted on the city’s website.

More than 100 Orindans attended the May 13 meeting – some came to support the plan, others to oppose it— but there were also non-Orindans such as Peter Singleton of Bay Area Citizens (bayareacitizens.com) and others with ties to the Citizens’ Alliance for Property Rights (proprights.com) and Save El Sobrante (saveelsobrante.com). Many – pro and against – opted for civil discourse; some listened only during presentations by like-minded speakers; several residents expressed discomfort at hoots, disruptive clapping and verbal attacks on city leaders, staff and even a Miramonte High School student who rose to speak.

### How Did We Get Here?

Since 1969, the State of California has mandated “that local governments adequately plan to meet the existing and projected housing needs of all economic

segments of the community.” Per the May 13 Orinda staff report, California “law acknowledges that, in order for the private market to adequately address housing needs and demand, local governments must adopt land use plans and regulatory systems which provide opportunities for, and do not unduly constrain, housing development.” Cities are also required, every five to eight years, to update their general plan housing elements. Each city must show “that there is adequate land zoned for residential development to meet [its] ‘fair share’ of the projected regional housing need,” and must submit its housing element to the California Department of Housing and Community Development to ensure compliance with the law. Although the city believes its housing element

complies with the requirements of the state law, Orinda has never received HCD certification.

### What Does This Have to Do with Plan Bay Area?

In 2008, the passage of California Senate Bill 375 mandated “development of a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) for all metropolitan regions in California.” Each region must “provide a new 25-year land use strategy ... that is realistic and identifies areas to accommodate all of the region’s population,” and must also “forecast a land use pattern ... integrated with the transportation system, reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from automobiles and light trucks,” which will be measured against the regional target for GHG emissions as established by the California Air Resources

Board.

In the Bay Area, the Association of Bay Area Governments and Metropolitan Transportation Commission “have joint responsibility for preparing the SCS, dubbed Plan Bay Area” because they are the state-designated regional authorities responsible for planning housing and transportation.

### How did Orinda Respond?

The city of Orinda, over the course of the review process, asked ABAG and MTC to change their plans. City letters date June 2011, January 2012 and September 2012 noted that Orinda’s 1987 General Plan projected 1,366 fewer housing units at build-out than ABAG-MTC estimates – and said Orinda’s “land use policies allow a maximum of 580 units in the downtown, not 1,498 as envisioned [by those agencies].” City leaders also advised ABAG-MTC that a “Transit Town Center PDA [Priority Development Area] designation was not appropriate for Orinda” because “the guidelines pertaining to the number of households, housing density, and commercial floor area ratio were too aggressive.”

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Visit the city’s website to sign up for email alerts about council meetings and newsletters for updates about planning, public safety and other important topics. While online, check out council meeting staff reports and minutes, and listen to the audio recordings of council meetings.

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