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Sinkhole repair should be complete by July

By Sora O'Doherty



Orinda is bringing in equipment to start the repairs to the Miner Road sinkhole. Photo Sora O'Doherty

and the noise problems associated chiefly with the dump trucks and their backup alarms.

Philip Chomak spoke to the council on the noise issue. While completely supporting the repair work, Chomak said that the noise of the backup alarms was particularly disturbing to the quiet neighborhood in which he lives. He had two suggestions: that the trucks

disable the alarms and rely on human spotters or that the trucks switch to the "white noise" system used in New York City.

This and the council were sympathetic, but This said he was afraid that relying on spotters would be costly and could lead to accidents. He also said that he didn't know that the white noise system was available currently, however, this might be a good option in the future. This also promised to try to keep the earth-moving activities away from the early morning or late night.

This also updated the community on the potential costs of the repair, which cannot be precisely known for two reasons: first, because it is unclear what issues might arise during the repair; and second, because it is as yet unknown how much of the repair work will be found to be reimbursable by federal agencies as "emergency opening" work, which is reimbursed at the rate of 88.5 percent and how much of the work will be considered unreimbursable "betterments." For example, the city is trying to save three trees on the country club property and one tree on the other side of the creek, which has resulted in additional costs being incurred. It is estimated that the total job will cost around \$2.9 million, which includes a 20 percent contingency provision. This thinks that the city's portion will be in the region of \$300,000 to \$500,000.

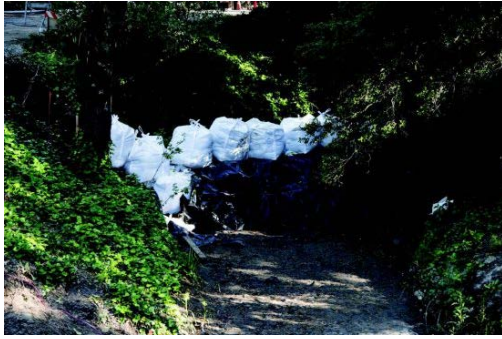
Other questions from the community included questions about the potential litigation by the three homeowners whose homes were flooded on Feb. 7. This answered that all three have filed claims against the city, and that the city is dealing with those claims now.

Neighbors also wanted to know when the repair would be complete and Miner Road reopened, and This replied that the city will reopen Miner Road the moment it is possible, and they may be able to reopen the road even before the work is totally completed, while decorative work on the headwalls and the mitigation planting is still being done.

Another question concerned the fate of another bridge on Miner Road, the one that crosses San Pablo Creek. This explained that that bridge has been scheduled for a seismic upgrade, but that the city is trying to change the scheduled work from a retrofit to a replacement. However, it cannot be done at the same time as the sinkhole repair, owing to the constraints of permitting and design.

Police Chief Mark Nagel said that there has been no major crime in the area but that officers are issuing tickets on the detour routes. He addressed a question about why the new stripping is broken rather than solid double yellow lines, explaining that the police want to encourage drivers to be able to go around obstructions on the road, but not to pass other vehicles.

This promised to keep the community updated on Orinda's new website, www.cityoforinda.org. He added that the city hopes to get some drone photos and time lapse photography of the repairs.



A temporary dam and the dewatered creek bed.

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[back](#)

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