



## Orinda

### Public Meetings

#### City Council

Tuesday, June 20, 6 p.m.  
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library  
26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

#### Planning Commission

Tuesday, June 27, 7 p.m.  
Special Joint Meeting with City Council  
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library  
26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

#### Citizens' Infrastructure

#### Oversight Commission

Wednesday, June 14, 6:30 p.m.  
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,  
22 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

#### School Board Meetings

Orinda Union School District  
Monday, June 19, 6 p.m.  
Regular Board Meeting  
8 Altarinda Rd., Orinda  
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



#### May 21 to June 3

<b>Alarms</b>	55
<b>Noise complaints</b>	3
<b>911 Calls (includes hang-ups)</b>	9
<b>Traffic stops</b>	45
<b>Suspicious Circumstances</b>	9
<b>Suspicious Subjects</b>	14
<b>Suspicious Vehicles</b>	13
<b>Accident</b>	
Camino Pablo/Brookwood (property) 100 block Crest View Dr.	
Library	
10 block Camino Sobrante	
<b>Animal cruelty</b>	
Reported to Orinda Fire Station	
<b>Barking Dog</b>	
200 block El Toyonal (2)	
<b>Burglary, Auto</b>	
10 block Theatre Square	
<b>Burglary, Residential</b>	
50 block Orchard Rd.	
10 block Casa Vieja	
300 block El Toyonal	
<b>Death, non-criminal</b>	
10 block Snow Ct.	
<b>Disturbance</b>	
Wilder/Rabble Rd	
Safeway (domestic)	
70 block Donald Dr.	
<b>Dispute</b>	
Orinda Theater	
Crest View Dr./Culver Ct.	
10 block Park Lane Dr.	
60 block Claremont Ave.	
<b>DUI</b>	
Oak Hill Rd./Mt Diablo Blvd.	
<b>Fraud</b>	
80 block Coral Dr. (2)	
<b>ID Theft</b>	
20 block Dolores Way	
Reported to police	
20 block Via Hermosa (2)	
10 block Alice Place	
<b>Loitering</b>	
90 block Davis Rd.	
<b>Medical</b>	
20 block Irwin Way	
Miner/Honey Hill Rd.	
100 block Stein Way	
<b>Panhandling</b>	
Bevmo	
Safeway	
<b>Possession stolen property</b>	
Starbucks	
<b>Public Nuisance</b>	
20 block Ardor Dr.	
Camino Pablo/BART	
<b>Reckless Driving</b>	
Orinda Intermediate School	
Camino Pablo/Claremont Ave.	
Moraga Way/El Corte	
San Pablo Dam Rd/Bear Creek	
Camino Pablo/Claremont Ave.	
Moraga Wy/El Camino Moraga	
<b>Shoplift</b>	
CVS	
20 block Orinda Way	
<b>Strongarm robbery</b>	
Camino Encinas/Moraga Way	
<b>Theft, Grand</b>	
Theatre Square	
<b>Theft, Petty</b>	
40 block Candle Terrace	
<b>Theft, Vehicle</b>	
Starbucks	

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## Bella Oaks: Orangetheory Fitness but no Chase Bank

By Sora O'Doherty



Bella Oaks site at 25A Orinda Way.

Orinda City Council members clearly grappled with their dreams of what Orinda might become as they agreed to a waiver allowing Orangetheory Fitness, an interval training, heartbeat-based fitness center, to anchor a corner of the proposed development at 25A Orinda Way to be known as Bella Oaks.

Developer Paul Ugenti needed the waiver because the gym is not a Category A use — not strictly falling within the category that includes restaurants and retail businesses that were originally planned for the development.

And despite the concern expressed by Mayor Eve Phillips, the rest of the council could not see their way clear to also approve a waiver for Chase Bank to occupy the other street front corner of the development.

Ugenti told the council that he has been trying for a year to pin down tenants for Bella Oaks, and is in talks with businesses such as Coffee Shop and Urban Remedy in Lafayette, and The Gastropig in Oakland, but cannot get them to agree to open in Orinda without the presence of the anchor tenants, Orangetheory and Chase Bank. With both Orangetheory and Chase,

Ugenti said, he would have leasing commitments equal to 90 percent of the building. After the waiver for Chase was denied, Ugenti said, “Despite this setback we will continue to work on our leasing agent in an attempt to replace Chase Bank as our anchor tenant. If we are unable to do so the future of the project is uncertain and our path unclear.”

There were several concerns with the two waiver requests expressed by both council members and members of the public. Loyal patrons of the neighboring In Forma Fitness, which occupies 23A Orinda Way, urged the city council not to allow Orangetheory to open right next door, fearing that the competition would put owner Andrea Columbu out of business. Columbu, owner since 1995, clearly inspires loyalty and affection in the patrons of his establishment, but other speakers urged the council to allow Orangetheory. Those speakers want something different and said that there is room for both gyms, which cater to quite different users.

The second waiver request presented an even greater challenge to the council, particularly because banks are not open evenings and



Orangetheory Fitness in Walnut Creek.

Photos Sora O'Doherty

Sundays, which, they felt, would not contribute to the vibrancy they seek for downtown Orinda. In the staff report and further comments, Orinda appears to suggest that Chase has expressed a “preference” for a ground floor location, which Ugenti believes is a misunderstanding of Chase’s position. Ugenti states that Chase does not want a second-floor location, an extremely rare location for banks. Chase Market Director of Real Estate Ronald J. Chester, urged the council to consider the fact that some 3,500 Chase customers from Orinda go to other Chase branches each month. Chester was clear that this figure represents Orindans who actually walk into a bank, not automatic teller machine users. Ugenti and Chester suggest that when a customer goes into a bank, they are more likely to combine that trip with other errands, such as getting dry cleaning done, or having coffee or lunch. Thus, they argue, even though the city does not derive sales tax from a bank, the presence of the bank should have a positive effect on city revenues.

The site of Bella Oaks was once a gas station, and has been vacant for decades. In 2014 Chase Bank applied for permission to build

and occupy a two story building, but later withdrew the application. After Bella Oaks was approved by the Planning Commission, they denied permission for the bank to be located on the ground floor, but suggested that it might go in on the second floor, adjacent to the parking lot, and approved spaces for two ATMs on the ground floor.

Council member Darlene Gee noted that she was very conflicted, but could not approve the bank waiver, and Vice Mayor Amy Worth agreed with council members Gee and Dean Orr.

Phillips said, “Chase may not be the most exciting tenant, but we have 3,500 users.” She said she was very concerned about the future of the project and wondered if this was the council’s last chance to make it more than an empty lot. If the project fails, she added, she thinks the people of Orinda are going to be really frustrated with the council.

Council member Orr was un-receptive to suggestions that the street front footage could be reduced, but left a small opening for the applicant to return with a plan for a first floor bank that was internal and did not front the street.

## School bus plan on hold, but routes still may be cut

By Sora O'Doherty

The Lamorinda School Bus Transportation Agency Board backed off its plan to immediately cancel the El Toyonal bus route and eliminate stops on some other Orinda school bus routes, but it appears to be a dim hope that the busses might operate the routes for the next school year.

At a meeting jam packed with upset parents and bus supporters, the LSBTA decided that more research was required, and tabled the matter until its next meeting

on July 13 — a date that upset many parents even more because it will cause their children to miss the Stingray Ball at Orinda Park Pool that same evening.

To make matters even worse, on June 5 there was another accident involving a school bus on El Toyonal. No children were present and little damage was sustained when a white pick-up truck sideswiped a school bus and failed to stop.

A steady stream of parents and children addressed the LSBTA board on June 8. Although Board President Don Tatzin urged the audience to withhold applause lest they discourage any speakers from voicing a contrary opinion, the applause was frequent and enthusiastic and all speakers seemed to be unanimous in their

opposition to the proposed route changes, especially the elimination of route 18, which serves El Toyonal, although other routes were also represented.

The parents begged the board to delay a decision on the bus routes until the end of the next school year, to allow for further research, but the board members expressed grave doubt that they could continue to allow the routes to be operated that have been deemed dangerous. The parents were also dismayed that the next meeting will occur when many affected families will be on their summer vacations.

The board and parents also heard from Orinda Director of Public Works Larry Theis, who explained some of the realities of dealing with Orinda’s narrow,

twisting roads. Theis talked about such issues as the possibility of removing double yellow road striping, and replacing it with another form of striping. He also addressed the issue of improvement to the roadway to increase the available width. As a capital improvement project such work would probably require a year to accomplish, from planning and city council approval through actual modifications of the roads.

One of the issues that was raised by the parents was that the striping was uneven on the section of El Toyonal involved in a 2014 bus accident: the lanes were unevenly divided so that the lane the bus was traveling in was only seven-and-a-half feet wide, while the other lane was over 11 feet wide. ... continued on next page

#### Traffic Collision

40 block Manzanita Safeway

#### Trespass

Orinda Country Club

20 block Heather Ln.

#### Unauthorized possession

10 block Theatre Square

#### Unwanted guest

10 Crest View Dr.

#### Warrant Service/Arrest/Advise

Safeway

Share your thoughts, insights and opinions with your community.

Send a letter to the editor: letters@lamorindaweekly.com