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## Still no construction activity at stations 43 and 16

By Nick Marnell



Two rebuilt Lamorinda fire stations are set to open in 2018, but both properties may be put into service later than originally planned.

Contra Costa County Fire Protection District Chief Jeff Carman has bemoaned the languid pace of the Lafayette Fire Station 16 construction at each district board meeting this spring. "Albeit slowly, we are making progress on that station," Carman told his directors June 13.

Deputy Fire Chief Lewis Broschard explained that because a fire station is an essential services facility, the building and design requirements are far more rigid than for a single-family home, and that adhering to those requirements lengthens the construction process.

Station 43: Nothing to see here.

Lafayette approved the fire station architecture in February. The application for a building permit followed, and LCA Architects of Walnut Creek put together the station construction drawings, including structural engineering, drainage and architectural plans, and ConFire submitted three sets of those drawings with its application to Lafayette in June. After favorable reviews by the city, the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District and, yes, the fire district, the county Building Inspection Department will issue the Station 16 building permit, expected by early September.

"It's a new building, on a challenging lot, and it's taking a bit longer to approve," said Chris Joram, Lafayette planning technician.

For now, ConFire continues its prequalification of contractors. "We want builders who have done a fire station in the past five to seven years," said Assistant Fire Chief Aaron McAlister, who has taken over as point-person for the district fire station projects. "They have to have experience dealing with government, and know how to deal with government."

Concord-based Pacific-Mountain Contractors of California, which recently built Fire Station 32 in Alamo and is rebuilding Fire Station 43 for the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, is expected to bid on Station 16. McAlister expressed no concern over one contractor working on two fire stations concurrently. "If a contractor can keep the same subcontractors in the same vicinity, that's a good thing," he said.

Once the district receives the building permit the Station 16 project will go out to bid. ConFire should award the contract in October, with the shovels to hit the ground on Nov. 1. "Our realistic opening date is November of 2018," McAlister said.

Meanwhile, work on MOFD Station 43 has hit a snag, possibly delaying a first quarter 2018 reopening.

"All permits are in place, but the district has not begun construction until it works out a few contract issues," Fire Chief Stephen Healy said. In May, the MOFD board refused to approve a \$100,000 contract increase requested for construction of the fire station, insisting that many of the extra charges incurred were not the responsibility of the district.

"Early 2018 is still possible, but it's becoming more challenging," the chief said.



Station 16: Awaiting the call. Photos Nick Marnell

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