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## Wilder Development Agreement Amendment approved by council, but not by residents By Sora O'Doherty

LEGEND 4' WIDE SIDEWALK 3' WIDE SIDEWALK ELIMINATED

parts of the development.

that was later changed to asphalt.

The builders, however, thought that Property Owner, LLC.

Site plan provided

ome Wilder residents were asphalt was not a good choice for Instracted by a change to the long-term maintenance and instead Wilder Development Agreement installed cement sidewalks on many that will, if finalized on March 20, streets, which was verbally apauthorize the developer to elimiproved by the city planning departnate planned walkways to offset ment. While the 3-foot sidewalks losses caused by the installation of comply with the federal Americans noncompliant sidewalks in other with Disabilities Act, they fail to meet the accessibility requirements Originally, pathways beside the of the California Building Code, so streets in Wilder were to be conthey must be removed and replaced with 4-foot wide sidewalks at the structed of decomposed granite, but

expense of the property owner, OG

Reached after the meeting, Bruce Yamamoto, Wilder project manager for OGLLC, estimated the costs involved to remove the constructed 3-foot sidewalks and replace them with 4-foot sidewalks at between \$160,000 to \$200,000. If you include necessary landscaping replacement, and construction of the 6-foot section on Wilder Road, overall costs rise to around \$700,000. To construct sidewalks on the streets proposed for sidewalk elimination would cost nearly an additional \$400,000 to \$500,000, Yamamoto estimated.

Since having no sidewalks does not violate either the CDC or the ADA and is consistent with Orinda's "semi-rural" character, eliminating further sidewalks was proposed, with the exception of a 6-foot wide sidewalk on Wilder Road, the subdivision's public collector street. Opinions from various groups were gathered prior to proposing the pathway or sidewalk elimination. According to Planning Director Drummond Buckley, the modified circulation plan has the support of the Wilder Homeowner's Association, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, the Orinda Po-

lice Department and the East Bay Regional Park District. Developer Scott Goldy agreed that everybody is concerned with safety, but stated that they sought a lot of advice that supported the proposed changes. The Planning Commission, however, split 2-2 on the sidewalk issue.

A number of current Wilder residents attended the Feb. 20 city council meeting to ask that the elimination of sidewalks not be approved, citing extra property taxes that residents pay, a hefty special assessment for amenities that other Orinda residents do not pay, safety concerns, and prior commitments made by the developer. Christophe and Sophie Davis, aged 9 and 7, appealed to the council to support sidewalks and their father Vincent felt compelled to speak up as well. Mark Bresnik said that he is a doctor of infectious diseases, and sees sidewalks as necessary measures to prevent accidents. He drew an analogy to seat belt laws: the risk of accidents may be low, but the degree of harm would be high. Bresnik and Madelyn Mallory also submitted extensive written comments in favor of sidewalks, as did other Wilder residents.

Explaining the rationale behind the sidewalk elimination proposal, Yamamoto said Wilder was always planned to be a semirural community under a dark sky ordinance, with no streetlights on the private roads, only at major intersections. Most of the streets for which sidewalk elimination is proposed are dead end culde-sacs, while most of the streets that lead down to Wilder Road are in the section that will have sidewalks. Further, he emphasized that few of the lots on the sidewalk-elimination streets have been sold, and that the vendors are engaging in full disclosure to potential buyers. Davidon only recently started selling homes, and have obtained signed disclosures from all their buyers. Taylor Morrison has thus far only sold on Wilder Road, which will have a sidewalk on one side.

Mayor Amy Worth voted against the DA amendment. Vice Mayor Inga Miller voted in favor, but strongly favored sidewalks. She noted that sidewalks were never planned for Wilder and that sidewalks are not consistent with Orinda's semi-rural environment, but added that "semi-rural is a thing of the past. ... continued on page A10

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