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A Republic Services truck picks up recyclables in a Lafayette neighborhood on April 13.

Photo Andy Scheck

Local recycling concerns mount

By Nick Marnell

China's March 1 decision to halt import of select categories of solid waste, including certain types of plastics, paper and textiles, has put pressure on the local recycling industry, as public officials look for ways to offset the loss of a large market for the recycle and reuse of disposable products.

Solid waste disposal in Lamorinda is managed by the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority, a joint powers authority operating as RecycleSmart. Its board of directors includes two representatives from each member agency – unincorporated Contra Costa County plus five county municipalities – with Lafayette Council Member

Mike Anderson the 2018 board chair. The authority contracts with Republic Services to collect recycled product from homes and businesses, and with Mt. Diablo Recycling to package the recycled product and sell or otherwise dispose of it.

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Orinda City Council expresses outrage about EBMUD soil removal project

By Sora O'Doherty



Map showing closed section of trails

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Orinda City Council members reacted with shock and anger when staff told them that the East Bay Municipal Utility District plans to move some 200,000 cubic yards of accumulated trench soil over Orinda roads and past Wagner Ranch Elementary School at the rate of 17 heavy trucks per hour in each direction from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. for seven months. Director of Public Works Larry Theis told the council that the city had received very little notice of the project, scheduled to begin April 16 and run through October. The route the trucks will take goes from Bear Creek Road, down Camino Pablo to Highway 24, and returning on the same roads. The excess soil will be transported to Oyster Point near the Oakland Airport. The project will also close some trails in Briones Regional Park.

Council Member Darlene Gee said she was frustrated and disheartened that EBMUD doesn't seem to feel the need to be a good community partner. Vice Mayor Inga Miller went further, labeling it "outrageous that barely six months after EBMUD came here to apologize for its poor communication skills in the Glorietta and Orchard Road incident," they are again failing to communicate with Orinda. She said it has now come to light that at that very time EBMUD had gone ahead and was secretly working on this project.

"It's a terrible travesty," Miller said, and not acceptable – 130 of the heavy trucks will be going past an elementary school, past the path where students are walking to school. The trucks will also damage some newly paved parts of Camino Pablo. This stated that each single truck trip has the equivalent impact as 8,000 passenger vehicle trips.

Mayor Amy Worth expressed her concern about EBMUD proceeding without sufficient notice, and announced that EBMUD would appear at the city council meeting on April 17, the day after the project is scheduled to begin, to respond to council questions. Perhaps owing to the lack of notice, no members of the public spoke to the plan at the April 10 City Council meeting.

Although the city only recently received notice of the EBMUD project, it has been in the planning stages since August, the same month as EBMUD's public apology to Orinda for the Orchard Road debacle (see the Aug. 23 Lamorinda Weekly article, "Orchard Road Detour Ends"), according to a letter to City Manager Steve Salomon from EBMUD's General Manager Alexander R. Coate. City staff have now filed a Public Records Act request with EBMUD. This stated that he thinks EBMUD has behaved "in bad faith."

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