



**Fire Districts**

**Public Meetings**

**Moraga-Orinda Fire District** Board of Directors  
Wednesday, July 18, 7 p.m.  
Go to the website for meeting location, times and agendas. Visit [www.mofd.org](http://www.mofd.org)

**ConFire** Board of Directors  
Tuesday, August 7, 1:30 p.m.  
Board Chamber room 107, Administration Building, 651 Pine St., Martinez  
For meeting times and agendas, visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

**Grass fire destroys 45 acres in Moraga**

By Nick Marnell



MOFD drone image

Photo courtesy MOFD

A three-alarm fire burned 45 acres of dense vegetation near Campolindo High School on July 2, forcing the temporary evacuation of 20 homes along

Buckingham Drive in Moraga. According to Moraga-Orinda Fire District spokesman Dennis Rein, crews from MOFD, the Contra Costa County Fire Pro-

tection District, the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District and Cal Fire contained the blaze by 6:30 p.m.

Because the emergency con-

ditions forced the closure of Moraga Road between Moraga and Lafayette, Rein said that PG&E halted its Lafayette pipeline replacement project and opened St. Mary's Road to through traffic.

"The responding crews contained the fire through aggressive direct attack and excellent cooperation from all agencies. The firefighters on the line did a great job of suppressing the fire despite the challenges presented by the terrain and steep slopes. This is a reminder of the need to mitigate fuels early in the season to minimize available fuels near our populated areas," said MOFD Fire Chief Dave Winnacker.

There were no injuries to residents or firefighters. Rein said that the fire was caused by equipment used to plow a fire break on a private road behind the homes. "If you must mow or cut weeds, do it in the morning when the ground is damp from the overnight dew," Rein said. "Don't do it in the afternoon when the fuels are the driest."

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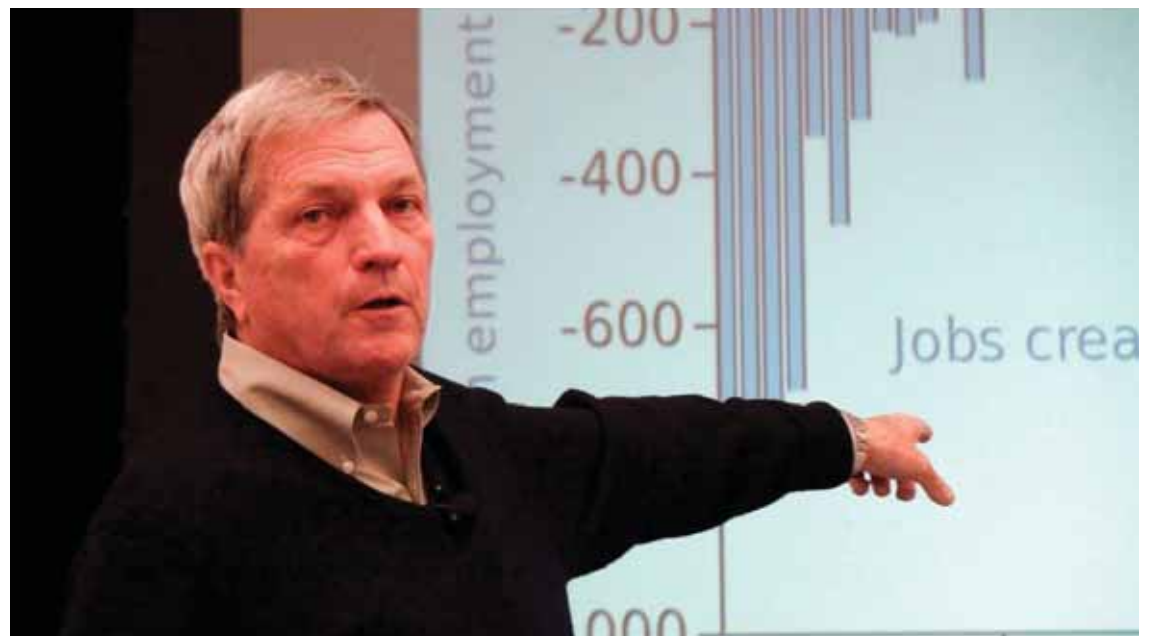


**DeSaulnier talks environment at Campolindo Town Hall**

By Sophie Braccini

It was hot in Moraga on the afternoon of July 2. A grass fire in the open space next to Moraga Road had seriously snarled traffic, but it was not enough to cancel Rep. Mark DeSaulnier's town hall at Campolindo High School – it was merely shifted by one hour, with residents from Lamorinda and beyond filling the high school cafeteria. The attendance was not as high as at previous meetings, which had seen overflowing crowds, the news of the fire and road closure likely deterring people not very familiar with the area from attending.

DeSaulnier, who represents



Congressman Mark DeSaulnier

Photo provided

California's 11th district, started by framing the topic of environmental protection, sharing his philosophy and highlighting his own achievements while in office at the state and national level.

He explained how he favors the establishment of urban growth boundaries to stimulate more dense housing toward town centers and transportation, and curtail the spread of single-family residences in open space. He also discussed industrial safety, noting how he had been working with refineries for the past 20 years to establish industrial safety ordinances that are now becoming the law of the land.

DeSaulnier shared his concern about the current administration unraveling years of environmental protection. Several questions from the audience asked how to get rid of the now former EPA chief, Scott Pruitt, who resigned on July 5. The

congressman noted how he is wary of the administration's attacks against the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act, which were, the congressman reminded the crowd, both signed by Richard Nixon.

"There was a time when you could be a Republican and be for environmental protection," he said. The Clean Air Act was based on a cost/benefit demonstration done by the state of California showing what it would cost to remove certain pollutants and the public health benefits that would result. The EPA would then confirm the state's findings and other states would follow. It included regulations to mandate more efficient cars, something that DeSaulnier says President Trump wants to deregulate.

DeSaulnier said that California has demonstrated how protecting the environment also stimulates the economy, and that

the current administration's policy will not only hurt the environment, but put the country behind in terms of innovation and future growth.

Audience members expressed concern about carbon pollution, renewable energy, endangered species, and exploitation of tar sand in the Bay Area.

Several in the audience had questions about what to do now, since the administration is overtly undermining previous environmental protections and California being at the forefront may not need extra local support. The congressman had only one answer: engagement and participation. He repeated several times that a democracy cannot function well if people do not vote and they should also be well informed.

"When the people are engaged then the country is saved," he concluded.

**CIOC unanimously approves motion to form private road task force**

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It was also agreed that although the meetings of the task force should be publicly noticed and must comply with certain legal requirements, such as the Brown Act, the task force should try for less formal meetings, and staff would not be required to attend except for "as needed." One of the most significant and new recommendations is that the city council fund a professional facilitator, which it was estimated might cost \$5,000 per meeting.

The complex discussion was then translated into the language of a motion, which passed unanimously and was to be presented to the city council at its July 10 meeting. The CIOC recommends that the Private Road Task Force shall consist of up to nine members:

three property owners on public roads; three property owners on private roads; two CIOC members; and one member of the city council. Alternatively if a smaller group of seven members is desired, that composition would include only two private and public road property owners.

It was recommended that the Private Road Task Force should meet a minimum of once a month at a publicly noticed meeting, including at least one public outreach or workshop-style meeting shortly after its formation.

The CIOC made a number of additional recommendations regarding what the task force should consider in developing its charter and scope of work, including identification of legal ramifications and

the precedence regarding the potential use of public funds to maintain private roads and consideration of the additional liability (financially and legally) of accepting private roads into the public road maintenance system. The CIOC concluded that the task force should also reevaluate the city's current private road acceptance policy and identify financing alternatives, including developing alternative processes for converting private roads to public roads, identifying financing requirements including cost sharing for accepting private roads, and considering financing alternatives to facilitate private road maintenance by the owners of those roads.

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