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## Wilder things: sidewalks, parking, and an easement

By Sora O'Doherty

Decades in the planning, the development at Wilder is finally coming to life, but it isn't without glitches, leaving residents frustrated and the Orinda City Council scrambling for fixes. At a well-attended April 23 city council meeting, the council dealt with three of the most pressing issues: access to the Art and Garden Center, parking enforcement and sidewalk completion.

The error that led to the Art and Garden Center being moved from a public street to a private street, with no provision made for public access to the rear of the building, is now being described as "an administrative oversight." The council corrected the situation by accepting the grant by the developer, OGLLC, of an easement over that portion of Bigleaf Road that leads from Wilder Road to Paintbrush Lane, which includes access to two mail kiosks and the rear entrance of the center. In return, the

city will contribute to the maintenance of the road, but the Wilder Homeowners Association will control the actual maintenance work. This led to protests from Wilder residents present, who argued that the city also needs to accept liability for the stretch of road. The easement will give the public access to the rear of the center, where a broad driveway will allow for dropping off supplies for events, as well as for disabled visitors who might have difficulty navigating the long ADA-compliant walkway up from the parking lot beside the play fields.

Currently there is approval for six parking spaces to the rear of the center, but the city also has plans for a larger, 26-space lot. Wilder residents have said that the presence of the six parking spaces will result in hundreds of cars driving up Bigleaf Road to see if they can nab one of the spaces. The city agreed to limit use of the spaces to events at the center and not for use by those using the play fields.

Residents described egregious driving and parking behavior around the play fields, including people parking in the spots allotted for Wilder residents to pick up their mail from the mail kiosk near Paintbrush Lane and sitting atop their vehicles to watch the game on play field four. Sometimes, according to residents, this involves a "tailgate" picnic, with trash being left behind.

Bruce Yamamoto, a representative of OGLLC and a member of the Wilder HOA, wrote to Director of Public Works and Engineering Larry Theis to ask for city help with the parking and traffic problems. His letter states that "the general public continues to create safety and traffic congestion issues by blocking traffic along Wilder Road as well as damaging adjacent landscaped areas." He added, "These issues were observed even when the designated public parking lot at Wilder Park was not full."

... continued on Page A13

## At last, redwood trees removed from Orinda mini park



Photo Sora O'Doherty

Workers remove redwood trees from beneath high voltage lines.

By Sora O'Doherty

A number of redwood trees that have been worrying PG&E owing to their placement directly under the high voltage power lines behind Theatre Square were removed during the week of April 15 by a crew from A Plus Tree. The trees had been slated for removal

for some time, and the city has plans to relandscape the mini park with plants that will present less of a fire danger.

Cesar Hernandez, A Plus Tree crew chief, said that in the past the company has been the subject of negative attention when removing trees,

... continued on Page A9

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