



Published May 1st, 2019

## 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, OG LLC, 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 OG LLC 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."

Extensive signage is being planned to clarify the parking situation, and the city agreed to provide robust parking enforcement, as Wilder residents complained about safety and convenience issues surrounding the play fields. Orinda plans to hire four new parking enforcement officers, who will focus largely on the play fields and Wilder Road, especially during evenings and weekends when parking in downtown Orinda is not restricted and the play fields are actively in use. The officers will have the authority to issue citations. In addition, according to city staff, bad behavior by teams who use the play fields can be addressed by better communication of the rules to the teams. Repeated infractions may lead to loss of privileges, according to Director of Parks and Recreation Todd Trimble.

The city council also finalized the extension of the subdivision improvement agreement for Wilder to Dec. 31, 2020. The main reason for the extension is to allow for the installation of sidewalks. The developer wishes to install the sidewalks as each home is finished, thereby avoiding damage to sidewalks during construction, and the city found that sufficient security exists to cover the installation of the sidewalks should the developer default.

In addition, there are several Wilder-related items on the new draft capital improvement plan for fiscal years 2019-23. These projects include a fix for the acoustic problem at the Art and Garden Center, estimated at about \$70,000, to be funded by the Wilder community maintenance endowment fund, park dedication fund and/or facility preservation fund. Another project to be funded by the Wilder community maintenance endowment fund is the replacement of the grass turf at Wilder field number three. The current fescue grass will be replaced with hardier Bermuda grass. An additional parking lot for the Art and Garden Center is added as an unfunded project. The project is not fully planned at this stage.

Reach the reporter at: [sora@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sora@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA