



ORINDA

See public meetings schedule on this pages and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Orinda:

www.cityoforinda.org
Phone (925) 253-4200

Chamber of Commerce:

www.orindachamber.org

The Orinda Association:

www.orindaassociation.org

City enters into controversial food truck agreement



Photo Sora O'Doherty

By Nick Marnell

The Orinda City Council May 21 approved a three-year contract with Martinez-based Taste of the World Market to provide vendors for the city's Thursday Night Food Truck Feast for a \$200 monthly concession fee, but the contract award was not

well received by members of the Orinda restaurant community.

Thomas D'Amato, president of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce, said that the Orinda agreement with TOW gives the company a competitive advantage over local restaurants. "Orinda restaur-

rants support the city of Orinda and our local community by paying taxes and rent and many hire locally, support Orinda schools and other non-profit organizations," D'Amato wrote in an email to the council.

The co-owner of Shelby's in Theatre Square agreed that the event harms his restaurant. "It's a significant hit to my business," Gregory Haynes said. "I may have to close my restaurant the nights of the food trucks."

"My occupancy costs at 2 Theatre Square in Orinda exceed \$200 daily," wrote Peter Eberle of Piccolo Napoli, unhappy with what he called an "absurdly low fee" being charged to TOW.

"There was never any intention to cause a negative impact to restaurants," said Vice Mayor Darlene Gee, and City Manager Steve Salomon explained that the city met three times with Orinda restaurants

to try to bring greater variety to the Thursday events, and to create positive programs with restaurants. "It didn't go anywhere," Salomon said.

As for restaurant participation, Haynes said that he could not afford to send his staff to the food truck events and also keep his restaurant open.

The council maintained that the focus of the Thursday events was not simply eating out but a community gathering, with Mayor Inga Miller insisting that the events were more about the Orinda community than they were about food.

Contract terms designate that TOW provide food trucks each Thursday from February through October and also for the Orinda Summer Concert Series each Tuesday from mid-June through mid-August. The events are held in the Orinda Community Park at 28 Orinda Way.

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What exactly is a shaded fuel break anyway?



Before and after photo



Photo courtesy Cal Fire

By Nick Marnell

Thanks to the initiative of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, a systematic study by the state fire agency and rapid action by the governor, work on the

North Orinda Shaded Fuel Break project will soon begin on the northern edges of Lamorinda.

But what is a shaded fuel break?

According to the California Department of Forestry and

Fire Protection, fuel breaks are wide strips of land where trees and vegetation have been reduced or removed. A shaded fuel break is constructed in a forest-type setting, not unlike the northern rim of the NOSFB project along Bear Creek Road and the Lafayette Ridge. As shown in the photos, the vegetation at ground level has been removed, and the tree canopy has been thinned, reducing the likelihood that a dangerous wildfire will head into an urban area.

At a May 22 public meeting in Orinda, MOFD Chief Dave Winnacker outlined the details of the fuel break project to about 50 attendees. The chief explained how hot, dry, north and northeast winds descend upon Lamorinda in the fall, bringing the potential of a serious wildfire as occurred in 1923 and in 1991 in the East Bay hills. The fuel break will reduce this threat to Lamorinda.

The idea to create the shaded fuel break was presented to Cal Fire by MOFD Battalion Chief Jerry Lee in November. The state fire agency expanded the breadth

of the proposal and presented it to Gov. Gavin Newsom in January, who expedited the project, along with 34 others in high-risk wildfire areas of California. MOFD, the de facto project manager, has partnered with various public agencies to complete the work that encompasses 14 miles of open space between Tilden Park and Acalanes High School.

Winnacker explained that the \$4 million, seven-month project will begin in mid-June, and Orinda residents should be prepared for smoke as prescribed burns of annual grasses get underway. Road closures may be necessary but major Lamorinda arteries should not be impacted.

Environmental issues were of concern to the public.

Though Newsom has exempted the project from state environmental regulations, Winnacker explained that federal and local regulations will be closely followed and monitored by a biologist and an archaeologist. Nesting birds will not be displaced. Even with all of the fuel removal, the natural appearance of the area will be preserved.

The chief stressed that the fuel break is only one part of a system to reduce the regional threat of a wildfire, and reminded homeowners about the critical need to create defensible space around their property. He also urged residents to sign up for the county Community Warning System, to schedule a date for the MOFD wood chipper to come to their neighborhood and to regularly check the Ready for Wildfire website.

Orinda Public Meetings



City Council

Tuesday, June 4, 7 p.m.
Regular Meeting
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way
Planning Commission
Tuesday, June 11, 7 p.m.
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way

Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission

Wednesday, June 12, 6:30 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room, 22 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

Orinda Union High School District Board Meetings

Monday, June 3, 6 p.m.
Regular Board Meeting
8 Altarinda Rd., Orinda www.orindaschools.org
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

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