

Orinda gears up for fire protection with new oversight commission, chipper and vehicle



Chipper – Manufacturer: Bandit Model: 15XP Drum Style Brush Bandit 139 hp engine

By Sora O'Doherty

At its first meeting on March 10, the newly formed Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission (SSTOC) – the successor to the very influential Citizens Infrastructure Oversight Commission, which was formed to oversee expenditures of the previously approved sales tax revenue and has now been disbanded – received and considered a report on the chipper program and the plan for the city of Orinda to purchase a chipper and a truck to tow it.

Although the recently passed sales tax increase in Orinda is a general tax, and therefore the city council is not obligated to spend it in

any particular way, the council is intent on keeping its promises made during the campaign, including making the first focus of spending the tax on increasing fire safety in Orinda – and it's the impetus behind the council agreeing on the rapid purchase of the truck and chipper.

The commission raised several questions regarding the efficacy of purchasing over renting equipment and whether the chipper selected would limit the city program to tree limbs of six-inches or less. Staff explained that the practical reasons for the limit include worker safety, the ability to efficiently remove debris, the ability to remove more fuel by including grasses and brush and the

potential reduction of services that could be provided if larger pieces of wood were to require more time, in addition to the benefit of maintaining consistency with the existing Moraga-Orinda Fire District chipper program.

The commissioners concluded that in view of the urgency of the upcoming fire season, there is a need to prioritize getting the program into operation rather than spending additional time on research. Staff reported that it may be appropriate to discuss the matter in the future when replacement equipment is required or when there is a program focused specifically on trees, as opposed to branches.

... continued on Page A10

Fuel abatement deadline looms for local property owners



Dead trees at 46 Cedar Terrace before ArborWorks Photos provided

By Jennifer Wake

When it comes to making the Lamorinda community safe from wildfires, especially after a dry winter, time is of the essence. But when dead trees, brush or grasses need removal from your property, time isn't always on your side.

For one Orinda property owner, time ran out on Sept. 17, 2020. The Moraga-Orinda Fire District board of directors held a public hearing

March 17 to address the costs incurred to remove dead trees at 46 Cedar Terrace. According to a report provided to the board by MOFD Fire Marshal Jeff Isaacs, "In accordance with the California Health and Safety Code, the Board of Directors must hold a public hearing to confirm the costs of abatement incurred by the Fire District in abating separate parcels of land. The purpose of the hearing is to review any objections from property owners legally responsible to be

assessed." The total cost of abatement was \$14,610 – \$4,870 of which was MOFD administrative costs.

The property owner, Jandali Nasser, and his son spoke during the March 17 MOFD board meeting via Zoom to ask for a reduction in the costs, and to explain their situation.

While the property owner had started the work to clear 12 dead trees on his property, the time it was taking and the debris it was generating became problematic. Nasser was sent an absentee landlord letter following an inspection on June 19, 2020 by MOFD Fuels Mitigation Manager Gordon Graham. After two more inspections in July, a public hearing was held July 15, 2020 due to failure to comply with the Notice to Abate order. During an inspection on Aug. 7, 2020, Graham noted that slight mitigation had been done, but there was still much to do.

Graham visited the property four more times before MOFD stepped in on Sept. 17, 2020, using a certified contractor, ArborWorks, which had the property cleared to fire code standards within two days.

Prior to that work being done, MOFD Fire Chief Dave Winnacker at the March 17 hearing noted that "dead trees were lining the road, logs were dropped down the hill and dead trees were on the ground," adding, "Folks doing the work did not appear to be contractors." According to Winnacker, more work needs to be done before the June mitigation deadline. "There are still dead trees on the property."

According to Isaacs, most



ArborWorks Completion

property owners don't realize that the fire code requires dead trees be removed.

"The Fire Code requires that dead, dying or diseased trees to be removed from all parcels," Isaacs said. "We recommend that property owners that are concerned or have questions about trees on their property speak with a certified arborist or Registered Professional Forester. Property owners are required to maintain their property year-round." The deadline for annual and seasonal grass is May 31.

"Homeowners will create defensible space around their home, but fail to maintain their entire property as required in the Fire Code," Isaacs said. "Parcels that are one acre and under require complete abatement of the

property, not just around the home."

While MOFD cannot recommend specific contractors, and cannot endorse them or imply approval of the quality of work performed, the MOFD website (mofd.org) does list five contractors who have contacted the district, including ArborWorks, Inc., East Bay Tree Service, Expert Tree Service, Firerready and Scott Carr. The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District website (cccfd.org) also lists potential contractors.

And while tree removal may not be as extensive for some as on the Orinda property, no matter what mitigation is required, the time to start is now. With the height of fire season just around the corner, the clock is ticking.

For information on Fuel Abatement requirements, visit: www.mofd.org/our-district/fuels-mitigation-fire-prevention/hazardous-wildfire-fuels-reduction-program (Lafayette residents, visit <https://www.cccfd.org/wildfireprep>) To see a list of contractors that have worked with MOFD, visit: www.mofd.org/home/showpublisheddocument?id=1454

Fire District Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District
Board of Directors
Wednesday, April 21, 6 p.m.
For meeting times and agendas, visit www.mofd.org

ConFire
Board of Directors
Tuesday, April 27, 1:00 p.m.
For meeting times and agendas, visit www.cccfd.org



Public Safety

Emergency response:
Emergency: 24 Hours 911
Police Dispatch: 24 Hours
925-284-5010
Nixle: Text your zip code to 888777 or go to www.nixle.com
Lafayette Police Department:
3471 Mt. Diablo Blvd. 925-283-3680
Chief of Police, Ben Alldritt
925-299-3221
Police Department Tip Line
94549Tip@gmail.com
Police Department Traffic Issues
94549Traffic@gmail.com
Moraga Police Department:
329 Rheem Blvd., 925-888-7055
Chief of Police, Jon King ext. 7049
Orinda Police Department:
22 Orinda Way 925-254-6820
Chief of Police, David M. Cook
925-254-6820
Orindatip@cityoforinda.org

Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report

March 7 - March 20
Alarms 32
911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 14
Traffic 41
Suspicious Circumstances 10
Suspicious Subject 13
Suspicious Vehicle 17
Service to Citizen 40
Patrol Req./Security Check 37
Public/School Assembly Check 1
Supplemental Report 18
Vacation House Check 3



Welfare Check 18
Ordinance Violation 2
Vehicle violations
Auto Burglary
1600 Block Springbrook Rd.
DUI Misd
Eb Sr 24 Oak Hill Rd Central Lafayette
Hit And Run Misdemeanor
3800 Block Quail Ridge Rd.
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
1200 Block Panorama Dr.
900 Block Dewing Ave.
Reckless Driving
Moraga Rd./Via Granada, Mor Happy Valley Rd./Deer Hill Rd.
Old Tunnel Rd./Pleasant Hill Rd.
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (3)
Pleasant Hill Rd./Eb Sr 24 Merriewood Dr./Indian Way
Tc - Property Damage
Moraga Rd./St Marys Rd.
Deer Hill Rd./Laurel Dr.
Acalanes Rd./El Nido Ranch Rd.
3800 Block Happy Valley Rd.
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Mt. Diablo Blvd./2Nd St Regio Ct./Ameno Dr.
Other criminal activity
Fraud Credit Card
3900 Block Cowan Rd.
Fraud False Pretenses
1000 Block Oak Hill Rd.
Grand Theft
3300 Block Woodview Dr.
Grand Theft From Veh
1St St./Deer Hill Rd.
Grand Theft Veh Parts
800 Block Revere Rd.
Identity Theft
Police Department
10 Block Diablo Oaks Way
Petty Theft
700 Block Moraga Rd.
3400 Block Moraga Blvd.
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
1100 Block Sierra Vista Way

Shoplift
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (4)
3200 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Nuisance to the Community
Disturbance-domestic
900 Block Paulson Ct.
1000 Block Carol Ln.
Disturbing The Peace
Old Tunnel Rd./El Curtola Blvd.
Loud Music
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Loud Noise
Dewing Ave./Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Public Nuisance
Los Palos Dr./Glenside Dr.
3400 Block School St.
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Vandalism
3300 Block Springhill Rd.
Other
Animal Cruelty
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Harassment
3300 Block Berta Ln.
3800 Block Los Arabis Dr.
Phone Harass
900 Block Dewing Ave.
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Threats
3100 Block Rohrer Dr.
Trespass
3800 Block Happy Valley Rd.
Trespass W/ Vehicle
Deer Hill Rd./Miller Dr.
Unwanted Guest
3200 Block Old Tunnel Rd.
Violation Custody Order
3200 Block Marlene Dr.
3900 Block Rancho Rd.

Moraga Police Department Incident Summary Report

March 9 - March 22
Alarms 14
911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 9
Traffic 30
Suspicious Circumstances 7
Suspicious Subject 3
Suspicious Vehicle 4
Service to Citizen 43
Patrol Req./Security Check 16
Supplemental Report 28
Vacation House Check 0
Welfare Check 7
Public/School Assembly Check 2
Vehicle violations
Accident Property
200 Block Willowbrook Ln.
Auto Burglary
1300 Block Camino Peral
20 Block Freitas Dr.
DUI Misd
Moraga Rd./Canyon Rd.
Excessive Speed
Moraga Way/Miramonte Dr.
St. Andrews Dr./Augusta Dr.
St. Marys Rd./Moraga Rd.
St. Andrews Dr./Moraga Way (2)
Moraga Way/School St.
Moraga Rd./Delores Ct.
Moraga Rd./Draeger Dr.
200 Block Rheem Blvd.
Moraga Rd./Alta Mesa Dr. (2)
Reckless Driving
Moraga Rd./Moraga Way
Campolindo Dr./Paseo Del Rio
Moraga Rd./Ascot Dr.
Moraga Rd./St. Marys Dr.
Tc - Property Damage
Moraga Way/School St.



Other criminal activity
Grand Theft
100 Block S Sandringham
Camino Pablo Rd. School
700 Block Camino Ricardo
Petty Theft
1900 Block Ascot Dr. (2)
10 Block Bal Tusrol
Camino Pablo Rd./School St.
Nuisance to the Community
Civil Disturbance
100 Block Shuey Dr.
Disturbing The Peace
20 Block Williams Dr.
Drunk In Public
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Lafayette Cir.
Loud Music
1400 Block Camino Peral
Loud Noise
Rimer Dr./Juniper Way
10 Block Southard Ct.
Loud Party
Ascot Dr./Moraga Rd.
Vandalism
1200 Block School St.
1100 Block Larch Ave.
1300 Block Camino Peral
Other
Mentally Ill Commit
70 Block Miramonte Dr.
400 Block Stonefield Pl.
Revoked License
Canyon Rd./Sanders Dr.
Trespass
10 Block Pimentel Ct.



Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report
will be back next time