



Published May 12th 2021

Letters to the editor

Dissolving MOFD and merging into the County Fire District proposal

At the request of MOFD Director Baitx, the MOFD Board on May 19th at 7 p.m. Zoom meeting will discuss the process for dissolving our local fire district and merging Moraga and Orinda into the County fire district (ConFire).

Merging MOFD into the county fire department is bad for Moraga and Orinda:

1. The Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) is one of the highest performing, top-ranked, efficient, effective and innovative fire districts in the State of California. This community cares deeply about its locally-controlled fire district.
2. Our fire district was established in 1997 to provide high quality paramedic and fire protection services to Orinda and Moraga that are tailored to local needs and that surpass the services provided elsewhere in the County.
3. Should our fire district dissolve and merge, the citizens of Orinda and Moraga will lose the following: Improved critical response times for paramedic and fire suppression services that are provided by our district; Local control over decisions about fire-fighting and paramedic service priorities and programs (for example, fire breaks, neighborhood chipping, and Firewise); The locally-elected, locally-focused MOFD Board, which would be replaced by the County Board of Supervisors that looks out for the County as a whole; The deep understanding that our local district has about fire and evacuation risk posed by our terrain, network of narrow roads, vegetation, and abundant open space; The local control over all tax dollars that currently fund our fire district; Extensive volunteer and community efforts (such as Firewise Councils, CERT, Rescue 1 Foundation) that support our local fire district; and Innovative and proactive approaches to fire protection, paramedic services, and emergency evacuation preparedness.
4. Much of our area has been designated by the State of California as a high fire hazard severity zone. It is therefore imperative that our community not lose its high-performing, nimble, well-funded, innovative, efficient, and locally-controlled fire district.
5. The public portion of the May 19th MOFD Board meeting (held using Zoom links available at www.mofd.org) where this will be discussed is scheduled for 7 p.m.

Sue Severson
Orinda

Proposed MOFD merger with ConFire

As a retired veteran firefighter from ConFire, I can assure you that giving up our invaluable local control of our great MOFD would be a huge mistake!

ConFire does a good job of Fire/Rescue/Medical issues, but it is totally subject to the whims and budget constraints of the county board of supes. They do not give a damn about our special needs and would close stations and reduce manpower as needed to balance the county budget! They have done this many times in years past!

We need to maintain local control of our specific safety and fire issues that our MOFD provides to our citizens. This year is probably going to be a critical fire year yet again, due to our ongoing drought and many dead trees and brush that have not been addressed by Orinda City, EBMUD, & PG&E! It makes no sense to drop our local control.

Who is behind this attempt to rob our citizens of local control?

Don Moresi
Orinda

Wagner Ranch Nature Area

What an extraordinary resource we have in Orinda - and it would not be possible without the dedication and determination of Toris Jaeger and the Friends of Wagner Ranch Nature Area. The OUSD almost closed the Nature Area some years back, but thanks to the resolve and talents of Reg and Kathy Barrett, Bill Hudson and Steve Gentry (to name a few long standing volunteers) WRNA was saved and flourished. Volunteers, including Jane Voll, Arman Marchiel and the BOD, have created an exceptional outdoor education experience for children, which shows the power of volunteers in a community. Importantly, their example has inspired young people to donate their time and energy to environmental projects as well. It takes a village and we applaud you.

Cinda MacKinnon
Orinda

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[back](#)

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