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Orinda agrees to accept Wilder Road as public road

By Sora O'Doherty



Wilder Road marked in green Image provided

In accordance with the development agreement for Wilder, the city of Orinda agreed to accept Wilder Road as a public road upon being requested to do so by the developer, OGLLC. The matter was removed from the city's consent calendar at its June 15 meeting in order to allow public comment and discussion of the matter. A dozen Orinda residents submitted written comments on the Wilder Road acceptance.

Since the early days of planning the development of Wilder, it has been envisioned that Wilder Road would be a public road. Originally it was to lead to the Art & Garden Center, but that was later moved closer to the front of the valley, near the Wilder play fields. However, it will still be used by the public to access the Red-Tailed Hawk Staging area, a public facility for accessing trails. Some Wilder residents expressed concern during the city council meeting on June 15 that making the road public

would increase security disruptions. Bob Finch wrote that the acceptance would afford 24/7 public access, even though neither the staging area nor the trails are yet in existence. Finch urged the city council to delay acceptance of the road.

Dave Korpi, who lives in the house closest to the staging area, both wrote and spoke at the meeting. He reviewed the types of unwanted activities he has experienced near his home, including bonfires, vandalism, drug use, and unauthorized camping. "I can't think of a single good reason anyone should be up there, out of sight, outside of the dawn to dusk hours," he said.

Council Member Darlene Gee asked if there were any up-to-the-minute reports on recent incidents. Orinda Police Chief David Cook said that in the past six months, excluding the play fields, there were two thefts from porches and no calls about the staging area. Bruce Yamamoto, a representative of OGLLC, explained that one reason for the turnover to the city is to allow the OPD to patrol. He added that the turnover has financial significance for the developer, who must maintain a sewer bond.

Eric Egan asked if the chain could be left up during constructions. Long term, he said, he wanted to remind the council that Director of Public Works Larry Theis and city staff had presented an option to gate the staging area, with the gate locked from sunset to sunrise.

Kori agreed that the chain has worked magic. "Cars come in at 2 or 3 in the morning," he said. "They see the chain and turn right around." City Manager David Biggs said that it is the plan to maintain the chain, and to also add signage. Deputy city attorney Fran Layton said that the design does include a gate, and that the East Bay Regional Park District has been involved in the decision. Theis said that the city can restrict parking during certain hours. Mayor Amy Worth added that the city will implement a gate to prevent entry to the emergency vehicle access and that the Moraga-Orinda Fire District will have access to the lock on the gate.

Council Member Nick Kosla suggested that it is time to revive the Wilder subcommittee, which has been dormant during the COVID-19 pandemic. The council voted unanimously to accept Wilder Road and directed the city clerk to work on scheduling a meeting of the Wilder subcommittee to work on an enforcement plan for Wilder Road.

At the same meeting, the city council also received the annual review of the Wilder project. Worth said she was so sad about the passing of Scott Goldie. She noted that Goldie had been instrumental in developing Wilder and recently was killed in a traffic accident. "This is a particularly tough time for all of you," she said. "Our hearts go out to you and his family and the whole community." In comments after the meeting, Yamamoto said that he had worked with Goldie since 1996 and that he will miss him greatly as both a mentor and a friend.

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[back](#)

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