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## Fly flags to show patriotism on Fourth

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The ordinance also authorizes the Sheriff's Office to issue citations for violations. Violators are subject to an initial fine of \$100. A second violation within one year is \$200, followed by a \$500 fine for each additional violation of the ordinance within that year.

Reports of fireworks-related fires in Contra Costa County have begun as early as May, when ConFire announced that investigators identified two juveniles who were believed responsible for throwing a tennis ball-sized exploding mortar from a vehicle that burned a quarter acre of vegetation near 321 Golf Club Road in Pleasant Hill in

the vicinity of parked cars, homes and Diablo Valley College. If not for observant witnesses, who notified authorities, the fire could easily have spread.

Another incident last month involved three teens who caused a two-alarm fire in Martinez by hitting a flaming tennis ball into a neighbor's yard resulting in a grass fire which burned a house, several vehicles and created a massive fireball causing high-transmission electrical lines to fail, disrupting service to nearly 8,700 customers. What residents mistook for fireworks was actually loud explosions that were caused by detonated propane tanks. However, that assumption

makes it clear that communities are on edge as the Fourth of July approaches.

Honoring the founding of the United States of America need not involve fireworks. Holidays such as Valentine's Day, Easter, Hanukkah and Christmas, to name a few, all manage to be celebrated without blowing something up. There is no shortage of red, white and blue bunting during this time of year; and expressions of patriotism should not put properties in danger.

To report any fireworks sales or criminal activity call the Arson Tip Line at 1-866-50-ARSON. Tips can be anonymous and are all treated confidentially.

## Orinda's PG&E transmission towers

... continued from Page A1

Kosla guessed that undergrounding the lines could cost Orinda a quarter of a billion dollars, which the city could never afford.

The cost to relocate the towers and lines would be lower, but the PG&E representatives said they could not estimate what those costs might be without further study. The cost of the study alone could be between \$35,000 and \$50,000.

The possibility of moving the towers from their present location to run alongside Camino Pablo, crossing over the Safeway parking lot, and

then continuing along Camino Sobrante was discussed. That plan would make about three acres of land available for development in the village. "Three acres isn't worth the numbers we are hearing," Kosla suggested. Council member Miller also questioned whether moving the lines over the Safeway parking lot might impede some future development there.

Very close to the end of the meeting, van Gorder tossed out an idea that Orinda would adore. PG&E, he said, has been working on rebuilding a number of very old towers. Some of their towers are 50, 60 or 70

years old. He promised to investigate the age and condition of the towers in Orinda. If PG&E was going to rebuild the towers anyway, he said, it might be an opportunity to relocate them at potentially very little or no cost to the city. In 2016, PG&E removed a number of 85-foot steel transmission towers and power lines located in Orinda near the following streets: Brookwood Road, Longridge Road, Oak Road, Stein Way, Lloyd Lane, Moraga Way, Sunrise Hill Road. Those towers were removed because they were no longer necessary.

## Principal movements in AUHSD

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"I'm excited about working with the younger population," said Parks, "and feel I can bring in the perspective of how the high school works to better prepare the students for the transition."

"I've loved every moment of my time at Miramonte working with all these amazing people," Parks added. At the same time however, she regrets leaving now and missing the opportunity to help rebuild the school after the changes brought about by the COVID pandemic. "It's particularly hard to separate after we've been through so much together."

Like Bell, she is proud of the intervention programs put in place designed to help all

students, including opening up the wellness center.

Nickerson praised Parks, saying, "I'm sure she will work with the staff to ensure all students achieve at high levels, have a sense of belonging, and have a positive experience."

After four years at Las Lomas, Benson was named director of Curriculum and Instruction for the Travis Unified School District. In a statement from her new employer she was recognized as "an experienced educator and administrator who has been working in Bay Area schools for the past 15 years. As a teacher, her focus on global education brought her to many different countries for both research and career, including China, Russia and Germany, and she brings that passion for broad perspectives to all of her

work."

Eric Shawn, most recently a house principal at James Logan High in Union City, has been named as the new principal at Acalanes. Nickerson called him "an accomplished school leader with qualities that are a great fit for the high school."

Replacing Benson at Las Lomas will be Sara Harris, who most recently worked as an associate principal at Miramonte since 2018. Harris is a Las Lomas grad and a former history teacher at Alhambra High.

Nickerson announced that the district will start the process to search for a new principal for Miramonte in the next few weeks, recruiting across the state and beyond, with input from teachers, staff, and parents.

## Orinda city council talks budget

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Before the proposed budget comes back to the city council for adoption, it is scheduled for further review by the SSTOC, the planning commission and the independent library parcel tax oversight and finance advisory committee.

The CIP is financed from a variety of funds. General fund contributions authorized by the city council are allocated to two funds, the capital fund and the road/drainage stabilization fund. City specific revenues are generated by local sales, parcel, or general taxes. Outside revenues include the return to source program of the countywide sales tax and gas taxes. Development impact fees are fees collected to mitigate for specific impacts. Additional funds are provided by grants.

The CIP included in the June 15 agenda contains details of all the proposed capital improvement projects, with photos. One project that was not included in the CIP but which the council was unanimous in wanting included was work on Brookwood, where work to lower fire danger resulted in unintended consequences, including reduced protection from vehicles coming off Highway 24. Staff will look at adding at least a placeholder before coming back to

the council.

A number of improvements are proposed for the community center, including replacing the roof, windows and vinyl flooring, replacing the sewer line, improving the HVAC, exterior painting, and improving accessibility for people with disabilities. Solar back-up power for the community center will cost \$365,701.

One major project is the city hall slide stabilization, which is estimated to cost \$885,000. Other city hall projects include installing a battery to keep the elevator running during power outages. City hall exterior painting is also on the list.

Plans to install a mini-split HVAC for the lower retail spaces of the Orinda Library, replace the old library boiler, and the library roof. One project that has generated some concern is the replacement of the library's exterior decorative tile fascia and accents. Several large sections of the tile have failed and detached from the building over the last decade, indicating improper installation. Other expenditures include addressing noise problems at the Art & Garden Center, a new roof at Wilder Ranch House, and replacing turf and extending the fence at Wilder Fields 1, 2 and 4.

In the category of long-term planning, \$532,360

is set aside for the Downtown Precise Plan and \$425,000 for the housing element update. Paving rehabilitation of the Camino Pablo pathway from Orinda Way to Monte Vista has been submitted through Congressman Mark DeSaulnier for federal funding at 80%. Total cost is estimated at \$660,000. The project is on the "top 10" for bikeways, trails and walkways.

The CIP also include replacement of a large number of high priority corroded storm drains. The priority drain projects are planned for 2024 and 2025 and are estimated to require nearly \$7 million. Staff are currently working on permitting and design issues for the drains using other funding sources.

Rankin explained the budget does not include any revenues from the Federal COVID-19 Response American Rescue Plan. The city will, however, receive \$4,766,723 in two payments this year and next year, and must obligate the funds by December 2024 and spend them by December 2026. There are restrictive uses and qualifications for allowed expenditures. The city manager and staff will develop information and propose funding adjustments in the next two months.