



See public meetings schedule on this pages and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements
City of Orinda:
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Chamber of Commerce:
 www.orindachamber.org
The Orinda Association:
 www.orindaassociation.org

Orinda gets new chipper, funded by Measure R, into service for fire season

By Sora O'Doherty

When Orinda residents voted to tax themselves with Measure R, they were expressing their huge concerns with fire safety. In response to that concern, the Orinda City Council has adopted a number of actions aimed directly at reducing the risk of dam-

age from wildfires in Orinda. Among those was the purchase of a chipper machine and a truck to transport it for use by Orinda residents only. The program supplements the Moraga-Orinda Fire District chipper program, but does not replace MOFD services for Orinda. Although the MOFD chipper program is

currently on hiatus until the fall, the Orinda program will run year-round.

In addition to availing of the city-provided chipper, some Orinda residents are employing private companies to help them get their properties fire-season ready. While the city program will not take down trees or clear

brush, and is limited in the size of the branches or trunks that can be disposed of, professional tree companies can perform both the work of the actually clearing and trimming of trees and can handle larger pieces of wood. Private services can also be seen around Orinda clearing brush and trees.

Appointments for the new Orinda dedicated chipper operating throughout the year can be scheduled with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District by using the link below:
https://link.edgepilot.com/s/b0071155/kMamvpm3EkOibUkfH_ziXg?u=https://www.mofd.org/our-district/fuels-mitigation-fire-prevention/hazardous-wildfire-fuels-reduction-program/wood-chipper-program

Orinda Public Meetings
City Council
Regular Meeting:
 Tuesday, July 20, 7 p.m.
 By Teleconference Only
Planning Commission
 Tuesday, July 13, 7 p.m.
 By Teleconference Only
Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission
 Wednesday, July 14, 6:30 p.m.
 By Teleconference Only

Friends succeed in raising more than \$500K; purchase of Moraga Adobe assured



By Sora O'Doherty

The Friends of the Moraga Adobe have raised more than enough funds to meet the \$500,000 price to purchase the adobe. The Friends will take title to the building, restored by developer J&J Ranch in September and will continue fundraising with a goal of funding a half-million-dollar annuity to provide for running the adobe as a public museum and learning center.

According to the Friends, this is a huge milestone that means the Adobe will be saved for future generations to enjoy. The developers are currently rehabilitating the Adobe to its 1848 configuration which includes the original two rooms plus three additional bedrooms. After the building's rehabilitation is complete FJMA will own the Adobe and surrounding 2-plus acres and will work on opening it to the public.

President of the FJMA Kent Long said that the announcement was "welcome news that we have been waiting a decade to see." In its newsletter to the community, the Friends noted that they could not have done it without strong community support. In particular, the Moraga Historical Society was one of the first organizations to come forward, pledging to raise \$100,000 toward the purchase, an ambitious goal which they recently met. Other community groups including the Orinda Community Foundation, Orinda Historical Society, Orinda Parks & Recreation Foundation, Orinda Woman's Club, and the Miramonte Latin Club have all donated to help make this possible.

The Friends are currently finalizing categories in which to honor donors. Bricks that will be used to construct walkways around the facility can be purchased and will bear the name and message of the donor.

In other FJMA news, the

group elected a new slate of officers, with Kent Long remaining as president, Tania DeGroot as vice president and Jeff Boreo as secretary. Former treasurer Bob Thompson has moved to Tennessee, but will continue to back up new treasurer, Margaret Beck. Beck first joined FJMA as a volunteer in 2019, inspired by her love of history, architecture and her own family legacy of adobe preservation. Her mother grew up in the Customs House in Yuma, the oldest adobe building in Arizona – and thanks to her grandmother and the local ladies' Assistance League, that building was restored and turned into a museum. The group also adopted a proclamation honoring architect James Wright, who retired from the board. The FJMA recognized his work on gathering the history of the adobe, offering his home for a fundraising fandango before the COVID-19 pandemic, and creating a 3D model of the building.

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25A Orinda Way about to break ground and, unfortunately, a newly repaved street

By Sora O'Doherty

Just as the Orinda City Council was about to approve a contract for the repaving of the entire length of Orinda Way, the developer of 25A Orinda Way announced that they are about to break ground on the project. Developer Paul Ugenti won approval from the council in June of 2020 for The Station, a mixed-use develop-



Lamo archive

ment combining office space with retail and restaurants, as well as some community amenities; it will be the first major development in downtown Orinda since Theatre Square in 1989.

Public Works Director Larry Theis pulled the repaving contract from the city's consent calendar because he wanted to avoid the surprise to the council or the public that might occur if they observed the street being repaved, and then quickly cut into by the developer. "It's not ideal," Theis agreed, but he explained to the council how the repaving project was being largely funded through federal grants, and how the contract offered an excellent price that the city might not be able to match if the repaving were delayed. However, he explained to the council that after repaving, the street would be subject to a moratorium that requires much more extensive restoration when a street is cut into within five years of repaving.

Council Member Inga Miller wondered if the federal funds could be redirected to another shovel-ready project, but Theis said the funds were not easily transferable. He advised against delaying the

repaving of Orinda Way because it is unknown how long the construction at 25A will take and also because it will only affect a small portion of the repaved roadway.

Other considerations include that the developer will need to place a crane on the street, and there will be dump trucks removing earth that will be excavated from the site traveling on the newly paved road as well. It is possible that instead of totally closing one traffic lane, it could be rerouted through the parking lot in front of the Orinda Community Center. Vice Mayor Dennis Fay suggested that they might be able to locate the crane in the parking lot behind 25A, but Theis said that there were other issues, including the placement of a

construction trailer. The work could take as long as one year and, he added, the developer has been trying to work with the neighbors, but it hasn't gone well.

Mayor Amy Worth expressed concern about the damage to the newly repaved road caused by the crane and the trucks. Theis said that in terms of possible reimbursement for damage to the road, it will be easier to point to the damage if the road has just been repaved. The repaving is scheduled to start in early August.

New city manager David Biggs said that the good news is that there are two good news stories, the repaving of Orinda Way and the long-anticipated development arriving in downtown Orinda.

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