



Published February 2nd, 2022

## Private security works in Wilder, but dumping continues on Highway 24

By Sora O'Doherty

Wilder subcommittee members Nick Kosla and Amy Worth heard updates on issues of concern to Wilder residents on Jan. 24. Crime, fortunately, has dropped in priority, owing largely to two things: the employment of private security guards from Intervention Group Security and the chain closing off the road to the yet-to-be completed Red Hawk Staging Area at the far end of Wilder Road.

Bruce Yamamoto, representing Wilder Developer Brook Street, spoke to the subcommittee about progress in turning over the remaining property to the city of Orinda. "We're in a little bit of a holding pattern," he said, because of the weather. Heavy rains caused some damage to trails and fire roads. After things are repaired and settled, some land will be finally conveyed to the Wilder Owners Association, the city of Orinda, the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD), the East Bay Regional Parks (EBRP), and the Orinda Geologic Hazard Abatement District (GHAD).

In addition, there has been a hold-up because a new employee of the parks district has requested that the trail T28 be rerouted to bypass some significant geological formations. The new routing, Yamamoto said, is extremely difficult, requiring the clearing of very heavy brush on a very, very steep slope. "We have walked the trail six or seven times," he said, but it is almost impossible to build a trail there.

Worth wondered if the formation is serpentine rock, which happens to be the state rock of California. "In my experience," she said, "people who hike that trail are very respectful." Yamamoto added that even if the trail were rerouted, people tend to find the path of least resistance. He suggested that perhaps the problem could be resolved by the addition of educational signage. He also told the subcommittee that the developer OGLI would not like to turn over the staging area until the trail is finalized.

One of the most significant issues for Wilder now is their concern about construction materials being dumped along Highway 24 near the entrance to Wilder. Worth reported that she has been in contact with Caltrans about the issue, and, after the subcommittee meeting, she told Lamorinda Weekly that she has had further contact with Caltrans, who has promised to remove the existing debris and work with the city toward a long-term solution to the problem.

Worth said that she has gone out and examined the debris, and identified it as clearly coming from road construction work, as it includes both cement and asphalt. She pointed out that Orinda uses full depth reclamation, wherein the existing road materials are ground up on site and used as the foundation of the new road. However, Worth noted that, although the problem of illegal dumping is relatively new to Orinda, it has been a significant problem in the Bay Area and California for years. In 2004, the Contra Costa County board of supervisors tried to address the problem with legislation and funding. The dumping of construction debris in Orinda is definitely a new development, and Worth stressed that it is an illegal activity.

On another subject, Yamamoto said that the Wilders Owners Association has requested that bollards be placed at the very bottom of the Emergency Vehicle Access road. The application for the bollards was just approved before the meeting, Yamamoto said, and construction was to begin the next week.

Wilder resident Robert Finch had questions about the staging area: Who will be responsible for security, especially in the evening? City Manager David Biggs explained that the EBRPD will be in charge of park security, although who will be responsible for locking the chain over the access road when the staging area closes has yet to be determined. He noted that most parks are open 5 a.m. to 10 p.m., but Orinda and the Wilder residents prefer dawn to dusk hours. EBRPD has a new general manager, and Biggs thought it would be good to let her settle into the job before pressing too hard about the hours of a facility that is not yet finished or open. Generally, security is shared between the parks and the city.

Biggs also mentioned that the city is trying to hire another part-time parking enforcement officer, but, like other cities, Orinda is having a hard time hiring because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, also owing to the pandemic, Orinda's existing parking enforcement officer has deferred his going into the military for some time.

Following a report by Police Chief Ryan Sullivan, Finch responded that while he was pleased to hear about the low level of criminal activity in Wilder, that might be attributable to the fact that Wilder now employs private security. During December, he reported, Intervention Group Security stopped 20 suspicious vehicles during the middle of the night and directed them to leave the area. Lynn Trowbridge, another Wilder resident, explained that Wilder has a neighborhood program in place with block captains, radio contact through the Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT) and other precautions. It was suggested that it would be beneficial if IGS reported on a regular basis to the Orinda Police Department, which would like to work together with the existing neighborhood program. A new OPD officer has just been designated as a neighborhood watch coordinator and he will work with the various neighborhoods in Orinda.

Reach the reporter at: [sora@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sora@lamorindaweekly.com)

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