



See public meetings schedule on this page and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements
City of Orinda:
 www.cityoforinda.org
 Phone (925) 253-4200
Chamber of Commerce:
 www.orindachamber.org
The Orinda Association:
 www.orindaassociation.org

City Council Regular Meeting:
 Tuesday, May 17, 7 p.m.
 By Teleconference Only
Planning Commission
 Tuesday, May 24, 7 p.m.
 By Teleconference Only
Traffic Safety Advisory Committee Regular Meeting
 Monday, May 16, 7 p.m.
 By Teleconference Only

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Capital Improvements and a new Director of Public Works for Orinda

By Sora O'Doherty

Orinda's Department of Public Works and Engineering Services submitted to the city council its annual update of the Capital Improvement Plan on May 3. The council took the opportunity to welcome Senior Engineer Scott Christie as Public Works Director. Annually, the CIP comes before the council on three occasions. At the first meeting, staff seeks the council's feedback and guidance. The second meeting takes a deeper dive into fund balances and scheduling. The CIP then goes to the planning commission, returning to the city council for approval.

At this point, Christie said, the budget is really only an estimate, as the rising price of

crude oil will affect the cost of asphalt. Although Orinda's roads are now much improved, Christie said that it is still necessary to make progress under Measure R. The second priority for the department is the city's drainage system, and the storm drain repair plan.

Christie informed the council of an unexpected problem that has arisen, damage in a large concrete culvert from the Safeway parking lot down to Orinda Way, which is partially in the city's right of way along Camino Pablo. Repair will be a multi-year project and is estimated to cost \$5 million. Currently, the design effort is underway. The project will include soil boring work and testing. The department hopes to find out how erosive type damage that has

occurred since the 1950s might be prevented in the future.

Council Member Amy Worth expressed a desire to bring forward the proposed Moraga Way crosswalk to facilitate safe passage for children getting on and off school buses. She also thanked Christie for teeing up projects for grants.

Mayor Dennis Fay was satisfied with the CIP. "I think it is a very good program," he said, noting that he was really happy to see LED lights in there. "It doesn't take much time to convert lighting fixtures to LED," he added, "and it is a very good thing to do that is also good for the environment." LED retrofits are proposed for the tennis courts and Wilder Fields No. 1 and 2. The mayor asked that as a

general rule, the city consider climate change in CIP projects. For example, he said, Orinda's vehicle fleet will contain more electric vehicles over time. Speaking of vehicles reminded the mayor of one of his pet peeves: Parked police vehicles left running just to keep the computer running. "I don't know if we can fit it into the budget," he said, "but can we look at that carefully?" He suggested that perhaps an uninterruptible power system might be possible.

During the discussion, the council also heard about a small sinkhole that developed at the intersection of El Toyonal and Camino Pablo. The council heard how city staff jumped right on it and got it fixed right away before it could become a larger problem.

Orinda bans sale of vaping and flavored tobacco products, no exception for hookah use

By Sora O'Doherty

The Orinda City Council moved to ban the sale of flavored tobacco products within the city, as well as all vaping products, at its May 3 meeting. The ordinance will not affect the use of such products, as it is limited to sales only.

As introduced, the ordinance would have become effective 120 days after passage. In public comments, Jamie Rojas of a national tobacco trade group asked the council to table the ordinance, and instead allow Orinda voters to express their views concerning a statewide ban, which is on the ballot for the California general election in November. He also argued that bans on flavored tobacco products have been shown to not work, but rather to switch users to

unflavored products. Education and outreach, he said, do work.

Thomas Lawton, the government affairs representative for Hookah manufacturer Fumari and a member of the National Hookah Community Association, asked the council to exempt flavored tobacco products for use in hookahs. Although, he said, "we strongly support this council's goals of ending teen nicotine addiction and protecting minority communities," youth use of hookah is only 0.8% nationally. He said that there is a rich cultural tradition of hookah, and that tobacco products for use in hookahs are traditionally flavored with molasses or honey.

Yete McMahon, Contra Costa County Senior Health Education Specialist, urged the city to ban the use of flavored tobacco products for hookahs. "Given the health risk of hookah," he said, "we know that culturally it is part of some cultures but it is increasingly common in the

general population." He added that "to excuse hookah use could increase health inequality." He informed the council that bans in unincorporated Contra Costa County, San Pablo, Antioch, Dublin, Livermore, and other areas have not excluded hookah, even in cities with hookah lounges within the city. He also offered the county's assistance: "We are available to assist. The County's regulation is comprehensive. County is a resource for you."


The council rejected both the requests to await state action and to exempt products for hookah use. In fact, they eliminated the additional time proposed for retailers to dispose of their current inventory, opting to make the ban effective as soon as allowed by state law, which is 30 days after the date of adoption, eliminating the 90-day grace period that had been proposed.

The council expressed their concerns for Orinda retailers, but agreed that this

ban would not be a burden on them. City Manager David Biggs responded to a council question about which retailers will be affected. He noted that CVS Pharmacy does not sell any tobacco products, so the ban will only affect Safeway and two convenience stores associated with gas stations. Rite Aid Pharmacy in Orinda does sell tobacco products, but does not sell any flavored tobacco products or vaping supplies. Council Member Amy Worth noted that Rite Aid also intends to phase out all tobacco sales.

Council Member Nick Kosla pointed out that Del Rey Elementary School, Orinda Intermediate School and Miramonte High School are close to the border of Moraga, which does not have a ban on flavored tobacco products, although Lafayette does. Council Member Amy Worth suggested that this would be a good topic for Biggs to bring up with the Moraga Town Manager, and the council requested that he do so.

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Overhill Road closed through December for EBMUD pipeline work

By Sora O'Doherty

Overhill Road in Orinda will be completely closed between the hours of 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. through Dec. 30 weekdays to

allow the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) to construct a pipeline replacement project that will upgrade 6,000 linear feet of existing pipeline to improve residential service in the area, fire flows, and service reliability and redundancy during outages.

The temporary full road closure will affect that portion of Overhill Road between Moraga Way and Hillcrest

Drive. Portions of Overhill Court, and Tara Road will also be closed to through traffic during construction. Residents located in the vicinity of the proposed road closure will need to detour using Tara Road to Moraga Way. EBMUD has begun informing local Overhill Road residents via mailed letters of the proposed work and associated road closures.

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OUSD honors teachers and staff in May

By Sora O'Doherty

Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic presented teachers with challenges never previously experienced in schools, the Orinda Union School District board of trustees resolved to proclaim May 11 as the California day of the teacher. In its resolution adopted on April 20, the board recognized teachers for their innovation and creativity, for giving of their time far beyond the school day to prepare outstanding lessons, collaborate with colleagues, assess student work and provide feedback to students, as they provide encouragement, support, and care. The resolution states that "our teachers have helped to produce

the thinkers, scientists, artists, inventors, technicians and engineers who have led our state to become one of the largest economies in the world."

The theme of the 40th annual California Day of the Teacher is "California educators: at the heart of communities, powering our future."

The board also proclaimed May 15 through 21 as classified school employee week, in recognition of the vital role of classified school employees in ensuring the well-being of the district and its students. The resolution provides that the board encourages activities to recognize and honor classified employees during the designated week and throughout the school year.

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