



See public meetings schedule on these pages 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 21, 7 p.m.
 Orinda Library Auditorium
Planning Commission
 Wednesday, May 29, 7 p.m.
 Orinda Library Auditorium
Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission
 Wednesday, May 8, 6:30 p.m.
 Sarge Littlehale Community Room, 22 Orinda Way

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Orinda Council updated on Miner Road contraflow exercise

By Sora O'Doherty

On April 30, the Orinda City Council received an update on the contraflow traffic system on Miner Road, including an exercise conducted in December of last year. The exercise showed that some people were not deterred by signs from turning against the flow of traffic when the contraflow was in force. City Manager David Biggs, who is also the Emergency Management Director, concluded that more education is necessary to get people to realize what the contraflow system is and how it works, as well as deploying staff to manage the intersections along Miner Road to prevent anyone from turning in the wrong direction. The idea for such con-

traflow systems arose from the tragic fate of places like Paradise where many people died trying to get out of the way of a raging wildfire where there was only a single road leading to the place. Miner Road is an arterial route in Orinda which is also deemed an evacuation route. On Dec. 2, the city conducted an exercise intended to see how quickly the one way system could be set up and how successful it might be. According to the update to the council, the results were mixed. The most successful aspect of the exercise was deploying a trailer that had been stocked with all the necessary signage for the counterflow. As a result, set up was quickly, taking only 15 minutes to place signs at all intersections along Miner Road from Lombardy Lane to Camino Pablo. Once the signage was in place, the exercise lasted for 45 minutes.

Unfortunately, the exercise did not prove to be 100% successful, with some residents turning the wrong way onto Miner Road, despite the signs. Council member Janet Riley wondered if the language on the signs, which read, "Reverse lane in effect when indicated," and "Reverse lane in effect," with a no turn arrow, might not have communicated clearly to drivers. She strongly suggested that more forceful language is required, such as "Danger, Keep Out!" or something like that. The danger is that, in the event of an actual evacuation, if one car turns the wrong way it would most likely lead to an accident that would severely impact the flow of cars using the evacuation route, perhaps affecting thousands of people. When the signs were placed in the middle of a road, they failed to stop drivers from turning in either direction. City Manager David Biggs

opined that the only effective way to prevent people from turning onto Miner Road in opposition to the one-way flow of evacuation traffic was to have a person, be it a staff member or a member of Orinda Police Department, standing in the intersection to direct traffic. Biggs confirmed that when called upon to return to Orinda in the event of an emergency, most staff could make it back within a half an hour. In the event of a fire, Biggs stated, the city would call staff back to the city, as well as getting mutual aid from neighboring areas. Council Member Inga Miller, who participated in the December exercise, agreed that only staff can control drivers from turning the wrong way onto Miner Road when contraflow is in effect. The permanent signs are solar powered and are checked monthly by city staff to make sure that they do work.

Makers' Market held at Theatre Square

By Sora O'Doherty



Makers' Market, Theatre Square, Friday May 3.



James Duff and City Manager David Biggs

Taylor Marlatte of Bay Area Makers Markets joined forces with Orinda's Theatre Square, facilitated by Orinda planner Darin Hughes, to host a Makers' Market on the evening of Friday, May 3. Although Marlatte has put together larger groups of vendors in some locations, she kept Theatre Square numbers low, with under two dozen vendors offering their products. The weather was fine, and, as Marlatte pointed out, Theatre Square restaurants were doing a brisk trade, so there was a sufficient audience browsing the market, perhaps thinking of Mothers' Day, coming up

on May 12. The City of Orinda participated, with a table promoting the upcoming June 1 Wildfire Prevention and Safety Fair, staffed by James Duff, the city's education and outreach coordinator, and David Biggs, City Manager. Other vendors included Lakenda Wallace, purveyor of natural vegan perfumes for the body, home and spirit, and Mood and Mind, featuring hand drawn designs by Kayla. Navya Dandu of Golden Gate Clothing Co. offered colorful apparel and accessories made by women in Bangladesh. Rechic, where Marlatte held her first mak-

ers' market in Orinda, had a table, as did Orinda floral shop Garden Nest and Fastened, Permanent Jewelry. Also present was EM/Powered by WMN, a Bay Area group devoted to highlighting women entrepreneurs. Marlatte began organizing outdoor events for small businesses in 2021. After Covid, outdoor venues appealed to folks who wanted to get out of the house but preferred fresh air. She currently has up to 150 different vendors upon whom she can call for events and hopes to have several additional markets in Orinda before the end of the year.

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