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Published February 15th, 2012

## A Spirit of Cooperation at Tri-City Meeting

*By Sophie Braccini*

The City of Lafayette, City of Orinda and Town of Moraga assembled in Orinda last week for their annual Tri-City Meeting. Often filled with recounts of past achievements, these meetings seldom lead to action. This time, things were a little different.

The three Councils made decisions on joint projects - some to which they had already committed, such as Emergency Preparedness - others with new objectives, like creating synergy in the area of public works and acting together to protest the County's Sustainable Communities Strategy.

Perhaps not surprisingly, roads and infrastructure were on the evening's agenda. Orinda Council Member Dean Orr asked the three councils what they thought about working together to put joint transportation bids out to increase their bargaining power. Moraga Mayor Mike Metcalf stated that market forces should be left to their own dynamic to create economy of scale. Orinda's Vice Mayor Amy Worth agreed with Orr's idea, and Lafayette Vice Mayor Mike Anderson added that the three cities should break the institutional barriers ahead of time so this synergy could happen. The elected bodies sent the ball to the court of the City/Town Managers to lay the ground work-the three managers responded that they had already decided to meet and work on aligning some strategies.

Dennis Rein presented the results of his first six months as Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for the Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD). Rein's scope of work now also includes Lafayette. He has finished an inventory of all the actors who would be involved in an emergency situation, and is now working on increasing synergies between the three communities, creating a pool of resources that could be accessed by all, and training and drilling the stake holders.

Canyon resident Jonathan Goodwin, whose community was cited as a model of emergency preparedness, added that whatever the minutia of the procedures, what counts when an incident happens is whether every resident knows the answer to the question, "What do I do now?"

The last two subjects of the evening, parking at the skatepark and a presentation of the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA), were also areas where cooperation flourished. Moraga Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram presented an update of the plans for new parking at the Lamorinda Skatepark, the cost of which is being shared by the three communities. He indicated that Lafayette's recommendations for the use of greener materials had been incorporated and that further review by all staffs would happen before the project goes out to bid. The parking area is scheduled to be built over the summer.

CCTA's presentation of the SCS objectives, which aim at reducing house-gas emissions in Contra Costa by creating housing and jobs closer to mass transportation, was met with almost unanimous opposition by all the council members. The plan requires that each municipality build higher density housing close to mass transportation to accommodate what CCTA calculated will be the growth of that city. The projections of growth are seen as unrealistic and overly optimistic by the municipalities. Cities cannot be forced to build, but funds and grants can be withheld if targets are not met.

Both Lafayette and Orinda governments wrote letters detailing their concerns about the plan; Moraga's indicated that it would work on a letter as well.

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