



Orinda Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, Feb. 5, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Feb. 26, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission

Wednesday, Feb. 13, 6:30 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,
22 Orinda Way

School Board Meeting

Orinda Union School District
Monday, Feb. 11, 6 p.m.
OUSD Office
25 Orinda Way, Suite 200
www.orindaschools.org
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

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



Police Report

Twice buzzed 1/21/13
Having coffee and a smoke sounds like an innocent way to pass the time. Except that in this case, the coffee was stolen from an Orinda grocery store and the smoke was crack cocaine. A 33-year-old man was reported to have stolen packets of coffee worth over \$250 from Safeway. When confronted by a clerk, he dropped one package of coffee and fled on bike. Police found the man with a backpack full of coffee. He admitted stealing it and admitted smoking the illegal substance. He was transported to Martinez Detention Facility where he was booked for commission of commercial burglary and possession of drug paraphernalia.

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Politicians Sling Mud for a Good Cause

Orinda breaks ground on new affordable senior housing program

By Laurie Snyder

Smiling as she looked out at faces “who have worked so hard for so many years” to bring additional affordable housing to the city of Orinda, Mayor Amy Worth kicked off the Orinda Senior Apartments’ ground-breaking Jan. 25. Sixty-seven units will be built on the old library site at 2 Irwin Way by the non-profit Eden Housing, Inc. Once finished, Eden will then manage the facility.

An impressive slate of dignitaries shared memories of milestones achieved, thanking others who made the day possible, including Orindans Woody Karp and Linda Mandolini, Eden’s senior project manager and president.

“I don’t believe there has been anyone more dedicated” to the project, Worth said of fellow Orinda City Council colleague Victoria Smith. “She has the incredible talent of seeing both every detail ... and the big picture.” Beamed Smith, “This journey began 11 years ago today.” She sparked hearty laughter with her recollections, including of Planning Director Emmanuel Ursu’s remarks that



From left: Jonathan Klein, Eartha Newsong, Linda Mandolini, Congressman George Miller, Mayor Amy Worth, Woody Karp, California Assembly Member Joan Buchanan, Council Member Victoria Smith, Steve Dexter, Malcolm Brudigam, Kathleen Hamm.

the site “was too nice to be used for City Hall.” She also thanked resident Eartha Newsong, calling her “the face of senior housing in Orinda.”

“This really is a celebration about

community,” said Congressman George Miller who termed the apartments “a positive asset for this community” and the decision-making “the best of America.” A long time af-

fordable housing champion, Miller talked “fiscal cliff” before advocating for affordable homes, which remain in short supply across the U.S.

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Orinda Averts Sinkhole Calamity

Complete Tarabrook repair will take time and money

By Laurie Snyder

The holiday season in Orinda became even more bustling than usual for residents when Mother Nature dumped heavy rains in early December, motivating an aging 24-inch corrugated metal pipe (CMP) to give up the ghost at the same time that a Contra Costa Sanitary District (CCCS) sewer line failed on Tarabrook Drive near Evergreen Drive. The end result was an eye-popping sinkhole that prompted the Orinda City Council to declare a State of Emergency.

According to the series of related city staff reports, council members “directed staff to continue pumping storm water flows around the blocked pipe and to proceed with retaining a consulting engineer to design a permanent repair.... This option will protect public health and safety as well as public and private property by allowing storm water to drain safely and efficiently through temporary facilities in the short term while allow-

ing the City the necessary time to design and construct an appropriate long-term solution.”

Chuck Swanson, the city’s director of public works, explained that Orinda’s sinkhole is actually worse than its more famous cousin in Lafayette.

The use of \$45,000 in Urgent Road Repair funds was approved by the council Dec. 7 to cover a temporary fix. Additional tweaks were needed to better manage storm flows and there are now several pumps to convey drainage around the blocked pipe. The city is responsible for operating the pumps, which are set to turn on automatically.

The permanent fix will require much more. A design engineer will be engaged “to evaluate the situation, develop a conceptual plan, prepare hydraulic analyses, make recommendations for replacement/repair, and prepare engineering designs and specifications for construction,”

according to the staff report. On Jan. 15, staff asked the council to approve an additional \$100,000 to cover pumping expenses, including the related equipment rental until June 2013. Those supplementary funds will be drawn from Urgent Road Repair funds and General Fund unrestricted reserves. In addition, council was asked to approve two staff-recommended contracts with firms which will carry out the permanent repairs.

Harrison Engineering Inc. of Pleasant Hill was proposed as the designer of the Tarabrook Drive Stormwater Improvements Project after staff solicited proposals from 10 local engineering firms. Only one other firm – Nichols Consulting Engineers – opted to compete for the project. Harrison was chosen based on the firm’s experience, planned approach to the problem, and ability to perform the services requested.

Lamphier-Gregory, the only firm

to respond after another 10-engineering firm approach by staff for a separate contract, will manage environmental services.

City leaders project that Harrison’s consulting fees will cost \$99,000 plus \$11,880 for oversight and administration by city staff – versus the rejected Nichols’ estimate of \$221,362.15. Lamphier-Gregory’s fees are projected at \$43,813 with a 10 percent contingency fee plus \$4,381 for city oversight. All expenditures will be drawn from the General Fund balance.

Council praised city staff for its handling of the situation, thanking area residents for their kindness with deliveries of hot coffee and food to workers who were subject to miserably cold and wet conditions. Council members also expressed their desire to have repairs completed by fall 2013 before unanimously approving the contracts and funding outlays.

Orinda City Finances Given Clean Bill of Health

Auditors cite Orinda’s desirable location and real estate market stability as strengths

By Laurie Snyder

At the Jan. 15 Orinda City Council meeting, locals learned that independent auditors found “no material weaknesses” with their city government’s internal financial controls. The auditors also noted that the city has “complied with all laws regarding separate funds and all revenue restrictions” in the report prepared by the Cropper Accountancy Corporation at the conclusion of the city’s most recent fiscal year (FY12) which ended June 30, 2012.

Council Member Steve Glazer termed city leaders “pleased about the clean bill of health that we’re getting from our auditors,” explaining that he and Council Member Victoria Smith had spent many hours reviewing the statements with their fellow Audit Review Committee members. The committee also included Cropper staff, Orinda resident Susan Vandergriff, and city personnel.

Smith added that city staff had made a concerted effort to present the

budget document in an easier-to-understand format, and specifically singled out city Finance Director Susan Mahoney for praise.

The auditors, according to the city staff report prepared for the council meeting, expressed the opinion “that the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the City of Orinda.”

The report goes on to say that the city “ended the fiscal year with a balanced budget and a healthy General Fund reserve and fund balance.... At the end of the fiscal year, the unassigned fund balance for the General Fund was \$6,338,067.” The General Fund ended the year with a surplus of \$218,384 while city personnel “held expenditures below budget resulting in a favorable variance of \$182,927.”

Major additions to the city’s FY12 capital assets included

\$1,338,285 in upgrades to Moraga Way and the delivery of the Wilder playfields maintenance facility valued at \$397,683, as well as \$964,078 in road paving projects and \$317,281 in drainage facility improvements.

Of further interest, the auditors stated that Orinda’s “desirable location and relatively stable real estate market make it less vulnerable to the effects of an economic downturn. Although the City has had a slight de-

cline in property tax revenue, it has not suffered the significant declines faced by many other cities in Contra Costa County.

“The City’s sales tax revenue increased by 3.7 percent over the prior year which is consistent with the overall increase in sales tax across Contra Costa County and reflects the increased consumer confidence seen throughout the state.”

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Revenues FY 2011-2012

