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## City Council Makes a Deal with MOFD

*By Cathy Tyson*

Knowing residents were hungry to make progress on a fire station on the west end of town, it didn't take much discussion for the Lafayette City Council to approve an agreement to act as a go-between for the Moraga-Orinda Fire District to purchase a 3-acre parcel on the Lafayette-Orinda border, for \$1.2 million - paid out of MOFD capital funds.

The Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement spells out the conditions of the understanding between MOFD and the city of Lafayette. With this move Lafayette is one tiny step closer to a consolidated fire department that would serve residents on the eastern edge of Orinda replacing station 43, and Lafayette residents after the closure of Contra Costa Fire Protection District's station 16 on Los Arabis. Still yet to be determined is a joint agreement between the two fire district entities with the nuts and bolts of how exactly they will work together.

To actually operate the station would require one of two options: an agreement with Con Fire or the approval of LAFCO, also known as the Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Committee, of the boundary change to include the new fire station location.

The land in question at the corner of Lorinda Lane and El Nido Road is literally on the Orinda-Lafayette border, unfortunately on the Lafayette side, outside of MOFD's boundaries - hence the agreement. MOFD is officially not allowed to purchase land outside of Moraga or Orinda (read the related article on page A9).

What's a Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement? A document that basically allows the sharing of power - the contract says it best: "Both City and District have the power to acquire, hold and convey real property for public fire protection purposes," notes the official recital of the agreement for the potential purchase of the land. To be clear, this step is not about the design, construction or use of a station on the property.

"The process is a bit novel," said Councilmember Brandt Andersson, "but current response times are excessive." Mayor Mike Anderson agreed: "Lafayette and Orinda will be better served if we have this joint station."

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