



Orinda Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, July 15, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

Tuesday, July 8, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission

Wednesday, July 9, 6:30 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,
22 Orinda Way

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



Orinda Police Department

Incident summary report, June 8-21

Alarms 85

Animal Cruelty

Orinda Theatre

911 Calls 11

Burglary, Residential

10 block Altarinda Cr
20 block Charles Hill Rd
20 block Bates Bl
20 block Muth Dr

Disturbance

10 block Via Farallon
100 block Moraga
Ivy Dr/Coral Dr
400 block Camino Sobrante

H&S violation

100 block Crest View Dr

Juvenile Disturbance

Glorietta Elementary

Loud Party

Via Corte/Camino Pablo

Missing Adult

reported at Orinda PD

Mentally Ill

10 block La Campana Rd

Petty Theft

Miramonte HS
BevMo
CVS

Promiscuous shoot

40 block Estates Dr
200 block Tappan Ln

Public Nuisance

Hwy 24/Camino Pablo

Reckless Driving

Camino Pablo/Bear Cr Rd
Camino Pablo/Miner Rd
Safeway
Camino Pablo/Camino Sobrante
Camino Pablo/Hwy 24
Camino Pablo/San Pablo Dam Rd
Camino Pablo/Monte Vista Rd
Moraga Wy/Glorietta Bl
200 block Overhill Rd
Moraga Wy/Hall Dr
Glorietta Bl/Moraga Via

Suspicious:

Person 2
Circumstance 9
Vehicle 33

Traffic Stops 90

Vandalism

10 block Orinda Wy
300 block Glorietta Bl
10 block Ardith Dr
Safeway



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The Balancing Act of Orinda Budgeting

By Laurie Snyder

The General Fund is balanced, and it maintains existing service levels. All of the other funds are projected to have a positive fund balance at June 30, 2015." That good news was delivered by Orinda finance director Susan Mahoney to the Orinda City Council at its meeting June 17.

Collectively, it was the eighth in a series of recent opportunities for the public to watch their elected officials and volunteer Finance Advisory Committee members in action as they assessed the city's fiscal health as part of Orinda's annual budget review.

Now in the second year of a two-year budget cycle, city officials were required to tweak budget projections approved in June 2013 in order to account for overages in legal and personnel costs. Threatened and settled litigation by parties unhappy with the city's handling of the state-mandated

housing element, home design reviews and other matters have drained city coffers of nearly \$130,000 in General Fund monies.

On the plus side, though, the revenue picture is now rosier. An increasingly busy Planning Department has generated an unexpected \$230,000, and newly opened sports fields have also helped bring in the bucks. Plus, Orinda will likely garner \$376,000 in property taxes thanks to an effervescing real estate market.

Earlier in the evening, when mulling over whether or not to implement new fees while increasing others, council members considered the impacts of rate hikes on everything from sports field rentals to traffic collision reports. As a result of their deliberations, indoor, outdoor and sports facility-related fees will jump by 10 percent. The double digit hike is "based on an annual facility fee sur-

vey conducted by the Parks and Recreation Department," explained Mahoney. "With this 10 percent increase, the fees will be considered in the mid-range among area cities." Parks and recreation director Michelle Lacy noted that the increase was approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission, and said that adjustments were being made largely to help cover increasing costs for water and electricity. Although the new fee structure will take effect July 1, she added, sports teams with existing contracts with the city will not see increases until those contracts expire.

In addition, planning and engineering fees will also climb by 2.8 percent – the same rate as the consumer price index for the San Francisco-Oakland-Bay Area – an adjustment which is consistent with increases instituted by the city in prior years. Also, "Park

dedication fees were adjusted as required by our municipal code, and the transportation impact fees were adjusted, which is consistent with the direction received from the Lamorinda Fee and Financing Authority," said Mahoney. "In total, we anticipate the new fees will generate about \$40,000 in additional revenues."

As she has done in past presentations, Mahoney sounded a note of caution. As it stands now, the budget is projected to be in the black by a razor thin margin of just \$158,000. So it is possible that, without continued vigilance, Orinda could tip over into a deficit at some point down the road. After reiterating their intent to be prudent in their fiscal oversight, council members gave staff a 5-0 thumbs up for the revised budget. General fund operating expenses for 2014-15 are now projected to be \$11.3 million.

Heated Housing Element Workshop Sparks Fear – But Also Determination

By Laurie Snyder



More than two dozen Orindans calmly milled around several information sharing stations following the city's housing element workshop June 26.

Photo Ohlen Alexander

"Forgiveness and reconciliation are not just ethereal, spiritual, other-worldly activities. They have to do with the real world. They are realpolitik, because in a very real sense, without forgiveness, there is no future." – Desmond Tutu

Shocking. Rude. Embarrassing. Frightening. Just some of the adjectives uttered by Orindans following the early end to the city's 2015-2023 Housing Element Community Workshop June 26.

The program began quietly with Jennifer Gastelum outlining the meeting's purpose. A representative from Pacific Municipal Consultants (PMC) – the firm approved by the Orinda City Council to help guide Orinda through the fifth cycle of a

process mandated by state law, Gastelum had just advised attendees that she had amassed 14 years of experience working on 70 other housing elements.

But before she could explain the workshop's format to those in the nearly full auditorium, she was interrupted by a handful of angry individuals who took turns standing and shouting. Some were members of Orinda Watch, a group which came out against the recent Measure J road improvement bond and, in 2013, accused city officials of working outside the full view of the public to update Orinda's General Plan in order to bring high-density, low income housing to Orinda. Seemingly determined to obstruct the

proceedings, the protesters even shouted down other audience members who were calling for quiet so that the presentation could continue.

"I'm intimidated by the yelling," said one resident who was willing to be quoted, but asked that her name not be used because she now fears for her physical safety. "I just came to find out what was going on."

"I really wanted to know the truth," said another who attended at the urging of a fellow dog walker because she'd been told government leaders were engaging in "political shenanigans." Disappointed because she couldn't hear the presenter and "appalled by the lack of decorum," she hopes future workshops will be scheduled by the city.

"This is an embarrassment for the community," said a third, expressing frustration that a small number of residents had prevented the larger group from receiving information they felt they needed to hear. Another younger resident concurred. Many in the auditorium were "new faces" – residents attending only their first or second council meetings who said they knew little about the housing element. Most said they planned to attend future city-sponsored events.

Had the program been allowed to progress as planned, the agenda would have unfolded as follows:

- 6:05 p.m. Welcome and Introductions
- 6:10 p.m. Presentation:
 - Housing Element update overview
 - Regional Housing Needs Allocation
 - Summary of City demographics/housing needs
 - Environmental Impact Report overview
 - Description of workshop activities
- 6:45-7 p.m. Workshop Activity Stations:
 - Station 1: Sign-in/Housing Element Overview
 - Station 2: Housing Programs and Services
 - Housing Types
 - Environmental Review
 - Potential Housing Sites
 - Housing Element Ideas and Suggestions

In his book, titled "In Defense of Civility," Middlebury College professor James Calvin Davis writes, "I like to define civility as the exercise of patience, integrity, humility and mutual respect in civil conversation, even (or especially) with those with whom we disagree." Although civil discourse, aimed at enhancing understanding, was derailed June 26, enough residents expressed a desire to hear directly from the consultant that city staff will try again at another workshop scheduled for July 9.



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