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Council to Consider Changes to Orinda's Smoking Ordinances

By Victor Ryerson

The Orinda City Council has directed the city's staff to present proposals to change certain portions of the Orinda Municipal Code (OMC) that govern the sale and use of tobacco in Orinda. The council identified specific issues of interest at its Oct. 6 meeting, and the proposed revisions will come back for discussion at a later meeting.

Two sections of the OMC currently address smoking, prohibiting the activity in some parks and nature areas, and restricting the promotion and sale of tobacco products to minors. State law also regulates these activities to a certain extent, and the interrelationships with local regulation are somewhat intricate. The council's effort at the recent meeting was to identify the areas for staff to examine more closely for possible revision of the city's laws. The issues they pinpointed for further examination include outdoor use, including sidewalks, tobacco retailer licensing, and emerging issues relating to smokeless tobacco products.

Other Contra Costa County communities, including Lafayette and Walnut Creek, have recently expanded their smoking ordinances to target more smoke- and vapor-producing products and prohibit smoking in more locations.

No public comment was offered at the recent meeting, but the public will be afforded a full opportunity to offer comments when the matter comes before the council in the future.

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