



Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board of Directors
Wednesday, Sept. 7, 7 p.m.
Go to website for meeting location
For meeting times and agendas,
visit www.mofd.org

ConFire Board of Directors
Tuesday, Aug. 16, 1:30 p.m.
Board Chamber room 107,
Administration Building,
651 Pine St., Martinez
For meeting times and agendas,
visit
<http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

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Station 43 Firefighters Take First Steps To New Home

By Nick Marnell



Photo at left is station 43's old home from 1952 - 2016. The rendering at right shows the new station. Image provided nearby in the St. Stephen's Episcopal Church parking lot. A flyer Before the building can be razed, the asbestos must be completely removed from the structure. Once that project is finished, the district will use station 43 as a training facility. "We will practice

ripping through the roof, breaching the walls, crawling through the windows, all of the challenges we can run into on our jobs," Capt. Matt Nichols said. After a few days of the training exercises, demolition of the fire station will begin.

Nichols said that the flagpole structure and the classic station 43 signage will be transferred to the new station, expected to be completed in September 2017.

"We are still on schedule to meet that target date," said Fire Chief Stephen Healy.

Weil Will Not Run for Reelection in November

By Nick Marnell



Longtime MOFD director Fred Weil, second from left, has been an advocate for fairness. Photo Nick Marnell

Moraga-Orinda Fire District director Fred Weil stunned the audience at the July 20 district board meeting when he announced that he will not seek reelection to his Division 2 seat in November.

"It is important that a board member be fully committed to a four-year term without distraction, and I am not in a position to do that," said Weil, citing personal reasons for his decision.

Weil has served on the district

board since 2003 and has long advocated for excellence in the MOFD service model and for fairness in dealings with district residents and its employees. He pushed for a competitive wage for the firefighters and he balked at any mention of service cutbacks, even once lecturing the board that it was more focused on saving money than on providing long-term service. As recently as June, as the board listened to a presentation on prefunding dis-

trict retirement costs, Weil warned that properly running the district came first.

"He did a solid job helping our district through good times and bad times, and he always treated us fairly," said firefighters' union representative Mark DeWeese.

Weil often criticizes what he perceives to be sloppy performance, including that of other public agencies. He lashed out at PG&E for what he termed an in-

adequate response to the sinkhole that disrupted Moraga in March. Weil blamed Contra Costa County leadership for the collapse of fire station 46, a joint venture with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District that was estimated to save the district \$1 million a year in operating costs. Even so, Supervisor Candace Andersen praised Weil's "commitment to MOFD and strong desire to keep the citizens of Moraga and Orinda safe."

"Fred will be a tough act to follow," said long-time fellow board member John Wyro.

Weil does have his detractors. A grassroots group faulted Weil for his part in the improper calculation of Fire Chief Peter Nowicki's pension in 2009, costing the district millions of dollars over the chief's retirement period, and in 2015 demanded Weil's ouster from the board. "As long as he remains a member of the MOFD board, his judgment will be questioned," said Steve Cohn, group spokesman. Cohn declined to comment on Weil's announcement.

"I have enjoyed this immensely," Weil said. "Whoever my successor will be, I hope will enjoy the opportunities as much as I have."

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Lamorinda

Transportation Sales Tax

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Officials of the Lamorinda communities outlined what the money from this proposed tax measure will provide for their jurisdictions.

Moraga

Benefits to Moraga residents include more than \$400,000 for local street and road maintenance over the life of the proposed measure, according to Ellen Clark, town planning director. The plan will also provide funding for pedestrian and bicycle projects throughout town, for enhanced transit service and for the Lamorinda School Bus program, which eliminates 3,000 automobile trips every school day. "Major streets projects like the new roundabouts planned along St. Mary's Road could also be funded with the measure," Clark said.

Orinda

"BART is a huge piece, because residents want access to BART," said Amy Worth, Orinda city council member and CCTA commis-

sioner. BART, however, will not receive proceeds from the sales tax measure until it meets contingencies, which include spending on its own infrastructure and funding by Alameda and San Francisco counties. Money will also go toward the design of direct access to east-bound Highway 24, the city's bicycle and pedestrian master plan, and the maintenance of Orinda roads. Worth said that the plan will address increased demand for senior services, as seniors wish to be able to age in place in Lamorinda.

Lafayette

Tatzin also led off with BART, noting that Lafayette residents are big users of the system, with money from the proposed tax allocated to increased capacity and ridership. Also planned is improvement of traffic and pedestrian flow and bicycle access in the downtown.

"We want to make the portion of Mt. Diablo Boulevard west to Acalanes Road a more attractive

route," Tatzin said. A bicycle trail along the East Bay Municipal Utility District aqueduct is also on the docket.

Not only did all of the 19 county jurisdictions support the expenditure plan, every member of each of the governing bodies voted yes. Orinda endorsed the plan in May, Moraga and Lafayette in June. Having been approved by the Board of Supervisors, the plan returns to the CCTA board for approval, then back to the supervisors for adoption of an ordinance allowing the sales tax measure to be placed on the November ballot, where it must garner two-thirds of the vote for passage.

"We have taken into consideration the needs of various interests, and we think this is going to be saleable to the public," said Supervisor Federal Glover, also a CCTA commissioner.

Moraga

All-access Park at Commons

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He was referring to fees the city will collect from the Palos Colorados development.

Mayor Mike Metcalf agreed that using part of the developer's fee from the Palos Colorados project, already about \$2 million, to help fund this project would be appropriate. All other council members rallied around the idea, supporting the concept and its possible location at the Commons Park. They asked Ingram to come back at their next meeting, on Aug. 24 with a feasibility study and a more refined cost. The members want to also keep the Rancho Laguna park option open for now.

Jon Bawden of Ross Recreation Equipment, the company chosen

for the project, said that he had never had a discussion about the Commons Park and assured that the company's equipment was versatile and could fit into an existing space or multiple spaces to create an inclusive design. Ross will work with staff to look at the best possibilities at the Commons.

Ingram is working on a master plan for the Moraga Commons Park that will include public participation in the fall, and his plan was that the first concepts would emerge in November. The council still required an August presentation for that play structure because they do not want to delay decisions for the Rotary.

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