



ORINDA

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Orinda adopts two-year budget, adjustments and Capital Improvement Plan

By Sora O'Doherty

At the June 18 city council meeting Paul Rankin, Orinda finance director, introduced a final proposed two-year budget, which was adopted by the council and will begin July 1 and continue for two years. Additionally, the city adopted adjustments to the fiscal year 2018-19 budget. The adjustments provide \$55,000 for recently incurred costs associated with the Rheem trail easement, and \$200,000 for improvements made by the developer at Wilder Fields Park, although only \$100,000 will come out of the city's general fund, with the remaining \$100,000 to be provided by the waiving of payments from the developer to the city.

In the new budget, the city council approved the establishment of a trust for retiree medical expenses, with a provision for an initial deposit of \$100,000 to be made

from General Fund reserves to fund the trust, which will be established by the end of this year.

The budget also corrects an error in the interest on Orinda's general obligation bonds which had been estimated at \$422,423, but was actually \$612,038. The budget provides for the additional \$189,615 required.

Council approved transfer of \$350,000 out of the General Fund into a General and Long Term Plans Sub-Fund. With this transfer, the fund will have a balance of approximately \$672,136 as of the end of June, which is below the target of \$1 million established by the city. Funding for the capital improvement plan for the next two years is included in the budget, but is funded by bonds.

Several staffing changes are covered. Although Orinda operates with a very small staff, it was recommended that a full-time senior engineer be added to assist with

capital projects. Also, the limited position of paving manager, held by Farah Khorashadi, was extended up to June 30, 2021. Hired in 2017, Khorashadi was brought on for a three-year period with two one-year extensions possible.

Rankin identified some changes that were included in the final budget. Fire safety brush and tree removal as a capital project was shifted into the operating budget. The funding of \$50,000 for each of the two years is limited to publicly owned city properties. Funding was also included to step up staff training for disaster response. A CIP project to rehabilitate the El Toyonal emergency vehicle access bridge is also intended to address emergency preparedness. This summer, as part of the Miner Road paving project, more shoulder paving will be added in spots between Camino Pablo and Camino Don Miguel. The gen-

eral fund emergency fund is being maintained at \$6.8 million through the end of 2020, then rises to \$7 million the following year.

Some elements also got moved around. Park tree removal was taken out of the CIP and included in the operating budget, and \$40,000 was transferred from reserve funds to building internal service fund to finance the initial geotechnical and conceptual design work on city hall slide stabilization. Subsequent work will be delayed until funding is identified to perform the project, estimated to cost an additional \$510,000. As there is currently no funding available, the Martha Road to Catherine Court Pedestrian Path has been pushed out beyond the timeframe of the CIP. However, it might be a candidate for a future one-time funding.

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Annual review of Wilder progress shows the development coming to life

By Sora O'Doherty

For decades it was just a dream: a large development in Gateway Valley, which became Wilder. Now, at last, Wilder is alive. Five play fields have been developed and turned over to the city of Orinda. The Art and Garden Center, despite a few bumps



Photo Sora O'Doherty

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along the way, had its official grand opening on June 2 and the facility of over 3,000 square feet is already hosting meetings and classes. On June 4, the Orinda City Council conducted its annual review and determined that developer OGLLC is in substantial compliance with the development agreement.

Of the 200 homes planned, all but 45 lots are sold, and 85 homes are built and occupied, with another 10 built but not yet occupied, according to the Project Director at Wilder, Bruce Yamamoto, of Brook Street and OGLLC. Yamamoto updated the Orinda City Council at its June 4 meeting about various ongoing projects at Wilder. The developer is continuing to remove and replace 3-foot sidewalks with the required 4-foot sidewalks. Most have already been removed, and the new sidewalks are now being poured. The 6-foot sidewalk on Wilder Road is finished. Yamamoto stated that all slope landscaping will be completed by Oct. 31, noting that it is a "big, big project" of over 4 million square feet of slopes.

He also mentioned that Wilder residents have mixed opinions about the Wild Rye Path, and the developer will work with staff to find a solution. Yamamoto said that wildlife is thriving at Wilder, and discussed ideas about "the ponds," located near the

play fields. He also talked about the wetlands at the end of the project, where there is a major newt migration path. In public comments, Alison Bannasad told Yamamoto, "We really appreciate that you took our son seriously about the newts. We appreciate your attention to the trails, all the trails in Orinda. We didn't even know our son had written you a letter!"

Madelyn Mallory also commented. "I want to give a great big thank you to Drummond (Buckley, director of planning), to Winnie Mui, (assistant planner) and Bruce Yamamoto for the good faith effort they have given," she said, adding, "I'm a little optimistic." She still has concerns about transition slopes, and the lack of continuous ground cover. "Plants are sparse, she said, "and we have an excessive amount of gorilla hair; if there aren't sufficient plants, there may be possible slides." Yamamoto said that there are some problems caused by seven years of intense drought. In addition, builders have damaged some areas during construction, and some homeowners have accidentally destroyed irrigation lines. All native plant materials are being used in the landscaping of Wilder. As plants become mature, Yamamoto said, water use will decrease.

City staff recommended

that council find developer OGLLC in substantial compliance, noting only two differences. The trail that OGLLC has constructed to connect with a sewer bench/path along Brookside Creek in the vicinity of Rabble and Wilde Rye Roads has been obliterated. Either the trail needs to be reconstructed, or the circulation plan needs to be revised to eliminate the trail. Staff also had some concerns about consistency with the landscape master plan. After hearing concerns from residents, staff has been working with a landscape consultant, Cultivate Studio and Amy McPhee, who had been the lead landscape architect on the landscape master plan. Work will continue through summer and fall with city on potential amendments to landscape master plan, which would have to be approved.

Council Member Nick Kosla expressed hopes that a way can be found to make the ponds look great all year round, and Council Member Amy Worth said that there is still work to be done on the landscaping master plan, ponds, and trails.

The council was also thanked for its help with parking enforcement, which residents are finding significantly improved.

<p>Orinda Public Meetings</p>	<p>City Council Tuesday, July 2, 7 p.m. Regular Meeting Library Auditorium, Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way Planning Commission Tuesday, July 9, 7 p.m. Library Auditorium, Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way</p>	<p>Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission Wednesday, July 10, 6:30 p.m. Sarge Littlehale Community Room, 22 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563 Orinda Union High School District Board Meetings Monday, Aug. 12, 6 p.m. Regular Board Meeting 8 Altarinda Rd., Orinda www.orindaschools.org See also AUHSD meeting page A2</p>
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