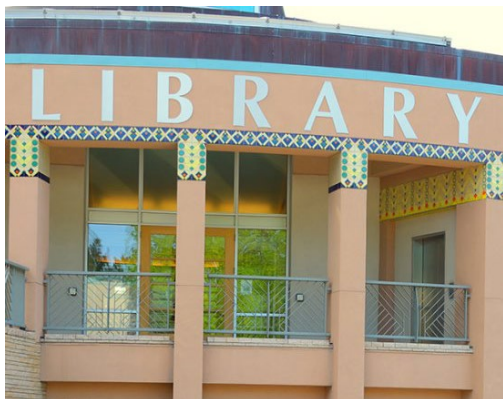


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Orinda Library reopens, but not on Sundays

By Sora O'Doherty



The city council heard the annual review of the library oversight committee on July 6. The library has reopened but, unfortunately, it cannot restore Sunday opening hours because the county library system has staffing problems. For many years after the county reduced the number of hours it funded, the city of Orinda used its library parcel tax passed by the voters to permit the Orinda library to open on Sundays. Now it seems to be not so much of a funding issue as a staffing issue.

Linda Landau of the Library Oversight Committee presented the report to the city council. She said that Orinda is very fortunate to have a parcel tax for the library. "Not many cities in Contra Costa County do," she observed, adding, "Lafayette has to raise \$1 million every year." This year the county will be paying for 40 hours a week for libraries, up from the previous 35 hours. However, the county has decided to close all the

county libraries on Sundays because of the difficulty of staffing. Landau agreed that people like having the library open on Sunday, and was anxious to get the message out clearly that this is a county issue, not a local one, and that it has nothing to do with the services provided to the library, including janitorial services.

She did say, however, that there are comments from public from time to time about janitorial service, wishing it were a little more thorough. Paul Rankin, finance director, noted that the janitorial contract will be going out for proposals some time this year. Rankin also said that he has reached out to county librarian Alison McKee. "They don't have a solution to the Sunday issue," he reported, "but they are looking at it and hopefully there may be some change in the future." Director of Parks and Recreation Todd Trimble reported that the library receives services every day it is open and he has not continued to receive complaints.

Landau concluded that Orinda will still need to go out for another library parcel tax in the next few years. The issue of the tax was scheduled for 2024; but cost savings during the pandemic might mean that the issue can be postponed a bit, unless, she added, "we have a really have a big maintenance bill."

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