



City of Orinda:
www.cityoforinda.org
Phone (925) 253-4200
Chamber of Commerce:
www.orindachamber.org
The Orinda Association:
www.orindaassociation.org

City Council Regular Meeting:
Tuesday, Aug. 20, 7 p.m.
Orinda Library Auditorium
Planning Commission
Tuesday, Aug. 23, 7 p.m.
Orinda Library Auditorium
Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission
Wednesday, Aug. 14, 6:30 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room, 22 Orinda Way



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Creekside Weekend Couples Retreat
October 4th, 5th, and 6th
With Dr. Darrell Christian

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If so, you and your partner are invited to a weekend couples retreat that will take place on October 4th, 5th, and 6th. The purpose of the retreat is to foster a more "Conscious Relationship". The retreat will help couples improve their communication, deepen their emotional connection, learn tools to negotiate conflict more effectively, and begin or extend a conversation about intimacy and sexuality.

Reconnect, Rediscover, Thrive: Your Journey Begins Here

- **Schedule:** Friday evening wine and cheese reception, followed by sessions from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM on both Saturday and Sunday.
- **Meals:** Continental breakfast and lunch provided each day.
- **Location:** Creekside cottage in Lafayette, CA

To contact me or for further information:

- **Website:** darrellchristian.com/couples-retreat/
- **Email at:** CouplesRetreatswithDr@gmail.com • **Phone:** (925) 935-8646
- **Couples Blog:** darrellchristian.com/blog/

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Fall CERT Classes

Lamorinda residents are invited to attend the Fall series of CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) classes beginning September 12, 2024 at the Orinda Library Garden Room. This interactive in-person class series covers topics such as disaster preparedness, emergency medical aid, GMRS radio use, fire extinguisher use, pet preparedness, and light search and rescue. No experience is necessary, and the material taught is vital should a disaster occur in our area. Classes are held on Thursday nights from 6:30 – 9:30pm and run from 9/12 – 11/7. To register for this class series go to the website at: <https://classes.lamorindacert.org>

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COMPASS

Orinda okays RFP for potential half million dollar storm drain mapping

By Sora O'Doherty



Photo Sora O'Doherty

Orinda resident working to clear a public drain.

In order to create a comprehensive map of all storm drains in Orinda, the city council has authorized staff to prepare a request for proposals (RFP) seeking bids on the job. Although there are some existing maps, primarily of public storm drains, the city lacks an up-to-date map of the storm drains, both public and private.

The work of compiling the data for the map has been estimated by Orinda staff at somewhat over \$500,000. Council member Brandyn Iverson questioned why the city needed to have an outside contract for the work of gathering data and preparing the map. She wondered if it could be done cheaper in-house. Her budgetary concerns drew an impassioned response from Mayor Darlene Gee.

Gee, who is by profession a transportation engineer, defended the high level of expertise in the industry. She focused

on the millions of dollars of damage that can be done by storm water in a matter of minutes, harking back to the Miner Road sinkhole of 2017. Gee recalled that that storm drain had been deemed to be in good condition as little as three years before it catastrophically failed.

"Public works are expensive," Gee noted, adding, "it's about public safety. It's about things that are really important to life and limb. So no, it is not about getting it on the cheap." Iverson was delighted by the lesson, exclaiming, "I love it when you do that! . . . You are so persuasive."

The matter was presented to the city council on July 16 by City Manager David Biggs and City Engineer Siva Natarajan, as Public Works Director Scott Christie was on vacation. The action of completing a comprehensive map of all city storm drains, public and private, was recom-

mended to the council by the Infrastructure Subcommittee.

According to the staff report, Measure R has been identified as the funding source most appropriate for this mapping project. Roads and storm drains are one of the focus areas for use of Measure R funding and there is a sufficient fund balance available to allow for this appropriation. Measure R, a half-cent sales tax increase, was passed in 2020, and was specifically targeted at increasing Orinda's fire safety and for work on roads and storm drains. As a general tax, revenue raised can be allocated as the city council determines.

The staff report additionally pointed out that for a period of time in the past, the work was done as time permitted by a GIS position which was shared between Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda. Unfortunately, that position was eliminated at the time of the Covid pandemic. Part-time engineering interns have also been engaged on occasion with mapping. But the piecemeal work did not complete the job. The Infrastructure Subcommittee considers the work to be significant enough to public safety to advocate for it being done by an outside agency.

Staff estimates that there are nearly 17 miles of private storm drainpipes in Orinda, many of which interconnect with

the public stormwater drainage. "Understanding the complete interconnected system and identifying any concerns before problems arise provides a better approach to risk management for the city. Drainage failures within the private piping could easily cause significant property damage to both public facilities and residents, and ultimately result in significant unplanned costs to the city," according to the report.

In written comments, Arlene Cohen called the drainage issue critical, reporting that her property receives massive flows of water from houses on public streets that can overwhelm the drains on her property, resulting in flooding and damage.

Comments from the public, both at the meeting and in writing, supported the proposed mapping project. The motion, which passed unanimously, authorizes staff to solicit proposals, but does not authorize expending funds for the mapping project at the current time.

According to Natarajan, the process will realistically take two to three months. The first step will be to develop the scope of work, refining exactly what is needed. After developing the scope, the proposal will be advertised. After proposals are submitted, they will be reviewed and staff will come back to the council with recommendations.

Pickleball courts and a dog park

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The off-leash dog park would be fenced, and would provide separate entrances and spaces for small dogs and for large dogs in an area of approximately a third of an acre. The proposal is complicated, however, by the fact that the park would require a walk uphill from the existing parking area and the path would have to be compliant with the

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The proposed pickleball courts would be located in Wilder, near the play fields. According to USA Pickleball, the sport was invented in 1965 on Bainbridge Island, near Seattle, by three dads whose kids were bored with their usual summertime activities. "Pickleball has evolved from original handmade equipment and simple rules into a popular sport throughout the US and Canada. The game is growing internationally as well, with many European and Asian countries adding courts."

The Wilder site does not allow for perfect orientation of the pickleball courts. However, Bob Finch in public comments opined that the orientation would be acceptable to players. Finch also addressed the noise issue associated with pickleball, and in addition urged the city to also consider spending the lesser sum on the same agenda for funding data gathering about the conditions of private roads.

Another public commenter expressed displeasure at the time spent by the council on

the dog park/pickleball courts issue while the matter of public drains was relegated to the end of the agenda. She suggested that if the city fixed its infrastructure problems that the community would then support new amenities. (See separate story.)

Council members, however, were concerned about the high projected price for both plans. The higher dog park expense, caused by ADA compliance, would be lower if the dog park took the Wilder site, but the Orinda Oaks site wouldn't accommodate pickleball courts.

Council member Brandyn Iverson suggested moving the dog park to the Wilder site because of the costs, which she considered shocking. However, even located at Wilder, the dog park would still require some modifications to be ADA compliant. Iverson also suggested taking another look at adding Pickleball courts to Orinda Community Park, although it is located quite close to senior housing, and the noise from pickleball is considerable.

The costs for the dog

park are estimated by Callendar at nearly \$974,000, while the costs for the pickleball courts are estimated at around \$775,000. The pickleball courts would have higher construction costs, including a bioretention area, paving, fencing, an ADA parking space, and retaining walls. Neither estimate includes design costs. Currently the city lacks funding for either project.

The Orinda community has been very vocal about their desire for pickleball courts, although less so about a dog park. Vice Mayor Latika Malkani said that she really, really wants to see both projects happen, but acknowledged that the city does not have funding at the proposed levels. She raised the question about the possibility of obtaining grant funding, and wondered if having actual designs would improve the city's chances of obtaining some grant funding. She also suggested the possibility of community fundraising, perhaps coupled with some matching funds from the city.