

# Civic News

# Orinda

- Public Meetings**
- City Council** Tuesday, June 15, 7:00 pm  
Auditorium, Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way
  - Planning Commission** Tuesday, June 29, 8:00 pm  
Auditorium, Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way
  - Senior Affordable Housing Development Community Meeting** Tuesday, June 3, 7:00 pm and June 17, 7:00 pm  
Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements  
 City of Orinda: [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org)  
 Chamber of Commerce: [www.orindachamber.org](http://www.orindachamber.org)

## • Police Report •



**D.U.I., 5/28/10** A Ford Explorer was stopped on the side of the Moraga Way at 5:30 in the afternoon. It appeared that the driver had passed out, but the car was in drive, and the operator had his foot on the brake. Officers carefully woke him up and noticed his slurred speech, the odor of alcohol, and an open bottle of vodka in plain view. Next stop, Martinez Detention Facility.

**Unlocked car shopping spree, 5/28/10** The following five thefts all took place during the early morning hours of Friday, May 28 on the north side of Orinda. Oddly enough all of the vehicles were unlocked.

An unlocked Nissan Altima was parked in a driveway on Irving Lane, \$20 was missing.

Two cars at one residence on La Vuelta were broken into - a \$310 camera was taken from the first vehicle and some change from the second car.

Right next door on La Vuelta a Jeep was parked and left unlocked in front of the victim's home. A wallet that was inside the car was missing.

An unknown suspect gained entry into unlocked cars on Diablo View Drive - a Lexus and a Cadillac that were parked in the driveway. An unspecified number of items were taken from both cars with an approximate value of \$450.

Finally, someone gained entry inside a detached and unlocked garage on Las Cascadas, took several items from a car and fled. No suspects or witnesses to any of these crimes at this time. Sensing a theme?



Peter & Darlene Hattersley



DRE# r00445794, DRE# 01181995

#1 IN SALES  
 JAN-MAR 2010  
 COLDWELL BANKER  
 ORINDA

HELPING YOU  
 ACHIEVE YOUR  
 REAL ESTATE GOALS!

925.360.9588 925.708.9515 WWW.THEHATTERSLEYS.COM

**COMING SOON!**  
 1299 Bear Creek Road  
 This serene 2919 square feet retreat offers sweeping views plus privacy on 5.66 scenic acres and includes an 8-car, 1440 square feet, insulated garage/barn.

## No Real Estate Transfer Tax for Orinda - Yet

By Andrea A. Firth

Orinda's City Council has decided not to pursue a real estate transfer tax as a source of revenue to help reduce the cost of the City's overwhelming infrastructure needs—at least not this year.

With road and drain repair needs exceeding \$70 million and a capital improvement budget of just over \$3 million that barely scrapes the surface of problem, Orinda's Council has long been in search of new revenue sources. Moving to become a charter city and institute a property transfer tax was the revenue option on the table for discussion at the June 1st City Council meeting. As a general law city, Orinda currently has a real estate transfer tax rate set at .055% of the value of the property being sold which will generate an estimated \$90,000 for the City in the next fiscal year.

The property transfer tax rates for charter cities in the Bay Area encompass a range up to the 1.3% rate in Piedmont. Orinda's Finance Advisory Committee has estimated that a 1% property transfer tax rate, which equates to \$10,000 on a million dollar home sale, could generate \$2 million

annually for the city. Voters in a charter city can approve a property transfer tax by a simple majority and designate who bears the costs of the tax in the transaction. According to Tom O'Toole of the Contra Costa Association of Realtors, the seller typically bears the cost of the tax but in higher end markets it's often split evenly between the buyer and seller. Council Member Amy Worth noted that because the real estate transfer tax is a general tax, it can not be designated for a specific purpose such as infrastructure support.

Lafayette City Council members shared information with the Orinda Council that they had compiled regarding the charter city process and property transfer tax option. Lafayette is considering placing a charter city and real estate transfer tax initiative on the November ballot and has embarked on a community-wide education process on the issue in which they have invested \$50,000.

Members of Orinda's real estate business community who were present at the meeting were not supportive of the real estate transfer tax option. Local realtors

Mary Chatton Brown and Jeanne Anderson both stated that they felt the additional fee would negatively impact housing sales in Orinda. Anderson added that given the vicissitudes of the real estate market, she felt the tax represented an unreliable source of revenue. However, the Council did not seem persuaded by the argument that a modest transfer tax would serve as a real disincentive in the market.

"The only viable alternative that we can currently consider to address the infrastructure problem facing the city is the real estate transfer tax," stated Council Member Sue Severson, who supported the city moving forward with the steps necessary for

a ballot initiative like Lafayette. Although the other Council members agreed that charter city status and a voter-approved real estate transfer tax should be pursued, they felt the timeframe to educate residents in order to secure a positive outcome in November was too tight. "I don't think we can do it between now and November," stated Mayor Tom McCormick.

Ballot initiatives to adopt a charter and approve property transfer taxes must be placed on the November ballot in an even election year. The Council directed staff to begin to develop a timeline and action plan for considering a ballot initiative in 2012.



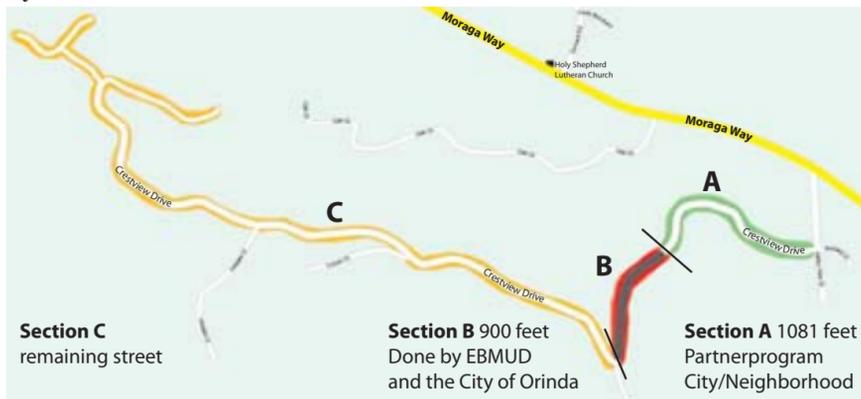
### Residential and Restoration Painting Services

Meticulous attention to detail  
 40 years of satisfied customers  
 Licensed and Insured

**David Collins, Orinda**  
**925-254-6882**

## Crestview Residents Take Road Repairs into their Own Hands

By Andrea A. Firth



Crestview Drive cul-de-sac off Valley View Drive

To many of her neighbors on Crestview Drive, Diana Stephens, a 23-year resident of Orinda, is known as "the pothole lady." Due to the decaying road condition and the lack of city resources to repair it, about two years ago Stephens started filling the ubiquitous potholes on her street herself. "I have all the supplies, the orange cones, the apron. The hardware store loved it when they saw me coming to make a purchase." But soon she and her husband realized that they could not bear the cost of her one-woman road repair initiative alone and that they would

need to find another solution to repairing their street, which they believe has deteriorated to an unsafe condition.

Located on the southside of Orinda, Crestview Drive extends from Valley View Drive and winds over a mile up into the hills and dead ends. "We think it is the longest cul de sac in Contra Costa County," says Stephens. This distinction is part of the challenge that faces Crestview Drive residents. Although the street, especially the bottom portion, sees quite a bit of traffic from the 124 property owners that live in the neighborhood, it

is not a city thoroughfare, thus low on the City's road repair priority list. "Crestview is not scheduled for any other city sponsored repairs in the foreseeable future," says Stephens.

Stephens banded together with about ten other neighbors, circulated a petition, and subsequently presented Crestview Drive's situation to the City Council. Through the process, she got to know the members of the Council and the Citizen's Infrastructure Oversight Commission and staff of the Public Works Department and concluded the cost of the City's infrastructure

problem is overwhelming. "The City receives only a limited amount of our property tax dollars and much of that is allocated to the schools. There is no way the City is able to afford the \$65 million in road repairs that are needed," she says. "I have concluded that I have to maintain my own road." And that includes paying for it, according to Stephens, who compares the concept to the private monies raised locally to support the public schools.

Stephens and a few other neighbors have launched a campaign to raise funds to repair their street and so far over 50 residents have contributed a total of \$35,000 toward the cause. They are focusing their funds on the most heavily used segment of the street from just above the hairpin turn to the bottom at Valley View Drive. To repave the entire stretch, roughly 1981 feet, will cost about \$180,000. Last summer EBMUD retrenched sewer lines along the first 900-foot section extending south from the junction at Crestview Court; the City has partnered with the agency to cover the \$84,000 cost to rehabilitate this segment. "We'll repair the first 900 feet then continue working down the street with the money available from the neighbors," stated Chuck Swanson, the City's Director of Public Works and Engineering Services. He noted that the City is currently developing a formal policy and criteria for citizen-initiated pavement projects so the City can engineer, negotiate, oversee, and absorb liability for citizen-funded repaving projects.

Remarkably, Diana Stephens' home is not within the area of the road repair project. "I live further up the street, so I'll still be maintaining the road in front of my house," says Stephens who seems fully prepared to continue to sweep up the loose gravel and fill potholes. "Through this process I have come to really know my neighbors. I have made many more friends. We'll be able to come together better than ever before if we need to in the future," she adds. "We have a certain amount of pride in our homes, our roads, and this city. In the current condition, the roads do not reflect what we think of as Orinda."



Pia Loeper (seated) and Diana Stephens working at a neighborhood rummage sale that raised over \$2,000 for the Crestview Drive repair cause. Photo A. Firth

**BEDELL** Celebrating 35 Years in Business!  
 investment counselling  
 Achieve your financial goals with our help

Portfolio Management  
 Individual Stocks and Bonds  
 Old Fashioned Customer Service

www.bedellinvest.com 800-783-0344

Michael Frazier  
 Vice-President, Portfolio Manager and Moraga Resident

computer technical support  
 repairs • training • websites

**FREE 1/2 Hour Computer Service Call**

NEW Location! 925.283.5666  
**Nerd4Rent.com**  
 990 Moraga Road, Ste B, Lafayette (next door to Campana Music)

**NERD4Rent**  
 Computer Consulting & Training  
 Service plans starting as low as 49 cents per day!

Offer applies to new Lamorinda clients only. Exp. June 23, 2010. With This coupon only.

