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Environmental Review Begins for Proposed Senior Project

By Cathy Tyson



Architect's rendering of proposed Astoria project near Wilder. Image provided

At a recent meeting of the Planning Commission, the City of Orinda announced the Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for a senior housing facility near Gateway Boulevard and Highway 24.

Developer Agemark Corporation has owned a 1.1 acre parcel near the entrance of the Wilder development for approximately two years and is interested in building a congregate care facility on the site. The proposed project, "Astoria at Wilder," consists of a two story, roughly 40,000 square foot facility with 45 units of assisted living, 15 of those for Alzheimer's or dementia patients, along with surface parking and landscaping.

"We are very excited about our

boutique assisted living community and feel that the site provides a great opportunity for us to serve an unfulfilled need in Orinda," said Forrest Westin, Vice President of Agemark.

The Draft Environmental report examines probable environmental effects like aesthetics, air quality, land use, hydrology, traffic and more. There was some concern at the meeting that adjacent ball fields will have lights and noise late into the night that may disturb the residents. The environmental report is a preliminary step in the planning process, and there will continue to be opportunities for public comment.

Michael O'Hara, Project Director with Brooks Street, repre-

senting Wilder, commented, "The location is inappropriate," explaining that the proposed project is inconsistent with the scenic corridor and the semi-rural character of Wilder. Attorney Amanda Monchamp, also representing Wilder, added that there are a number of categories omitted from the environmental report that should have been included.

Agemark has been in business since 1987, and has three types of senior facilities throughout the country: Astoria Gardens focuses on assisted living and memory care, Country House Residences are exclusively designed for Alzheimer's patients, and Kensington-Evergreen for independent seniors.

LOL at Live at the Orinda

By Andrea A. Firth



Rick Kattenburg is planning for another sell out of the second annual Live at the Orinda Comedy Night to be held on Friday, March 11th at the Orinda Theater. "Last year's event got rave reviews as a uniquely different fundraiser," says Kattenburg, the Chamber of Commerce Director in charge of this event. Presented in collaboration with Tommy T's Comedy Clubs and the Lamorinda Film & Entertainment Foundation, the laughter-filled evening will feature six of the Bay Area's most up and coming comedians.

"Last year we had a pretty good party prior to the show," says Kattenburg. "We will be selling Piper Sonoma champagne this year, as well as a white wine by the glass or bottle. You can carry your drinks right into the theatre as you join your friends for the laughs. The seating is open. Everyone will have a great view because of a live video feed projected onto the big screen above the comics during the performances."

The Orinda Chamber of Commerce produces this event, to help fund Chamber events that enhance Orinda. The proceeds also benefit other Orinda nonprofits. Tickets at \$30.00 may be reserved in advance until March 10th using a major credit card at the Orinda Chamber of Commerce web site, www.OrindaChamber.org, or purchased at First Republic Bank, 224 Brookwood Road. Tickets at the door, if available, will be \$35.00 per person.

"Live at the Orinda offers fun-

loving people of our East Bay communities the opportunity to share an evening of relaxing laughter while discovering all the charms of Orinda," says Sue Breedlove, Orinda Chamber Pres-

ident. "It's no wonder this has become an annual event."

"This will be one great night of comedy, so come on out for the laughs," says Kattenburg, adding, "Orinda ain't Borinda anymore."

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