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93 Moraga Way, Orinda

Civic News orinda

Plan Bay Area Riles Some Orinda Residents

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Eventually, Orinda secured figures consistent with the growth projections of the city's 1987 general plan, according to Planning Director Emmanuel Ursu, and has made reasonable progress toward meeting its required housing numbers. Downtown Orinda is considered only a potential PDA because it is not zoned to accommodate the development characteristics of the PDA designation.

At the May 13 Meeting

Council members sought to ease residents' fears. Steve Glazer observed that there is no application currently before the city to increase building heights, and reminded residents of the lengthy public review procedures that would kick in should such a proposal be made. Leaders also tried to reassure those worried about a loss of local control under Plan Bay Area, stating that "the deci-

sion whether or not the city chooses to adopt land use policies that are consistent with those of the PDA 'Place Type' assigned to Orinda is left to local decision makers."

At the end of the three-hour meeting, the council directed staff to contact ABAG-MTC to, among other things, request an extension of the draft EIR comment period and present copies of residents' correspondence.

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Orinda Watch Delivers Message to Orinda City Council

"We're into local control," said Rusty Snow recently. Snow, of Snow Property Company in Orinda, is one of the organizers of Orinda Watch, a citizens group urging residents to learn about Plan Bay Area.

Prior to Orinda's May 13 city council meeting, Orinda Watch distributed a lengthy report disputing that plan's assumptions. Unsure to what extent the city council had reviewed PBA's related draft Environmental Impact Report and mindful of a May 16 deadline for public comment, Orinda Watch mobilized its supporters. "Our concern is - does the city have a responsibility to protect the citizens to really get into this and review it carefully," observed Snow. "What type of people would they need to review it ... are they qualified ... the city staff and council, or would they need to get transportation experts?"

According to Snow, Orinda Watch has hundreds of people on its mailing list with 10 to 20 organizers, including Orinda residents Chris Engl and Alvin Ziegler. Its membership includes Menlo Park attorney Peter Singleton who founded Bay Area Citizens, a group described by Snow as "a separate entity." On its website (orindawatch.org) Orinda Watch asks supporters to donate to Bay Area Citizens, which uses the Lafayette UPS Store as its mailing address but involves, Singleton said, members from "all around the Bay Area."

Singleton has spoken out against Plan Bay Area in Marin, Danville and Pleasanton, where he also endorsed David Miller, a Tea Party candidate for that community's May 7 city council election.

"He's hired experts," said Snow of Singleton. "They have actually prepared reports that are reflected

in our Orinda Watch report that was submitted to the city of Orinda on May 10... We're really trying to make sure our information is accurate."

One section includes an assessment of PBA's conformity analysis by Thomas A. Rubin, an Oakland-based mass transit consultant and a policy author for the libertarian Reason Foundation (reason.org). Although Orinda Watch's full report is too long to address in the short space of this article, key points stand out:

- "The Plan's transit elements will not increase ridership, will not reduce greenhouse gases (GHGs), and will do nothing to help lower income citizens who are dependent on transit for their personal mobility... [PBA] ignores the one form of transportation subsidies that are proven to increase transit usage ... lowering fares and increasing service quality."

- "The Plan's mandate requiring that 80% of all new housing in the Bay Area be built in high density, multistory, multifamily attached units near mass transit in suburban and urban downtowns will not reduce GHGs."

Orinda Watch contends that ABAG and MTC used only results favorable to PBA in analyzing the impacts of state Clean Car standards on PBA and would like approval of the plan delayed until all material concerns about the process and substance of the plan have been fully addressed.

If everybody gets together and votes for high density, Snow said, that's fine; but citizens should be able to make decisions about what's happening in their town.

L. Snyder

From Front Page

Campo Seniors Ready for Their Close-Up

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Sarah Torchio with her date Mason Windatt and his grandmother Jeanne Dowell pose at the packed Moraga Commons. Photo Ohlen Alexander

Clearly corsages, color-coordinated pedicures and dangly earrings are still popular, and the classic black tuxedo never seems to go out of style. Quite a few of the gentlemen sported a vest in the same color as their date's dress.

Many of these students have lived here for the majority of their young lives, enjoying the subtle change of seasons, nestled safe in the rolling hills of Moraga where laid back golden retrievers and orthodontia are

hallmarks of this prosperous bedroom community.

Little do they know that this snapshot in time is the leading edge to a major shift in their lives. Perhaps college is right around the corner - or work, or a combination of the two - with many of their lifelong friends scattering across the country.

Like the town-wide photo-op, the small town tradition will continue with many of the lucky Class of '13 coming home for the holidays - Thanksgiving and Christmas break will see these fresh faces gathering together again on a much smaller scale - mainly because mom and/or dad haven't moved.

They'll reminisce and reflect, and describe their brave new world outside of Mo-town. One small town, one high school, and eight stop lights makes for a tight community - for better or worse.

Hopefully they will look back at this insular 'burb and be thankful for connectedness, safety and a great education.

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