



Independent, locally owned and operated!

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published July 3rd, 2013

Station 46 Resuscitated New MOFD board president pushes hard for property purchase

By Nick Marnell

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District board of directors not only has a new president; as evidenced by the actions at its June 20 meeting, the board has a more aggressive leadership style as well.

In May, the MOFD board voted 3-2 to terminate a purchase agreement for a parcel at 1035 Lorinda Lane in Lafayette to be used as the site for a proposed fire station 46; this after the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors voted against funding a planned joint venture between the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District and MOFD to build the new station.

Board president John Wyro was steadfast in his resolve to make station 46 happen, notwithstanding the negative votes by both boards. "I believe strongly that this is far and away one of the most important things we'll do as a board in sustaining the viability of the district," he said.

After the Lafayette City Council created an Emergency Services Task Force to investigate delivery of fire and emergency services to its residents, including possible annexation into MOFD, Wyro talked with members of the county Board of Supervisors and with Lafayette city officials to ensure that the process of a potential MOFD partnership - with either ConFire or the city - was fully vetted.

"I was concerned that there were opportunities being lost and that I needed to develop more information," said Wyro. He clarified that those meetings were attended by him alone, with no other MOFD directors, and that he spoke for himself and not for the board. Wyro also assured the board that the Lorinda Lane property was available. "I've been in contact with the broker, who's been in contact with the property owner, and the property is not under contract," he said.

Wyro urgently appealed for the district to purchase the property. "It needs to happen, and it needs to happen there," he said. "I'm anxious to move forward with this."

Director Fred Weil stated that he feared the risk in the purchase was 100 percent on MOFD's shoulders. "How do we know for sure Lafayette will partner with us? Why not work together? If we're entering a partnership with Lafayette, we're not starting off on the right foot," he said.

While he supported the idea of a station 46, Vince Wells, president of Local 1230 United Professional Firefighters of Contra Costa County, railed against what he perceived was MOFD's inter-district tampering. "It's inappropriate that you come to Lafayette and solicit taking them over," he said. "That's not being a good neighbor."

The board passed two motions regarding the property. It voted unanimously to form an ad hoc committee, made up of directors Wyro and Weil, to meet with the city of Lafayette. And a motion to direct the staff to resume negotiations on the Lorinda Lane purchase passed 3-1, over the objection of Weil, who voted against the same motion in May.

"It gets Lafayette moving, and makes the Lamorinda Fire District happen, which is the key to our sustainability," said director Steve Anderson after the meeting, on his reason for voting to resume negotiations with the property owner. His no vote in May helped kill the property purchase. "It gives (mayor) Mike Anderson a clear message that MOFD will support Lafayette's actions."

As for the \$15,000 deposit forfeited by the district when it terminated the Lorinda Lane contract, MOFD fire chief Randall Bradley said later that he will push to have the money credited back to the district. "Absolutely," he said. "We are hoping to reinstate the original contract with original terms other than an extended closing date."

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA