



Orinda

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, Dec. 1, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Nov. 24, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Finance Advisory Committee

Wednesday, Nov. 23, 6:00 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,
22 Orinda Way

School Board Meeting Orinda Union School District

Monday, Dec. 14, 6 p.m.
OUSD Office, 8 Altarinda Road,
www.orindaschools.org
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Orinda:

www.cityoforinda.org
Phone (925) 253-4200

Chamber of Commerce:

www.orindachamber.org

The Orinda Association:

www.orindaassociation.org



Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report Oct. 25 to Nov. 7

Alarms	56
Noise Complaints	5
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	7
Traffic Stops	156
Suspicious Circumstances	5
Suspicious Subjects	15
Suspicious Vehicles	28
Abandoned Vehicle	
30 block Barbara Rd	
10 block Knickerbocker Ln	
Animal Cruelty	
60 block Moraga Way	
Barking Dog	
10 block Rio Vista	
Burglary, Auto	
Bear Creek Rd/Camino Pablo	
100 block Orchard Rd	
20 block Rheem Blvd	
Wagner Ranch Elementary	
20 block Southwaite Ct	
Burglary, Residential	
100 block Moraga Way	
Civil Problem	
20 block Ardor Dr	
10 block Lost Valley Dr	
20 block Orinda Way	
600 block Miner Rd	
Disturbance	
100 block Estates Dr	
Camino Pablo/Camino Sobrante	
Europa Hofbrau	
600 block Miner Rd (3)	
DUI	
Hwy 24/Camino Pablo	
Fraud	
20 block El Patio	
Harassment	
30 block Irving Lane (phone)	
Hit & Run	
80 block Via Floreado	
Health & Safety Violation	
Oakwood Athletic	
ID Theft	
10 block St James Ct	
300 block Overhill Rd	
10 block Lavina Ct	
Juvenile	
Orinda Intermediate School	
Miramonte High School	
Loitering	
Donald Dr/Alice Ct	
Missing Adult	
20 block El Camino Moraga	
Police/Fire/EMS	
600 block Tahos Rd	
Bear Creek/San Pablo Dam Rds	
Hwy 24/St Stephens Dr	
Promiscuous Shooting	
Brookside Rd/Moraga Way	
70 block Orchard Rd (2)	
Public Nuisance	
CVS	
Reckless Driving	
Moraga Way/Glorietta Blvd	



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Petition Highlights Burgeoning Demand to Improve Downtown Vitality

By Victor Ryerson

A petition to create a more vibrant downtown, signed by nearly 700 Orinda residents, was presented to the City Council Nov. 3 in what may be the beginning of a groundswell of demand to change Orinda's aging center soon. The petition, authored by Monica Fitzsimmons, who submitted it to the mayor and council during the public forum portion of the meeting, asks that the city "immediately commence development of a plan to restore Orinda's downtown area" with amenities "necessary to better serve residents and merchants and bolster the financial health" of the community.

Although city planners have been working on plans for downtown improvement for nearly as long as the city has been in existence, progress has been slow. Residents seem to have taken the lead lately in this effort, remarked City Manager Janet Keeter following the meeting. It seems that the community's changing demographics – at both ends of the spectrum – are fueling the demand.

Creating an effective and workable downtown plan is expected to be the highest priority task for the city's incoming planning director, who will likely take office early in the coming year. According to speakers at the meeting, it cannot happen soon enough.

Presentation of the petition was followed by a variety of comments by a cross-section of the community. The unifying theme of the comments, regardless of the age or family status of the speaker, was that major change is needed soon in order to serve Orinda residents and compete with neighboring cities for their business. Some expressed the hope that they will not find it necessary to move to find what they need before change actually comes.

Ethan Elkind, the father of three small children who grew up in Orinda, whose parents also live here, encouraged the council to "go bold," referring to development of a downtown plan integrating major elements such as the creek that now runs hid-

den behind buildings and zero energy commercial buildings. "We're not afraid of a little excitement in our downtown," he added.

Speakers repeatedly stressed the need for vibrancy in plans for the change, but without disregarding the community's essential character. Orinda "isn't vibrant enough," said Michael Hoffmayer, one of the younger speakers. Fitzsimmons declared the need for a plan with "vitality" and "vibrant elements," while maintaining Orinda's semi-rural character. Karen Brockwell, who recently became an empty nester, would like to downsize and move to a condominium closer to downtown, but lamented that she wants to live in "a town that has a lot more going on." Another speaker decried Orinda's "vast parking lots and empty buildings," conjuring a very austere mental image of downtown. Several speakers expressed a desire for greater density in downtown housing, whether or not this would require changing the building height limit.

Speakers also alluded to the migration of shopping and dining, and the associated loss of tax revenue, to Lafayette and Walnut Creek. One speaker, who wants more than a single food market in Orinda, expressed her dismay at running into neighbors at Lafayette's Whole Foods Market. Others commented on the greater variety of restaurants and entertainment available in those other communities, and the planning process that brought them there.

Although the council could not lawfully comment on remarks made during the public forum portion of the meeting, Mayor Dean Orr assured the audience that the council had initiated the issue for discussion, and encouraged the speakers to stay tuned for further developments in the near future. Whether the council and incoming planning director will be able to fulfill a mandate for major change in the near future remains to be seen, but the pressure to do something to meet the challenge in a hurry is definitely on.

Council Awards Contract for Downtown Traffic Study

By Victor Ryerson

Following through with its earlier decision to hire a consultant to perform a comprehensive study of Orinda's downtown parking situation, on Nov. 3 the City Council awarded the contract to TJKM, a consultant experienced in local transportation matters. With an amendment to cover extras not included in the original request for proposal (principally an as-

essment of Americans with Disabilities Act parking needs), the total contract award is \$51,155.

The study will identify current parking patterns, restrictions, and enforcement, as well as the overall demand for parking and proposed solutions. The council has stressed that it wants an "action-oriented plan" that spells out concrete steps to address

Orinda's downtown parking problems.

Three proposals were received in response to the RFP. The selection process was designed to prevent bias toward any bid, and factored in the bid prices only after other considerations were assessed. TJKM was selected as the most qualified bidder in part because it had previous experience consulting on traffic matters in

neighboring localities.

To kick off the study, TJKM will hold an initial meeting with stakeholders, including representatives from the business community and affected neighborhoods near the downtown. There will be opportunities for public input at later stages of the process.

The study is expected to take about six months to complete.

Story Poles May Become a Thing of the Past

Developers and planners embrace newer, better technology tools

By Victor Ryerson



Image provided Dahlin Group, Pleasanton

Sitting at the dais in their meeting room, the Orinda Planning Commission reviewed the designs for six proposed homes in the Gateway Valley.

Using images of the houses on a screen, commissioners could look at each building from the front, side, back, and above, and from any vantage point on any neighboring lot, comparing them to nearby homes. They could simulate a drive by, alter the color schemes, zoom in and out, and play with the details. Theoretically, they could even view the homes from outer space, if they so desired.

Is this a science fiction scene from "Back to the Future?" Hardly. This is essentially what the commissioners experienced at their regular meeting Nov. 10 when the applicant plugged in an iPad with the data to be viewed, which was projected onto big screens behind the dais so that members of the public could follow along. It was an ironic twist after the commission at its previous meeting discussed the policy

for requiring erection of story poles to help visualize the dimensions and configuration of proposed buildings subject to its review.

Story poles are a time-honored simulation technique whereby the applicant erects a sketchy outline of the proportions of the proposed project on the building site, using lumber, or occasionally PVC irrigation pipe. It is an old technology, simple and low tech, and it works after a fashion if your brain can process what it sees. It is also outmoded, according to a report by Orinda's planning staff.

Currently, the city's design review application form requires story poles for all design review projects. However, the Wilder application checklist gives planning staff discretion to require the installation of story poles within that development. If the Wilder experience has taught the city any lesson, it is that better tools are available to do the job.

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- Moraga Way/Brookside Rd
- San Pablo Dam Rd/Wildcat (2)
- Camino Pablo/Manzanita
- Moraga Way/Ivy Dr
- San Pablo Dam Rd/Camino Pablo
- Moraga Way/Bryant Way
- Shoplift
- Safeway
- Theft, Petty
- 50 block Berkeley Ave
- 20 block Carisbrook Dr
- 10 block Tara Rd
- 100 block Orchard Rd (from vehicle)
- CVS (in custody)
- 10 block Estabueno Dr
- 10 block Evergreen Dr
- Theft, Vehicle
- Orinda Theater
- Threats
- 20 block Orinda Way
- Throw from moving vehicle
- Camino Pablo/Hwy 24
- Unwanted Guest
- Casa Orinda
- Safeway (2)
- Vandalism
- 500 block Moraga Way

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