



ORINDA

See public meetings schedule on this pages and 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



CALBRE# 00903367

He's All About Lamorinda!

CLARKTHOMPSON

REAL ESTATE BROKER
VILLAGE ASSOCIATES

Office: 925-254-8585 | Cell: 925-998-7898

ct@clarkthompson.com | www.clarkthompson.com



Orinda garbage fees rise by 12%, no relief for private road residents

By Sora O'Doherty

Garbage collections fees will rise by 12% for Orinda customers for the period March 1, 2020 to Feb. 28, 2021. With this increase, Orinda will have the highest garbage fees in Contra Costa County, according to city manager Steve Salomon. The increase comprises 4% for operating costs of Republic, 1% for long-term maintenance of Big Belly smart containers, and 7% for vehicle impact fees, imposed to offset the damage done by heavy garbage trucks to public roads. Although the fees are imposed on all customers, the funds will only be expended on public roads, leading to protests from residents of pri-

private roads, who seek either to be included in the repair work or to be exempted from the fee. Two longtime private road advocates submitted their views on the matter: Steve Cohn in an email sent to the city council prior to the meeting and Melissa Roeder, who spoke at the meeting. Cohn told council members, "When the fee was small, the inequality could be ignored." But, he continued, "it is no longer small and it looks like it is growing by leaps and bounds." Roeder said that the increase taxes everyone, but only benefits four-fifths of the city. She suggested that either private road residents should not be forced to pay the vehicle impact fees, or their streets

should also receive the benefits of the fees. Council Member Dennis Fay did not object to the portion of the increase that is due to the increased cost of doing business, but did object to the portion of the increase (about 7 percentage points of the 12% increase) that is related to the road impact fee, because he did not agree with the method used to calculate the amount of funds the city is using for roads. He ultimately voted against the increase. Council Member Inga Miller offered two suggestions: Private road residents may, she said, bring their refuse containers to public roads for collection. She said that she had checked this with Republic Ser-

vices, who agreed that it would be allowed. There were no details offered on how exactly that would work. In addition, Miller pointed out that the garbage vehicles caused damage while traveling over public roads to reach the private roads. Mayor Darlene Gee noted that the increases won't be popular, but agreed with other council members that service under Republic Services is much better than in the past. The portion for the popular Big Belly containers is intended to offset the fact that recycling no longer provides income to the city, following dramatic changes in the industry. The fee increase passed by a 4-1 vote.

- ◆ HARDWOODS
- ◆ CARPETS
- ◆ RUGS
- ◆ LINOLEUM
- ◆ TILE
- ◆ LAMINATE

FAMILY -OWNED
30 YEARS !

3344 Mt Diablo Blvd
in Lafayette
925-284-4440
lamorindafloors.com



In-lieu parking variance fee approved

By Sora O'Doherty

Senior Planner Adam Foster presented the city council with a plan to charge a fee to developers who need a variance from the required number of parking spaces for new or changed non-residential developments. Currently if a development requires a variance the city may grant it, but can-

not charge a fee. Under the proposed ordinance, fees would be collected and put toward mitigating parking in Orinda. Potential mitigations might include a parking lot or shuttle services. The in-lieu fee will not apply to residential buildings. The proposed fees will be a tiered system, increasing for each parking space that is sought to be eliminated, and

will cover both new construction and changes in use of existing buildings. For existing buildings, the fees will be lower, to encourage economic activity. The fees for existing buildings will start at \$1,275 for the first parking space eliminated, and gradually rise to \$6,375 for the fifth and any additional spaces. Existing buildings are defined as those that have been in place for

over five years. For new construction, the fees would be higher, starting at \$7,650 for the first space and rising to \$28,050 for the fifth and additional spaces. The fees are based on a study that identified the cost per parking space in Orinda as \$51,000. The in-lieu fee represents a fractional portion of that cost. ... continued on next Page

Orinda City Council wants answers, in writing, from PG&E

By Sora O'Doherty

How did things go in Orinda during the public safety power shut offs in November? The city council heard from staff at its Dec. 3 meeting, and decided it wanted the Pacific Gas and Electric Company to answer some questions, and they wanted the answers in writing. PG&E representative Tom Guarino was present at the meeting, but the council did not wish to receive oral comments. Staff were charged with writing to PG&E to request information about whether the high voltage power lines that run through Orinda were actually turned off during the two PSPSs. All of Orinda's electricity supply lines are underground, so the city council wants to know if there is a way that power to residents and commercial customers

could be maintained. Issues reviewed included costs to businesses, hardships for residents, and communications. Council Member Dennis Fay asked about what lessons were learned during the events. Public Works Director and Assistant City Manager Larry Theis presented the staff review. He said that the city-operated PSPS resource center was well received, and the public used it as a place to congregate and communicate, as well as to charge devices. The biggest complaint he reported was the lack of WiFi. Residents were surprised that cell phones were throttled down on data during the power outages. This pointed out that Orinda was one of only a few communities that provided its own resource centers, but he also explained that extra costs were incurred as

Orinda staff were pulled from their regular duties to assist at the center. Theis also said that the purchase of \$10,000 worth of portable stop signs was a good investment. Council Member Amy Worth complimented and thanked staff, noting that city manager Steve Salomon put together a team and met weekly to put together a punch list. She also complimented the Orinda Union School District for moving rapidly on its decision to keep schools open in time to use email communication before the power outage began. On the subject of communications, Theis noted that residents may be unaware that the city does not have contact information for residents. PG&E and Comcast, he said, have such access to this information from their customer files. Residents will continue to be encouraged to sign up for alerts.



Photo Sora O'Doherty

Mayor Darlene Gee said that during the second outage, CalTrans hired a generator to operate the traffic signals at the complicated intersection at Brookwood that also controls traffic exiting Highway 24. Fay was disturbed by the hardships suffered by residents of the Senior Village, who were without power for three days. This meant that they did not have heat, lights or elevators. Fay said he hoped that PG&E has a program to operate the grid to keep power on and wondered what other options exist instead of the PSPSs. He raised the issue of the high voltage lines, and said that he wanted written answers from PG&E that the city could depend on.

Council Member Inga Miller supported the concept of legislation, and Worth applauded state Sen. Steve Glazer for proposing legislation to require back-up generators for cell phone towers. She also hoped that the Chamber of Commerce might be able to provide better information about the cost of the outages to local businesses. Gee said that the city wants to be part of the process of the California Public Utilities Commission. Theis said that Orinda will sign up with the CPUC as a participating agency, even though it will come at a cost of staff time. Theis also said that PG&E is working on system hardening,

replacing old poles, updating system parts such as transformers, and improving insulation on lines. Like Fay, Gee wants to know if the high voltage lines in Orinda were actually turned off, citing the Kincaid fire that was sparked by a high voltage line that was supposed to be turned off but wasn't, even though the surrounding area had no power. Fay also asked for further explanation from PG&E about system hardening. In answer to a question from Fay about fiber optic cable for cell phones, city attorney Osa Wolff said that the city had just gone through the process for small cell installations.

FIRST OPEN - December 14th - 15th | 1-4PM



3866 PASEO GRANDE | MORAGA

3BD/2.5BA | 1,766 sq. ft. | \$1,295,000

Brand new Moraga listing! Campolindo Mid-Century modern gem. Move in ready with large kitchen, family room with wet bar and much more, on a large corner lot!




LISA TAYLOR
510.610.4461
l.taylor@ggsir.com
CalEstates.com
Lic. #02017954

Each Franchise is Independently Owned and Operated.







Orinda Public Meetings

City Council
Tuesday, Dec. 17, 7 p.m.
Regular Meeting
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission
TBA
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way

Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission
Wednesday, Dec. 11, cancelled
Sarge Littlehale Community Room, 22 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

Orinda Union High School District Board Meetings
Monday, Jan. 13, 6 p.m.
Regular Board Meeting
8 Altarinda Rd., Orinda www.orindaschools.org
See also AUHSD meeting page A2