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## Applications for grants for fire fuel reduction on evacuation routes accepted Nov. 1

By Sora O'Doherty

The city of Orinda will begin accepting grant applications Nov. 1 from residents who live on evacuation routes in the city for funding up to \$599 for work done to reduce fire fuel. The measure was approved by the city council at its Oct. 11 meeting, and the application for the grants can be found in the agenda packet for that meeting. Applications may be submitted online or by mail to the city of Orinda.

There are a number of requirements that must be met in order to qualify for the grants, which are set forth on the application form. The grants are intended to help homeowners on evacuation routes to remove vegetation in accordance with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District fire code, including removal of dead or dying trees, eucalyptus and/or Monterey Pine trees, ladder fuels, juniper bushes, and bamboo within specified distances from the road. The pilot grant program will be in effect until Aug. 31, 2023, unless the authorized funding of \$400,000 is depleted sooner. Residents may only apply for one grant.

At the same meeting, the city council rejected a suggestion from the Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission (SSTOC) to enter into a contract with Dr. John Radke, a professor at UC Berkeley, for a strategic wildfire planning process for Orinda. The proposed project would cost the city \$598,196.

Although the SSTOC had recommended that the city enter into the contract, city staff recommended that the city not proceed using Measure R or city funds, but perhaps to consider pursuing grant funding. The city council agreed among themselves that the amount proposed was high, and declined to take action on the proposal.

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