

Mr. Biggs emphasized there will be opportunities at the City Council meeting for interested parties to comment.

Chair Hammon recognized the disappointment and concern from Commissioners in not being able to process this ahead of time but said he also recognizes that staff did not have much choice. He appreciates the fact it was brought to the Commission as an information topic before it went to the City Council and that the Commission will be able to receive the staff report that will go to the City Council.

Chair Hammon opened the Public Forum.

Steve Cohn expressed extreme disappointment and opposed the use of \$3.5 million for such expenditure, stating this tax was for fire prevention. This should not happen for roads and he asked the Commission to object to it.

E. PUBLIC FORUM: None.

Mr. Biggs asked, and the Commission approved, moving up Item G.1.

G. DISCUSSION ITEMS/STAFF REPORTS

G.1. Strategic Wildfire Plan

Receive Report, Review Proposal, Discuss, and Provide Direction, if any

Chair Hammon thanked Dr. Radke for his very detailed proposal and commented that he agrees the City needs a Strategic Wildfire Plan and that the City and staff are already working on implementation of an existing plan which was based on recommendations that the SSTOC submitted to the Council on September 8, 2021. It focuses on educating residents on the need to reduce wildfire fuels on their properties and harden their homes against wildfire in accordance with the existing Orinda Community Wildfire Protection Plan, the MOFD Fire Code and the MOFD Wildfire Prevention Strategic Plan.

In general, priority guidance for wildfire fuel reduction efforts have been made based on the MOFD Wildfire Risk Map and, specifically, evacuation routes have been set as very high priority areas.

Secondly, regarding providing incentives for wildfire fuel risk reduction efforts and the home hardening efforts, they are in the process of developing incentive plans and already have the Orinda Chipper Program.

Third is clearing wildfire fuels from City property in accordance with the MOFD Fire Code and item four is helping Orinda residents prepare for emergencies, in general.

Commissioner Latimer then introduced Dr. Radke and said he has provided a more detailed description of what he is proposing his research on in aiding Orinda and its citizens in becoming a wildfire resilient city.

Dr. Radke said he took feedback from Commission members and residents and put together a formal proposal. The City Manager gave him a letter he could take to the project sponsor's office and they agreed to 17% overhead which is a huge value. He broke it down into two years and two months because the final two months would be tying up loose ends when hired graduate students would be ending a semester and could finalize the plan.

Throughout the process they will be able to deliver results of what they find and, as they go through the process, it will become more and more accurate. They will build maps where people will be able to see their properties, modeling, what they are finding, what needs to be done in reducing fires from turning into an uncontrollable firestorm. They bring science and a different way of looking at radiation and control it in Orinda.

As they end up with results, they will pass on the information to MOFD. In the end, it builds an infrastructure system that has metrics built into it. Over time, it will reveal the progress of mitigation and they can control it and monitor it on an annual basis or less.

He said after the project is over, the City might have to contract out with a satellite company to get a 6-month or annual subscription and purchase some of this data but this is fairly inexpensive. The database they turn over when they are done could be maintained on a desktop and it would not take much to train someone to maintain it.

There are three professors on the team. One professor has been studying fire and has been a statistician in biomass for 40 years. He will be assessing how much fuel exists in certain areas and then come up with strategies to reduce it. The other professor is in engineering and she does networking and optimizes egress.

In this project, the only fee Orinda would pay is to buy him out of a course this fall so that the money would go to someone else to teach the course so he can spend full-time this fall getting the project rolling and participating. The other two professors would not charge any of their time to this because they are doing research for other projects in California, funded by other organizations. Berkeley Professors are only allowed 3 months of summer salary and it gets taken up by other research projects so they cannot charge their time.

The hourly rate for the graduate students is fair given the skill set they have. One is a Ph.D. and the other two are professional Masters, and all are hand-picked because of their expertise in this area.

Chair Hammon thanked Dr. Radke for his presentation and for the level of detail he put in his proposal. He suggested Commissioners ask questions, and if they have many questions to forward them to staff by July 20th for Dr. Radke for written answers within two weeks for next meeting.

Commissioner Barber said he thinks he understands the proposal well enough to make a recommendation to the City Council on this matter. It strikes him this is experimental and that may be something that would make this of greater interest to a private grant maker, particularly to the Moore Foundation, the Chairman of which is a former Orinda resident that now lives in Lafayette. It would be appealing to him and possibly others but he was not sure this is something Dr. Radke can react to.

What he likes best about this proposal is the granularity; it will allow the Commission to look at specific parcels and it may be something which will finally get homeowners to act. Most people do not know quite what to do or they do not know there is a real problem on their parcel. He would support a demonstration project and if it shows there is real promise in this approach, the cities of Lafayette and Moraga and others might be interested in using this technology.

Commissioner Decareau noted that Task #5 does that. It is a small segment of the City and then it is built upon after lessons learned.

Dr. Radke referred to Commissioner Barber's questions and described a project on flooding where the oil industry was not reacting to climate change and they did not see how it would impact their productivity. They showed them how their infrastructure, especially marine terminals and refineries will be impacted over the next 20-60 years. It was amazing how they just "woke up." Over the last couple of years, the industry has been very proactive in making changes because of the impact on their infrastructure from climate change. That granularity does 'bring it home' so people realize and see what will happen on their property.

Commissioner Decareau said he has many detailed questions so he will put them in writing. His only concern is that they are running out of time. If he understands the schedule correctly, we are buying this year for Dr. Radke's fall semester and then the following year is Year 2.

Dr. Radke said the City is just buying one course/semester and in the springtime, the City is not. The rest of the time is when the professors are donating their time.

Chair Hammon asked when Dr. Radke would need to have a contract in place in order to start in a way that does not push them back one whole semester.

Dr. Radke said it would be to start in August because graduate students and researchers are brought on board then. However, if it did not start until September, he has other funding for the three graduate students for the fall so they could start getting paid in the spring. It is highly likely they would catch up and finish early according to his schedule because there is real incentive for these graduate students to work hard because they want to graduate. This will be part of their Master's thesis and part of their Ph.D. dissertation.

Commissioner Light said it is an exciting proposal and her primary concern has to do with the crowd-sourcing which has been tough in getting people to mitigate their properties. The data is from 2016 through 2020 which seems old. The granularity is contingent on the crowd-sourcing and that looks like it could be the weak link in the project.

Her other concern is a funding issue. She agrees with Commissioner Barber and should urge this project to be funded through private sources and possibly there is State funding, the Moore Foundation, and possibly others.

Dr. Radke said in the past they have done NSF, State and then local. Everyone always states they want to participate but there is not proof. Locally, people do not typically participate much. This is a complete reversal of that paradigm. He believes that their mission is to go to the State, show what the City is doing, and get them on board. The project has a better chance if they take that approach. The three professors have discussed this and believe it is much more convincing.

Commissioner Malkani said she also likes the granularity of the analysis and results, questioned if the modeling could include on some of the publicly open space that is not City-owned and the impact on Orinda because of issues such as EBMUD and EBRPD where they are not doing mitigation.

In terms of timing, she is sensing there are questions and people want to spend more time digesting this and did not think the opportunity would be lost if they spent another month or two engaging.

Dr. Radke said he has three students he recruited to study fire. They could have gone other places but came here. He has lots for them to do but once this project starts, they will focus on nothing else but this project. This way, the City gets the biggest bang for their buck and incredible research.

Commissioner Reinman said she likes the idea and likes the fact it is science-based. She will submit her questions in writing, thinks the students will come up with the technology and modeling, and this is more a question of buy-in and engagement before, during and after the project.

Commissioner Weinstein said he thinks this is a good idea and is excited about Orinda being able to capitalize on technology and grants and said the time is now.

Chair Hammon said there are Commissioners who will submit questions to Ms. Cronin and asked that they be submitted no later by the end of business day one week from today; July 20th. The sooner Dr. Radke can respond and submit his answers the sooner the item can be agendaized for recommendation to the Council.

Chair Hammon opened the Public Forum.

Richard Nelson writes: "I cannot wait for the comment period. Maybe you can present my points. 1) The City should adopt the Radke proposal; 2) Understanding the science makes this seem like a difficult decision but the matter is really simpler; 3) We need an expert in fire risk in Orinda. MOFD does not have such an expert but relies on general analysis presented to them by Cal Fire; 4) Radke offers new technology. This is always risky but offers considerable potential rewards; 5) Having two different approaches is better than one. At minimum, Radke's model would be a good way to test the Cal Fire model; and 6) The opportunity cost of the expenditure is not large. We have \$3 million in revenues to spend this year. We can do more than one thing at a time."

Blair Swedeen said the reason he voted for Measure R was to have a plan. To date, he does not feel sufficient progress has been made and this is the first concrete plan outside of "more tactical mitigation measures." He has worked in the areas of geospatial analysis and data science for 20 years, has run similar projects, and this is proven technology that has been used in other fields. There are dozens of companies leveraging satellite imagery, machine learning, feature extraction, prediction for insurance pricing, for risk planning, so it is proven. He thinks Dr. Radke's proposal is extremely thorough, well put together and thought through very personally. He would like to see more action and less waiting and agrees activation is important and a challenge, but he would separate that out from the actual analysis and strategy, which is what Dr. Radke's proposal relates to.

Steven Cohn said he thinks it is time for a plan. \$300,000 a year out of \$3.4 million is not much and he asked to work with MOFD directors on board for more. There is a lot of money available and they need a way to direct the action, and he asked the City to move forward on this and now.

Chair Hammon concluded the matter and asked Commissioners to submit their questions to Ms. Cronin by July 20th and they will continue this discussion in next month's meeting.

Chair Hammon suggested postponing the minutes of June 8, 2022 to a subsequent meeting.

F. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

F.1 Approve SSTOC Meeting Minutes of June 8, 2022

MOTION by Chair Hammon and seconded by Commissioner Malkani to **continue approval of the minutes of June 8, 2022 to the August meeting.** Said motion carried by unanimous (9-0) roll call vote.

H. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS/ACTION ITEMS

H.1. SSTOC Ad-Hoc Subcommittee Update - including discussion of continuation of the Ad-Hoc or formation of other subcommittees