



**SPECIAL MEETING
LAMORINDA TRI CITIES MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 07, 2025
MINUTES**

7:00 PM

Note: Written communications received from the public prior to the start of this meeting can be viewed on the City's website meeting calendar. They are also kept in the City Clerk's Office as part of the public record and available upon request (ssmith@cityoforinda.org).

7:00 P.M. – SPECIAL MEETING– ORINDA LIBRARY AUDITORIUM

A. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Mayor Malkani called the Special Meeting to order at approximately **7:00 p.m.**

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT:

Orinda:	Darlene Gee, Cara Hoxie, Janet Riley Vice Mayor Brandyn Iverson, Mayor Latika Malkani
Lafayette:	Jim Cervantes, Gina Dawson, John McCormick Vice Mayor Carl Anduri, Mayor Susan Candell
Moraga:	Lisa Maglio, (Graham Thiel and Brian Dolan- absent) Vice Mayor Kerry Hillis, Mayor Steve Woehleke

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Led by Mayor Malkani

C. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOTION by Mayor Woehleke, and seconded by Mayor Candell, to adopt the agenda. Said motion carried by unanimous (14-0) vote.

D. PUBLIC FORUM

Cherise Khaund, on behalf of Assemblymember Bauer-Kahan, provided an update on the Assemblymember's work on letters of support for federal funding, introduction of 16 bills, State allocation of funds for a diversity of wildfire resilience efforts and investments, AB 290-- modernization of the FAIR plan to accept automatic payments, support of AB 226-- FAIR Plan Stabilization Act, and various website-hosted events.

Mayor Candell thanked Ms. Khaund for the FAIR Plan payment updates and pointed out that the platform does not support automatic payments or bill reminders, and she requested that this issue be addressed.

E. POLICY MATTERS

E.1. Presentation by Contra Costa Transportation Authority Staff Providing Updates on CCTA Efforts, including Smart Signals and the Upcoming Evacuation Study. Councilmember Discussion and Direction, if any.

John Hoang, Director of Planning, CCTA, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Countywide Smart Signals project and the Countywide Emergency Evacuation Study project, spoke of the collaboration to date with cities, and said the two projects offer a huge investment for the Lamorinda area. He described the projects' safety focus, optimizing mobility, upgrading antiquated equipment and signal infrastructure, key benefits, levels of funding, and a funding plan.

Mayors and Councilmembers posed questions and received responses about: Potential risks of federal funding being cut, the construction schedule and lane closures, how signals will be controlled and coordinated, remote access and how the system would operate and change in an evacuation scenario, battery backup systems and other technologies for major routes, the ability to add signals, security of the system, coordination when making any changes to the system, the opportunities available to provide communications to Lamorinda cities once the project is complete, especially during an evacuation, and discussions for use of fiber in making an autonomous shuttle possible along Moraga Way.

Mr. Hoang then discussed the Countywide Emergency Evacuation Study project, provided background on application and funding from Caltrans through a sustainability grant, grant objectives and benefits, alignment with other plans, and costs, provided an overview of the study, the project's purpose and goals, assessment of four sub-regions and evaluation of up to six emergency events per region, the project's scope of work, oversight by CCTA and other agencies, boards, and committees, and schedule/timeline.

Mayors and Councilmembers posed questions and received response regarding: Concerns on the significant scope of work and funding, request for exploration of feasible evacuation routes, a request that the study look at completion of an evacuation route separating Moraga from Orinda, whether evacuation zones and modeling of traffic flows are based on different scenarios and assumptions, whether the actual full RFP is coming to the CCTA Board, whether the plan will be specific enough to identify senior communities for evacuation purposes, the need to provide more data and analysis in public outreach, whether a fire science-based modeling software will be used and whether the RFP takes this into account, traffic flow patterns based on where a fire may start and how assumptions are made for Lamorinda areas, a request that cities with their own fire districts be informed, a request to ensure the end product can be used given the breadth of the scope and that it can identify potential areas for future examination, whether there was input in preparation of the RFP by Lamorinda towns and cities, and confirmation that cities/towns will be included in notification of the RFP process.

Mayor Malkani opened the Public Forum, and there were no speakers.

Mayors and Councilmembers continued with voicing concerns about how expanded the scope is, believing that the study will not do what they think it will do, requested an update be agendaized for every meeting agenda, and a recommendation that the three communities conduct their own study more expeditiously, citing a Berkeley study that identified the Palisades and Orinda-Moraga as likely to experience a catastrophic fire. Councilmembers also asked that the study not include risks other than evacuation from wildfire at this time.

Councilmembers cited the receipt of Cal Fire's new fire severity maps and new analysis being performed now for another version which might provide additional information and voiced concerns with the amount of funding it will take to mitigate risks from wildfires.

Mr. Hoang stated he will return to the Councils and clarified that the Policy Advisory Committee is made up of one representative from each of the City Councils.

Mayors and Councilmembers thanked Mr. Hoang for the presentation.

E.2 Presentation by Townsend Public Affairs Regarding Proposal for a Regional Legislative Approach, and an Update on Legislative Matters. Councilmember Discussion and Provide Direction to City/Town Staff Regarding the Regional Approach.

City Manager Smith introduced Casey Elliott from Townsend Public Affairs who will discuss a proposal for a regional legislative approach and an update on legislative matters. Mr. Elliott is working closely with the cities of Orinda and Lafayette and has been in discussions with the Town of Moraga on a limited basis in helping frame appropriations requests for this coming legislative cycle.

Casey Elliott, Townsend Public Affairs, provided a PowerPoint presentation and described the 2025 Legislative Session key dynamics, areas of legislative focus on the State budget, housing and land use, wildfire recovery and preparedness, and homeowner insurance. He provided a status of bills introduced, described housing and land use policies, discussed revenue streams in the form of a potential statewide housing bond, housing affordability discussions, and housing and land use key bills (AB 647, AB 650, AB 712, and SB 79).

Mr. Elliott then referred to wildfire recovery and preparedness and described numerous bills relating to wildfire recovery and preparedness efforts (AB 66, AB 300, AB 888, and AB 1143), streamlining vegetation management projects, home hardening efforts, and additional firefighting resources.

Regarding homeowners insurance, Mr. Elliott described several bills (AB 1, AB 69, AB 226, and AB 1236) relating to stabilizing the CA FAIR Plan, encouraging insurers to increasing insurance offerings, and funding to make properties more insurable.

Mayors and Councilmembers posed questions regarding the status of AB 712 (Wicks) and asked and confirmed it is on the Assembly floor, questioned the status of AB 66 and similar bills relating to CEQA exemptions for egress projects in VHFHSZs, voiced concerns about timing and receipt of funding for prevention efforts, and resident concerns with evacuation and development of housing in VHFHSZs.

Mr. Elliott then discussed the purpose and structure of a Lamorinda regional advocacy proposal, drew on his experience with a similar structure with Tri-Valley cities, and described Mayors' and City Managers' involvement, meetings, and staff level assistance as part of the process. He described the need to establish and agree on priority issues by the three cities, noting advocacy opportunities, establishment of protocols or branding for communications provided by Townsend, organizational support and the cost of \$4,500 per month split between the three cities. He suggested a 12-month contract with annual renewal, and a separation of services provided by Townsend to any individual member city.

City Manager Smith thanked Mr. Elliott for his current work and discussions regarding this proposal over the last few months. This must be a value add for the Councils and, while additive, there are things Mr. Elliott could be doing at the local level that may be handled at the regional level. That adjustment could be made for those currently contracting for those services.

Vice Mayor Hillis asked and confirmed with Mr. Elliott that this is something additive on top of what Orinda and Lafayette contract for. On the list of services offered, given members are limited to 31 or 32 bills a year, if they all came together on an idea for a sponsored bill, he asked and confirmed Mr. Elliott could identify an author and work with the Lamorinda Advocacy group and also with any authors to then move bills through, committee fact sheets, backgrounds, support and opposition to help to carry the bill along.

He then asked how much of Mr. Elliott's time could be dedicated to Moraga under this proposal and if this would specifically be under agreement of the three cities, with anything specifically needed for Moraga under a separate contract. Mr. Elliott responded that this proposal would be limited to the Regional Advocacy proposal, and he would be happy to discuss a separate Moraga contract specifically for Moraga's legislative needs.

Vice Mayor Hillis asked how much of Mr. Elliott's time would Moraga receive for the cost as split between all three agencies. Mr. Elliott explained that Townsend Public Affairs has 22 employees, 17 of which are registered State or federal advocates or both. The way they operate is on a team approach. He is the primary point of contact for Lafayette and Orinda City Managers. Whatever he cannot do, he has a team of employees behind him.

For \$4,500, Moraga's one-third split would receive the full scope of services as much as he and his team can provide as opposed to being billed hourly. They try to tailor everything to the scope of services and deliver on that, and he would be the primary point of contact.

Mayors and Councilmembers asked and Mr. Elliott provided examples of work he did for Tri-Valley cities advocating with the DOT with Congressmen, identifying federal grants, and work done in Sacramento, how position letters were processed without the need to return to the Councils, and he confirmed that if a bill is amended, Townsend has a practice of re-issuing a letter if it is not a material change, so it is recognized by the new committee of jurisdiction.

Mayor Malkani opened the Public Forum.

Tonya Love, Community Relations Representative, BART, encouraged the three cities to support efforts to maintain regional public transit within their regional legislative approach, spoke about BART's efficiency efforts in operating costs, budget deficit and cost cuts, and the need for a new funding model. SB 63 would authorize a 10- to 15-year sales tax to fund transit operations with the default rate of one-half cent in the county.

BART is working with State legislators, partners at MTC, and other transit agencies to pass the legislation and she described service cuts of up to 70%, reduced train frequency, station closures, evening service, and reduced capacity, reliance on regional transit, benefits of fewer vehicles on the roads and cleaner air, and said BART Director Matt Rinn is available to provide a presentation upon request.

Mayor Malkani returned discussion to the Councils.

Vice Mayor Hillis spoke of mixed views on SB 63, and strongly advocated that Lamorinda cities have similar advocacy with the BART Director and with Senator Wiener.

Separately on the topic of whether or not Moraga should have Legislative Advocacy representation, the example he raises is that each of them individually have lives, families, and jobs and there is only so much people can do on an individual basis to go and represent themselves or their town in Sacramento, as well as only so much they can hope the League will do for them individually. Their three communities have many things in common and if the only advocacy Moraga is going to be able to get in Sacramento or D.C. is through the Lamorinda Advocacy proposal, he would thank them for allowing Moraga to be included because they have critical issues that can only be resolved through advocacy at the State and federal levels.

Mayors and Councilmember voiced overall support of the Legislative Advocacy proposal, emphasizing that all three cities have common issues and the proposal would also not prevent any one city to pursue issues affecting their own community. They provided examples of Mr. Elliott's work to date, real value added, worthwhile advocacy on the legislative front, the power of three voices versus one, the evident "bang for the buck," and the flexibility for any one city to depart from the group, if desired.

Mayor Woehleke cited Moraga's historical inward focus and the need to share resources and work together. He noted Moraga was not yet ready to make a commitment tonight because two members were not present; however, he personally agreed the legislative advocacy proposal was worth trying and it was likely Moraga would pursue this.

Mayor Malkani thanked Councilmembers for their support of the idea, stating this has been Orinda's first year of engaging with Townsend Public Affairs and appreciates the City Manager's leadership, Lafayette's example, and Mr. Elliott's advocacy. She was able to see personally the value added at a recent trip to Sacramento and hoped all three cities will work on issues that involve them all in the hopes of achieving additional funding and resources.

Councilmember Gee added that surrounding them are all partner type agencies such as EBMUD, EBRPD, PG&E and suggested a more unified voice as very helpful in terms of coordinating and collaborating with those entities, as well.

Mayor Candell asked about the process.

City Manager Smith said the cities will talk more about timing and schedule. She thinks Town Manager Mitnick has some work to do with the Council in terms of bringing that forward for a formal discussion, and they will be working with Mr. Elliott on what an appropriate schedule would be before the next Legislative Session.

Concurrence would be needed from all three Councils on the legislative platform, identifying topics and issues to work on a regional level, and this could inform the singular contract with Townsend on what is left on their individual respective platforms to work on. For Orinda, they would be looking at the fall to meet and work to put together regional issues, bring it back to the group, and this goes to the next item on the agenda.

Vice Mayor Hillis referred to timing and said the legislature has a very specific calendar. September is the end of this year's session, and if they will impact this year's legislative calendar they will need to have an agreed upon platform before the end of session when the bills are moving. If there is debate it will not work, but if there is consensus they should all get

together sooner than later to establish their legislative platform to get moving and have an immediate effect.

City Manager Smith said one option could be for the Mayors and City Managers to work with Mr. Elliott on identifying what the items might be and then bring them back to a body, but she sensed concerns.

City Manager Srivatsa said her concern is they are getting to the end of the Legislative year and she does not know how much they can influence the bills as they are in process. It might be better to budget for this regional group in the next fiscal budget but start work on it in the fall, and then return to the Councils with legislative platforms, both individual and regional. This would provide staff time, as well.

Mr. Elliott said for this year, bills will need to move out of their first House by the first week of June. They will then need to move through policy committee in the second House by July 11th. Then, there is a summer recess for a month and the legislature is back for a month. He would say if they cannot start before the start of the new fiscal year of July 1st then there is only a four-week window when the legislature will be in, so effectively, there would only be one month where the legislature would be in session.

He thought that if the group wanted to establish legislative priorities and have those in place for January when the legislature comes back when they are dealing with two-year bills and new bill introductions, the Councils could have all positions and priorities in place in time for January, and this would be a good goal.

City Manager Mitnick conveyed appreciation from Moraga to Lafayette and Orinda City Managers for working with them. They are in the early stages of developing a legislative platform for the very first time and will then work together to do a subregional one if that is desirable.

E.3 Discussion of Meeting Frequency from Annually to Semi-Annually.

City Manager Smith stated she agendaized this item from a Matters Initiated item at a previous Council meeting to hold a discussion about ways to connect more with the surrounding regional councils. This is one platform for that but it happens once a year. When discussing regional advocacy, that was an opportunity for more frequency in getting this group together, so it could serve as a foundation for other things Councils might want to be working on aside from legislative advocacy.

She and Town Manager Mitnick talked about meeting twice a year to start and see how that goes, and they would then look to potentially move the timing of these meetings to coincide with the legislative session. They might look more in the February/March timeframe for the first meeting because bills are being introduced and the Councils can discuss these, and then again closer in the August timeframe once they know what the bills are and what other actions the group might take in response to that, if the Councils are interested.

Mayor Malkani opened the Public Forum, and there were no speakers.

Mayors and Councilmembers voiced support for semi-annual meetings but were also open to all cities meeting additionally if there is good reason to do so. There was a suggestion for City Managers to solicit topics that would not take excessive time to discuss, potentially creating ad-hoc committees as needed, and recommended meetings be action-oriented and efficient.

Mayor Malkani confirmed there was consensus to meet semi-annually and thanked City staff for coordinating this meeting.

E.4 Possible Items for Future Joint Meeting

Mayor Malkani opened the Public Forum, and there were no speakers.

Mayors and Councilmembers suggested 1) Considering a Lamorinda pilot program on how AI might be able to assist with wildfire prevention efforts, 2) CCTA Transportation Study update as a standing item and funding opportunities, 3) Brainstorming ways to collaborate such as having liaisons to utilities talk about regional issues, stakeholder engagement, lessons learned from each City, 4) How to encourage sustainable housing development, 5) Formation of a regional working group with utilities to talk about emergency preparedness, evacuation, planning, and roadway interconnection and capacity issues.

F. ADJOURNMENT

The Special Meeting was adjourned at approximately **9:42 p.m.** to the next Regular Town Council Meeting of the Town of Moraga on Wednesday, May 14, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:



Amy Heavener, CMC
Town Clerk



Approved by the Moraga Town Council:



Steve Woehleke, Mayor