



Town of Moraga

MAYOR'S OFFICE

May 12, 2021

Moraga-Orinda Fire District, Board of Directors
1280 Moraga Way
Moraga, CA 94556

RE: Opposing a Study of a Moraga-Orinda Fire District Consolidation/Dissolution Process

Dear MOFD Chair Jorgens and Board Directors:

We understand that at your Board meeting of May 19, 2021, you will be discussing the process of a possible consolidation of Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) into the Costa County Fire Protection District (ConFire) and the financial implications of consolidation. We appreciate the opportunity to share our observations related to that upcoming discussion.

MOFD is one of the highest performing and innovative fire districts in the State of California. The Town of Moraga and its citizens have greatly benefited from the high-quality paramedic and fire protection services that have protected this community since MOFD's inception in 1997. Given the significant wildfire risk in our community, we particularly appreciate the ongoing collaboration between MOFD, the Moraga Police Department, neighborhood groups and our residents on disaster preparedness, emergency planning, and fire safety in our neighborhoods and open spaces. We hope for that collaboration to continue through this upcoming fire season and well beyond.

Our community is fortunate to be served and protected by a high-performing, nimble, well-funded, innovative, efficient, and locally-controlled fire district. Moraga residents and businesses benefit from: i) better critical response times for paramedic and fire suppression services; ii) decision making by a board that is locally elected and that represents the specific interests of Moraga and Orinda; iii) local control over decisions and the use of our tax dollars; iv) specialized fire prevention programs, such as the neighborhood chipping program; v) MOFD's experience managing the challenges posed by our terrain, narrow roads and high fire risk areas; and, vi) the innovative and proactive approaches to fire protection, paramedic services, and emergency evacuation preparedness that an agile locally controlled and focused organization can provide.

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This is not the first time that the issue of whether MOFD should be absorbed into the ConFire has arisen. As you may recall, in 2009, the Contra Costa County LAFCO Municipal Service Review of Fire and Emergency Service Providers recommended that consideration be given to merging MOFD into the ConFire. The Councils of both the Town of Moraga and the City of Orinda unanimously voted to oppose that option publicly.

We strongly oppose the consolidation of MOFD with ConFire and spending resources studying a process for such consolidation. Resources should continue to be spent on the delivery of high-quality fire protection, fire safety, and emergency response services.

Thank you for considering our input and that of the residents of our Town.

Sincerely,



Mike McCluer, Mayor
Town of Moraga

Enclosure: Correspondence sent to the Town of Moraga.

From: Brent Meyers <[REDACTED]>

Date: May 8, 2021 at 9:50:10 AM PDT

To: Mike McCluer <mmccluer@moraga.ca.us>, Steve Woehleke <swoehleke@moraga.ca.us>, Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>, Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>, David Stromberg <dstromberg@moraga.ca.us>, Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>

Subject: 5/12 TC Mtg - Item 11A (MOFD) Public Comment

[please include in public comment and associated packet/record]

Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers,

As a long-time Moraga resident predating the formation of the MOFD, **count me among those firmly opposed to any consideration of dissolving or merging MOFD with Confire and encouraging the Town Council to similarly communicate such a position** to MOFD and any other governmental agency involved or with influence.

MOFD has consistently done an excellent job of developing and implementing strategies and programs tailored specifically the local communities it serves. This success is a direct result of the local funding and management of MOFD, and there appears to be no valid reason nor benefit to Moraga or Orinda residents to even consider handing over this locally-created, high-performing organization to the county.

Thank you,

Brent Meyers

Moraga

From: Jorge Escobar <[REDACTED]>
Date: May 8, 2021 at 1:22:46 PM PDT
To: Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>
Subject: Proposal to Dissolve MOFD and Merge With ConFire

Dear Council Members of the Town of Moraga:

As I expressed to the Board of MOFD, I am deeply concerned with the proposal submitted by MOFD Board Member Greg Baitx to dissolve and merge the MOFD with ConFire. This idea advanced by Vince Wells, president of the Local 1231 firefighters union disregards the will of our communities' citizens, who approved the creation of the district twenty-four years ago. This proposal would not only result in losing local control of our top-performing/ranked and efficient fire and ambulance services with deep understanding of our district, but among several other dire consequences siphon significant funds from our Orinda and Moraga communities to other places in the county and make it even more challenging to find companies willing to underwrite home insurance.

As the father and grandfather of family residing in Moraga, as well as a resident of Orinda for the past thirty-five years and leader of one of our Firewise Neighborhoods, I ask that you encourage the MOFD Board to think very carefully about their fiduciary duty and respect for citizens' opinions and avoid making decisions that ignore both.

Thank you and kind regards,

Jorge Escobar
Orinda, CA 94563

From: SMARTMoraga Community <community@smartmoraga.com>

Date: May 8, 2021 at 4:04:05 PM PDT

To: Mike McCluer <mmcluer@moraga.ca.us>, Steve Woehleke <swoehleke@moraga.ca.us>, Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>, Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>, David Stromberg <dstromberg@moraga.ca.us>

Cc: Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>, SMARTMoraga Community <community@smartmoraga.com>

Subject: Agenda item 11A (MOFD)

Mayor and Councilmembers,

We write to express our strong opposition to any further discussion or attempt by MOFD to dissolve and merge with Confire, and in support of the Town Council communicating a similar sentiment to MOFD Directors. We further request that the Town exert whatever other influence it can to ensure MOFD continues as an entity that properly serves and is responsive to its taxpaying citizens' needs, desires and direction.

Thank you.

From: TomandCZ <[REDACTED]>
Date: May 8, 2021 at 4:31:56 PM PDT
To: Mike McCluer <mmccluer@moraga.ca.us>, Steve Woehleke <swoehleke@moraga.ca.us>, Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>, Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>, David Stromberg <dstromberg@moraga.ca.us>, Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>
Subject: KEEP MOFD INDEPENDENT!

The idea of MERGING WITH CONFIRE is dangerously absurd!

MOFD serves a portion of our county that faces unique dangers which, after years of neglect, have been aggressively addressed because Moraga and Orinda have established their own Fire Department. It was born out of necessity. We left Confire because our steep hills and deep ravines as well as our winding, narrow streets prevented their fire and ambulance services from reaching or even finding the homes in need of emergency services. With our own Fire Department, response times have been reduced to acceptable levels and lives and homes have been saved.

Our dedicated, innovative, charismatic and extremely effective Fire Chief, Dave Winnacker, his Fire Marshall, Jeff Issacs and the rest of the outstanding staff our Chief has assembled are doing a magnificent job of mitigating our Wild Fire risk. All of you must be familiar with the accolades MOFD receives from our grateful citizens, the aggressive and innovative measures MOFD has initiated, the grants it has received and the amazing cooperation it has elicited from our community.

To go back to being merely one of many communities, few of which face the urban-wilderness interface problems that we have here, would be a giant and dangerous step backward.

TOM AND CYNTHIA CZERNER

From: Joseph Heil <[REDACTED]>

Date: May 8, 2021 at 5:39:16 PM PDT

To: Mike McCluer <mmccluer@moraga.ca.us>, Steve Woehleke <swoehleke@moraga.ca.us>, Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>, Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>, David Stromberg <dstromberg@moraga.ca.us>, Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>

Subject: Fire Department

I'm writing to ask that you oppose the dissolution of the MOFD. The establishment of the MOFD was a result of the poor service that Confire had previously giving our community. To return to that lowered level of service at a time of elevated fire danger would be devastating to our community under this threat. Our community's protection should not be threatened by a union seeking to expand it's rank and file by so few. Your opposition to the MOFD dissolution is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely Yours,

Joseph and Alicia Heil

From: Kristina Whitney <[REDACTED]>
Date: May 9, 2021 at 9:45:45 AM PDT
To: Mike McCluer <mmccluer@moraga.ca.us>, Steve Woehleke <swoehleke@moraga.ca.us>, Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>, Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>, Mike McCluer <mmccluer@moraga.ca.us>, Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>
Subject: LETTER OF DISAPPROVAL

Dear Mayor McCleur, Vice Mayor Woehleke, and Councilmembers Sos, Stromberg and Onoda,

I am writing to express my **strongest disapproval** of any proposed or possible MOFD dissolution and/or merger with ConFire.

Much of our area has been designated by the State of California as a high fire hazard severity zone. It is imperative that our community not lose its high-performing, well-funded, locally-controlled fire district.

Should our fire district dissolve and merge with ConFire, we would lose:

- Improved critical response times for paramedic and fire suppression services that are provided by our district.
 - Moraga's emergency medical needs are best served by our excellent all firefighter/paramedic staff which can respond to medical distress calls quickly and efficiently. Without it, ambulances would have to travel long distances from the freeway to Moraga and then back out to the freeway, resulting in a possible increased risk of deaths.
- Local control over decisions about fire-fighting and paramedic service priorities and programs such as firebreaks, neighborhood chipping, FireWise neighborhoods, etc.
- The locally-elected, locally-focused MOFD Board, which would be replaced by the County Board of Supervisors that looks out for the County as a whole;
- The deep understanding that our local district has about fire and evacuation risk posed by our terrain, network of narrow roads, vegetation, and abundant open space;
- The local control over all tax dollars that currently fund our fire district;
- Extensive volunteer and community efforts (e.g., FireWise Councils, CERT, Rescue 1 Foundation) that support our local fire district; and
- Innovative and proactive approaches to fire protection, paramedic services, and emergency evacuation preparedness.

Past negotiations with ConFire showed that the views and priorities of ConFire vs Orinda and Moraga were in conflict, and that ConFire has too many conflicting demands for their time and funding to be a good partner to our towns.

In your position, you were elected to serve the residents of Moraga, not the Unions. We are counting on you to represent and voice the needs and preferences of your constituency.

Sincerely,

Kristina E. Whitney, Ph.D.

From: Bruce Cohen <[REDACTED]>
Date: May 9, 2021 at 10:59:43 AM PDT
To: Mike McCluer <mmcluer@moraga.ca.us>, Steve Woehleke <swoehleke@moraga.ca.us>, Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>, Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>, David Stromberg <dstromberg@moraga.ca.us>, Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>
Subject: Fwd: Opposition to dissolving MOFD and being absorbed into CONFIRE

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Bruce Cohen <[REDACTED]>
Date: Sun, May 9, 2021 at 10:31 AM
Subject: Opposition to dissolving MOFD and being absorbed into CONFIRE
To: <info@mofd.org>

As residents of Orinda since 1993 we feel qualified to comment on the importance of fire safety in Moraga and Orinda. We are very much opposed to having MOFD absorbed into CONFIRE. MOFD provides significantly improved responsiveness to fires and emergencies in Moraga and Orinda, and has higher fire safety standards than CONFIRE. Local control of the funding of MOFD is important to us; we are not as confident in the distribution of funding/resources for CONFIRE to Moraga and Orinda needs. Having our own local fire chief and local fire marshall is important to our safety. Moraga and Orinda residents have steadfastly supported having MOFD. The Moraga and Orinda residents should determine the continued existence of MOFD.

Thanks for your attention in this matter.

Bruce Cohen and Sharon Krause

From: Adam Kremen <[REDACTED]>
Date: May 9, 2021 at 5:05:41 PM PDT
To: Mike McCluer <mmccluer@moraga.ca.us>, Steve Woehleke <swoehleke@moraga.ca.us>, Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>, Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>, Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>
Subject: LETTER OF DISAPPROVAL
Reply-To: Adam Kremen <adamkremen@protonmail.com>

Dear Mayor McCleur, Vice Mayor Woehleke, and Councilmembers Sos, Stromberg and Onoda,

I am writing to express my **strongest disapproval** of any proposed or possible MOFD dissolution and/or merger with ConFire.

Much of our area has been designated by the State of California as a high fire hazard severity zone. It is imperative that our community not lose its high-performing, well-funded, locally-controlled fire district.

Should our fire district dissolve and merge with ConFire, we would lose:

- Improved critical response times for paramedic and fire suppression services that are provided by our district.
 - Moraga's emergency medical needs are best served by our excellent all firefighter/paramedic staff which can respond to medical distress calls quickly and efficiently. Without it, ambulances would have to travel long distances from the freeway to Moraga and then back out to the freeway, resulting in a possible increased risk of deaths.
- Local control over decisions about fire-fighting and paramedic service priorities and programs such as firebreaks, neighborhood chipping, FireWise neighborhoods, etc.
- The locally-elected, locally-focused MOFD Board, which would be replaced by the County Board of Supervisors that looks out for the County as a whole;
- The deep understanding that our local district has about fire and evacuation risk posed by our terrain, network of narrow roads, vegetation, and abundant open space;
- The local control over all tax dollars that currently fund our fire district;
- Extensive volunteer and community efforts (e.g., FireWise Councils, CERT, Rescue 1 Foundation) that support our local fire district; and
- Innovative and proactive approaches to fire protection, paramedic services, and emergency evacuation preparedness.

Past negotiations with ConFire showed that the views and priorities of ConFire vs Orinda and Moraga were in conflict, and that ConFire has too many conflicting demands for their time and funding to be a good partner to our towns.

As an MOFD Board Member, you were elected to serve the residents of Moraga and Orinda, not the Unions. We are counting on you to represent and voice the needs and preferences of your constituency.

Sincerely,

Adam Kremen, Ph.D.

From: Robert Etheredge <[REDACTED]>

Date: May 9, 2021 at 7:01:40 PM PDT

To: Mike McCluer <mmccluer@moraga.ca.us>, Steve Woehleke <swoehleke@moraga.ca.us>, Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>, Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>, David Stromberg <dstromberg@moraga.ca.us>, Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>

Subject: Moraga Town Council

Dear Council Members,

I'm writing to ask that you oppose the dissolution of the MOFD. The establishment of the MOFD was a result of the poor service that Confire had previously giving our community. To return to that lowered level of service at a time of elevated fire danger would be devastating to our community under this threat. Our community's protection should not be threatened by a union seeking to expand it's rank and file by so few. Your opposition to the MOFD dissolution is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely Yours,
Robert and Cheri Etheredge
30 year Orinda resident

From: [REDACTED]
Date: May 9, 2021 at 8:08:56 PM PDT
To: Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>
Subject: Upcoming MOFD Discusssion

My favorite Town Clerk:

I understand the council will be discussing the proposal to dissolve MOFD and merge with ConFire. What part of NO don't they understand? Attached is my comment on this prospect, which I'd ask you to share with the council before their upcoming meeting. I passed my draft by Dick Olsen for a check on accuracy, which accounts for the title of the file. I plan on making an abbreviated comment during the Public Comment segment of the meeting. Many thanks.

MFM

Comments on Prospect of Dissolving MOFD

It's distressing to learn that a faction of the current Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) governing board is considering dissolution of the district and merging its services with Contra Costa Fire (ConFire). This is not the first time such a proposal has arisen, and, once again, it's time for the citizens who benefit from MOFD's services to be heard.

First ask, What prompted the citizens of Moraga, Orinda, and in the Canyon and Bollinger Canyon unincorporated areas to form the MOFD back in 1997? Moraga already had its own fire district and had added ambulance and paramedic services in a deliberate effort to provide Moragans with more complete and more responsive emergency services. Moragans had previously done so particularly because the services they had been receiving from the County's Emergency Medical System had been grossly inadequate. Especially worrisome were unacceptable emergency ambulance response times. Testimony to their concern was that on three different occasions, Moragans had voted for Moraga Fire District tax increases to fully fund and improve our Fire and EMS services. Additionally, Moraga's impressive paramedic and ambulance services were then also supported by a special public benefit corporation called The Rescue 1 Foundation. Over the years this Foundation raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to help acquire specialized equipment, and the Foundation continues to operate to this day.

But the primary reason that Moragans voted to support the MOFD's formation was to free our fire and EMS services from the County's control by forming an independent, fire district to replace what was then a County-dependent fire district.

The citizens in the County-dependent Orinda Fire District wanted to join with the Moraga Fire District to form the MOFD so that they could also enjoy the paramedic and ambulance services that they then lacked as participants in the County's EMS program. They also wanted to free themselves from the County's control of their fire and EMS services. With much effort, the citizens of Moraga and Orinda developed the concept of what became the MOFD and prepared and filed with LAFCO an application to form the MOFD. The voters of each of the Moraga and Orinda Fire Districts then approved the MOFD's formation by overwhelming majorities.

The new fire protection district was funded by tax revenues from the two former fire districts that had been as previously allocated to them according to post-Proposition 13 schemes. Fireflow taxes that had been previously approved by Moraga Fire District voters to maintain and enhance local emergency services and to help fund capital improvements were continued within the MOFD. At the June 1997 election where the MOFD's formation was approved, a similar fireflow tax was passed that covered the area of the former Orinda Fire District. These fireflow tax revenues continue today.

Since its formation the MOFD has performed as intended. Service levels are high. Moreover, as the Moraga-Orinda-Canyon area becomes an increasingly dangerous wildland-urban interface environment, exceptional efforts undertaken by the MOFD are showing benefits in terms of fire safety for our communities. Emergency planning has been taken seriously and positive measures have been implemented (CERT, Formation of 27 FireWise Communities within the MOFD. Adoption of a new Fire Code, Real Time Computer Generated Evacuation Plans; Enhanced abatement enforcement efforts, etc.).

A recent attempt in 2009 to upset the existence of the district met with fierce grass-roots opposition. The focus of that effort was a LAFCO Municipal Service Review of the County's Fire and EMS Providers that included a Consultant's recommendation that consideration be given to merging the MOFD into ConFire. From the many hearings that were conducted, it became clear that there was strong public

satisfaction with the district, and that no major structural changes should be made. The matter died only after considerable time and energy had been spent by a lot of concerned citizens.

Now a new consolidation proposal has emerged. This time, it appears to be driven by the labor union to which the firefighters belong – Local 1230. In 2018 three new board members, whose elections were backed by significant donations from Local 1230, were elected. Presently the three board members are, in effect, union representatives. At the MOFD's March Board Meeting, Local 1230's President, Mr. Vince Wells, proposed that the MOFD should be dissolved and merged into ConFire. At that same meeting, MOFD Director Mr. Gregory Baitx, who represents the portion of the Moraga that lies south of Canyon Road and Saint Mary's Road -- and who also is a member of Local 1230 -- strongly supported Mr. Wells's proposal. At the MOFD's April Board meeting, Mr. Baitx proposed that the issue of dissolving MOFD should be added to the agenda for a future MOFD Board meeting. With a majority of the MOFD Board currently controlled by Local 1230, it seems the Board currently intends to dissolve MOFD. While some board members might deny that intention, it's plain to see.

This is a horrible prospect. Should MOFD cease to exist, and its assets and services be merged into ConFire, the two communities that worked hard in 1996 and 1997 to form the MOFD would actually be in worse shape than they were in 1997. Instead of benefiting from MOFD's superior services they would necessarily be forced to rely on ConFire, a much larger Concord-based agency with far more communities to serve than MOFD. There would be a complete loss of the local control ~~they~~ we currently enjoy. Nor would there be economies of scale with such a merger. With bigness follows inefficiency, most would agree -- which causes one to ask, Why should this happen? Why let this happen?

Clearly this is a union power grab. The beneficiaries would be other communities in the ConFire sphere, and perhaps the union itself. Other communities within the ConFire sphere would potentially enjoy improved service due to the addition of the MOFD's Moraga and Orinda-sourced taxes, assets and resources to ConFire, but current MOFD residents who are beneficiaries of the MOFD's services certainly would not benefit. MOFD district communities would suffer both a reduced quantity and quality of services -- they would be reduced to lowest common denominator status. Fire response times would increase; fire prevention measures such as fuels mitigation would likely diminish; and, most disconcerting, emergency medical services on which our communities so depend would be negatively impacted. Also troubling is that, instead of our current local control, our fire and EMS services would then be under the control of the governing body for ConFire: the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors. It's not that the Board of Supervisors ~~hasn't~~ haven't their constituents' welfare at heart; it's that their span of their responsibilities is so vast that there's no way they could attend to matters of our fire and emergency medical protection nearly as diligently as a focused governing board of MOFD -- assuming that a majority of the MOFD's governing body truly wants to serve the interests of our communities.

Any initiative to terminate the MOFD must be taken carefully. The road to perdition must be avoided.

This is to a plea to those elected officials who have a say in such a decision: Listen carefully to those who will be affected by what appears to be a misguided special-interest initiative. And then follow the maxim that always serves so well: If it ain't broke don't fix it.

* * * * *

From: Mark Spindler <n[REDACTED]>
Date: May 10, 2021 at 7:32:18 AM PDT
To: info@mofd.org
Cc: mmcluer@moraga.ca.us, Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>
Subject: Dissolution of MOFD

Dear MOFD Directors,

I am writing to ask you to oppose the dissolution of the MOFD. The establishment of the MOFD was a result of the poor service that Confire had previously provided to our communities. To return to that lower level of service in a time of elevated fire danger would be devastating to our communities facing this threat. I also think that it is fair to assume that if Confire resources become stretched or reduced, smaller communities such as Moraga will feel the effects of those reductions before the larger cities of Contra Costa County. Our communities' protection should not be threatened by a union seeking to expand its rank and file.

Your opposition to the MOFD dissolution is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Mark and Denise Spindler
Moraga

From: [REDACTED]

Date: May 10, 2021 at 11:44:13 AM PDT

To: Mike McCluer <mmcluer@moraga.ca.us>, Steve Woehleke <swoehleke@moraga.ca.us>, Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>, Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>, dsstromberg@moraga.ca.us, Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>

Cc: Nancy Comprelli <francycom@comcast.net>

Subject: MOFD Proposed Dissolution

I have grave ethical concerns about the MOFD dissolution. I understand members of the MOFD board of directors are employed by Contra Costa Fire. Is their loyalty to their employer or the citizens of Moraga and Orinda? What personal benefit do they gain by transferring assets to their employer? Are they on fast track for promotions? Are they assigned to preferred houses?

Has the fire board's legal counsel offered an opinion on this matter. I believe the MOFD members employed by Contra Costa Fire should recuse themselves on voting for the dissolution.

Joan Webb

Moraga, CA 94556

From: Cheri Etheredge <[REDACTED]>
Date: May 10, 2021 at 11:44:37 AM PDT
To: Mike McCluer <mmccluer@moraga.ca.us>, Steve Woehleke <swoehleke@moraga.ca.us>, Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>, Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>, David Stromberg <dstromberg@moraga.ca.us>, Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>
Subject: Dissolution of the MOFD

Dear Moraga Board members,

I am writing to ask that you oppose the dissolution of the MOFD. The establishment of the MOFD was a result of the poor service that Confire had previously giving our community. To return to that lowered level of service at a time of elevated fire danger would be devastating to our community under this threat. Our community's protection should not be threatened by a union seeking to expand it's rank and file by so few. Your opposition to the MOFD dissolution is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely Yours,
Cheri Etheredge
Orinda

From: "Fred B. Weil" <[REDACTED]>
Date: May 10, 2021 at 11:51:50 AM PDT
To: Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>
Subject: **Proposed Dissolution of the Moraga-Orinda Fire Protection District or its Consolidation with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District**

Dear Members of the Council,

I am writing to you to urge you to adopt your draft letter of opposition to a proposal to dissolve the Moraga-Orinda Fire Protection District (MOFD) or consolidate it with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (ConFire).

The emergency medical services provided by MOFD, through its fine staff of highly trained firefighter/paramedics and well-equipped emergency vehicles, are unique in this county and of great benefit to the residents of Moraga. Those special services would be lost in any dissolution or consolidation with ConFire, leaving our community with only whatever services may be provided from time to time throughout ConFire's large service area by a private contractor, American Medical Response, with which ConFire has formed a so-called "Alliance." Moreover, residents of MOFD's service area do not pay for ambulance services beyond what their medical insurance pays. That would likely change under ConFire's practices, which should be a serious concern for all of us, and especially those of advanced age or modest means.

MOFD gives attention to our local fire risks in ways that ConFire cannot do, given ConFire's size and many demands from all over the area it serves. Our needs and risks would simply be lumped in with the needs and risks of other parts of the ConFire service area, rather than being given the current special attention, such as assistance with local Fire Wise groups and controlled burns in areas with a history of fires.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Fred Weil

From: Charlie Coane <[REDACTED]>

Date: May 10, 2021 at 1:42:22 PM PDT

To: Mike McCluer <mmcluer@moraga.ca.us>, Steve Woehleke <swoehleke@moraga.ca.us>, Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>, Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>, David Stromberg <dstromberg@moraga.ca.us>, Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>

Subject: MOFD Issues

What are the advantages to the citizens of Moraga and Orinda to consolidate the MOFD into the county?? Why do that?

CCC

Charlie Coane

From: Brian Myers [REDACTED]

Date: May 10, 2021 at 2:49:30 PM PDT

To: Mike McCluer <mmcluer@moraga.ca.us>, Steve Woehleke <swoehleke@moraga.ca.us>, Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>, Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>, David Stromberg <dstromberg@moraga.ca.us>, Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>

Subject: **We opposed MOFD dissolution**

We think MOFD is performing well as is and have no reason to consider any changes.

We are against dissolution and support the town sending a letter and using all resources required to prevent this breach of public trust.

Brian and Heather Myers

From: meyersgconsulting@gmail.com <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, May 10, 2021 6:15 PM
To: Mike McCluer <mmcluer@moraga.ca.us>; Steve Woehleke <swoehleke@moraga.ca.us>; Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>; Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>; David Stromberg <dstromberg@moraga.ca.us>; Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>

Subject: MOFD dissolution proposal

Dear Mr. Mayor and councilmembers,

As a resident of Moraga since 1974, I am writing to indicate my opposition to the proposal to eliminate the MOFD which has served as an excellent example of how high quality, cost effective services can be shared by neighboring communities with common interests and needs. It is especially disturbing that the proposed dissolution process is being spearheaded by a biased union representative. I urge the Town Council to actively oppose this poorly thought out process which will result in poorer, less efficient and less timely service to our residents.

Gerald Meyers

From: Sharon Cahill <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, May 10, 2021 7:49 PM
To: Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>

Subject: Consolidation

My husband and I want to go on the record that we are vehemently opposed to losing the MOFD Fire Department as it exists now. We have zero interest in changing the very best asset that Moraga offers. The service and services are exemplary and very important to us. The local paramedics/ ambulance service is outstanding and of enormous importance. As Moraga residents we implore you to not let this asset be tampered with in any way.

Thank you. Bill and Sharon Cahill.

From: Brent Meyers <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 10:32 AM
To: gbaitx@mofd.org; mmjjex@gmail.com; stevedformofd@gmail.com; mdonnermofd@gmail.com; Craig.Jorgens@gmail.com; dwinnacker@mofd.org; info@mofd.com; mholbrook@mofd.org
Cc: 'Michelle Kolodziej' <mkolodziej@commoninterest.com>; 'Larry Jacobs' <larry_jacobs@comcast.net>; 'Junaid Mohiuddin' <jgmohiuddin@gmail.com>; 'Lesli Fellman' <lfellman@ir2diagnostics.com>; 'Eduardo Carranza' <eduardo@noleak.com>; Mike McCluer <mmcluer@moraga.ca.us>; Steve Woehleke <swoehleke@moraga.ca.us>; Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>; Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>; David Stromberg <dstromberg@moraga.ca.us>; Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>; Cynthia Battenberg <cbattenberg@moraga.ca.us>

Subject: Sanders Ranch HOA Letter re: Opposing MOFD/Confire Merger Exploration
Importance: High

Members of the MOFD Board and Chief Winnacker,

Attached please find a letter from the Sanders Ranch Homeowners Association related to your upcoming 5/19 agenda item on the exploration of an MOFD/Confire merger.

At its special meeting last evening, **the Board unanimously agreed that - on behalf of its 273 homeowners and 21 HOA-owned parcels – it is OPPOSED to this endeavor.**

Please also distribute/include this as public comment in any agenda packets and materials.

Thank you,

Brent Meyers
Moraga

From: Marty Aufhauser <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 10:38 AM
To: Mike McCluer <mmccluer@moraga.ca.us>; Steve Woehleke <swoehleke@moraga.ca.us>; Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>; Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>; David Stromberg <dstromberg@moraga.ca.us>
Cc: cbattenbrg@moraga.ca.us; Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>; aufmarty@aol.com

Subject: MOFD Dissolution: NO

Having reviewed pros and cons, I urge you to STRONGLY support NO dissolution of MOFD. As a fifty-year resident, active in many issues, this dissolution cannot be good for Moraga (and Orinda) citizens.

Marty Aufhauser

Moraga

From: Jim Tasker <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 11:45 AM

To: Mike McCluer <mmccluer@moraga.ca.us>; Steve Woehleke <swoehleke@moraga.ca.us>; Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>; Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>; David Stromberg <dstromberg@moraga.ca.us>; Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>

Subject: Moraga and Orinda Fire Departments

Local control has worked great. Why should we change it? The old saying " if it ain't broken, don't fix it."

James Tasker
Moraga.

From: Marianne McKay <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 12:16 PM
To: Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>

Subject: Opposed MOFD consolidation in to ConFire

Dear Town council members,

I am very disturbed and **opposed** to any dissolving of MOFD to be folded into ConFire. MOFD was established in 1997 to provide high quality paramedic and fire protection services tailored for the local needs of Moraga and Orinda. Both communities have a very high fire risk and require that you have an excellent knowledge of the area. MOFD is doing a great job and is very proactive within the community to start neighborhood Firewise groups, chipper services, landscaping guidelines, high tech monitoring in remote areas and many other outreach programs. I have had to use both their medical and their fire services and can attest to outstanding response. There is a tremendous advantage to be smaller and more nimble to the local situations. It would be a BIG mistake to rob the community of those services. Please do not go down this path of consolidations and remove the very local presence by MOFD.

Thank you

Marianne McKay
Moraga

From: Mardi Potts <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 2:30 PM

To: Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>; Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>; David Stromberg <dstromberg@moraga.ca.us>; Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>; Cynthia Battenberg <cbattenberg@moraga.ca.us>

Subject: Opposition to Study of MOFD/Confire Merger

To The Additional Town Council Members,

I just sent the following email and wanted each of you to know what I wrote as it was directed to the Board of Sanders Ranch.

“To the Board of Sanders Ranch---

Thank you very much for composing such a direct response to the current situation on the possibility of a MOFD/Confire merger following the meeting last night. I attended that meeting and want to tell each of you that your actions, dissemination of information, and your transparency are so appreciated. Following the meeting last night, Moraga Mayor Mike McCluer and Vice Mayor Steve Woehleke met with members of the Moraga Garden Club who also have a vested interest in many aspects of our community. A variety of topics were discussed at that joint meeting including the exploration of a MOFD/Confire merger. I attended that meeting and it was insightful as well. Thank you to the Sanders Ranch Board and our Town Council for being so pro-active. Hopefully this all can be “nipped in the bud” as we say in gardener’s language!

Best to each of you, Mardi Potts

Cc: Mike McCluer: Mayor, Town of Moraga
Steve Woehleke: Vice Mayor, Town of Moraga
Penny Walwark: current Moraga Garden Club President
Janice Lieu: 2021-22 Moraga Garden Club President”

From: Elizabeth Kalpakjian <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 5:16 PM
To: gbaitx@mofd.org; mmjex@gmail.com; stevedformofd@gmail.com; mdonnermofd@gmail.com; Craig.Jorgens@gmail.com; dwinacker@mofd.org; info@mofd.org
Cc: Mike McCluer <mmccluer@moraga.ca.us>; Steve Woehleke <swoehleke@moraga.ca.us>; Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>; Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>; David Stromberg <dstromberg@moraga.ca.us>; Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>; Cynthia Battenberg <cbattenberg@moraga.ca.us>

Subject: No time wasted on MOFD consolidation talks

Dear President Jorgens and Members of the Board:

I understand that an agenda item and associated discussion of financial forecasts and process overview for a potential MOFD/Confire merger will occur at your May 19 Board meeting.

As a resident of Sanders Ranch in Moraga, my family has benefited from MOFD's exemplary response to two sizable open space fires in as many years, and a 911 call. I am quite sure that having MOFD right here only a few minutes away made all the difference.

I vehemently OPPOSE the exploration of a potential merger with Confire, and ask that you do not use MOFD resources, including time and money further exploring any consolidation which is not in the interest of the Town and Residents of Moraga. I hope that you will do the job to which you were elected, to represent the residents of Moraga and their interests to ensure time and money only be spent on the high-quality fire safety, firefighting and emergency response services we have invested in and enjoyed for decades.

Thank you for your consideration,

Elizabeth and Norayr Kalpakjian
Moraga, CA

From: Larry Briggs <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 8:30 PM
To: Mike McCluer <mmcluer@moraga.ca.us>; Steve Woehleke <swoehleke@moraga.ca.us>; Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>; Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>; David Stromberg <dstromberg@moraga.ca.us>; Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>
Subject: Consideration of Dissolution of Moraga Orinda fire District

We understand that the MOFD Board will be considering dissolving the MOFD and relying on the county for fire and ambulance. I don't see what problems they might be addressing and trying to fix.

We are opposed to dissolving MOFD and having all fire and ambulance service being taken over by the county. Our fire district was formed by the voters many years ago to improve the quality of service to the residents of our communities from that when we were subject to county level decisions. By forming our own district, the level of both fire and ambulance service has been much higher.

I am not aware that the consideration of reverting to county fire and ambulance service is driven by the expectation that our service levels would improve. In fact, I don't know that there would, or could, be a commitment that service levels would even be maintained at our current levels.

Why would we want to risk reduced service levels at a time when we are at increasing fire risk and experiencing another drought (or a continuation of an extended on-and-of drought). When our risks are already higher, we should not be considering adding another element of risk.

We would hope that our Town Council would strongly oppose such an action.

Thank you.

Larry & Barbara Briggs

Moraga

From: Clark Vilas <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 8:42 AM
To: Mike McCluer <mmcluer@moraga.ca.us>; Steve Woehleke <swoehleke@moraga.ca.us>; Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>; Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>; David Stromberg <dstromberg@moraga.ca.us>; Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>

Subject: Fire Dept. merger

We have lived in Moraga since 1967 - 1967- and strongly oppose a merger with the larger Consolidated Fire Dept. The merger with Orinda was okay, this is definitely NOT.

Thank you for listening

Linda and Clark Vilas
Sanders Ranch area

From: SMARTMoraga Community <community@smartmoraga.com>

Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 8:56 AM

To: Mike McCluer <mmccluer@moraga.ca.us>; Steve Woehleke <swoehleke@moraga.ca.us>; Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>; Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>; David Stromberg <dstromberg@moraga.ca.us>; Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>

Cc: Cynthia Battenberg <cbattenberg@moraga.ca.us>

Subject: Public Comments for 5/12 Agenda Item 11C

Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers,

We write regarding the capital replacement and traffic safety items (combined or at least interrelated on tonight's agenda) and offer the following observations and suggestions:

The town's **capital replacement and traffic safety (and CIP, for that matter) projects should be driven by what is needed**. Discretionary spending on items of dubious value should be avoided, and **projects pursued primarily because they have grant funding associated with them should receive extra scrutiny**. The latter are the ones where we're often told "they're free", when in reality the town incurs a portion of the expenses (of varying degrees) and nonetheless bears the entire cost of time that could otherwise be spent on endeavors of greater value to the town.

In the context of this evening's discussion, this mostly applies to the potential traffic safety endeavors. **Sidewalks to improve safety near schools – where sidewalks currently don't exist – quite clearly are a proper use of the town's limited funds. Similarly, improving crosswalk visibility in areas where pedestrians frequently cross highly-traveled roads have immediate utility and a high ROI.**

Conversely, **some items are beyond wishful thinking and instead are driven by wholly unrealistic, eyes-bigger-than-our-stomach plans** (e.g. Bike|Walk, Livable Moraga Rd) developed as if Moraga wishes to become a Berkeley-style pedestrian and bicycle utopia (notwithstanding the fallacy that Berkeley is anything of the sort). Further, the paltry number of survey respondents and an apparent lack of representative community stakeholders call into question the validity of conclusions. They do look nice; they're just wholly inappropriate, unrealistic, or both.

Some items simply have very little utility and should be dispensed with as such. A Rheem BI bike line to the town limits in Orinda will serve no one. Reflective traffic signals are totally unnecessary here, as we are not a visually chaotic/crowded urban city with signals that are difficult to discern. Anyone who believes better synchronization of traffic signals is of any necessity or value in Moraga needs to have their head examined. A bike lane from the Canyon Bridge to the staging area would be an absurd and wholly irresponsible expense when the protected EBMUD trail parallels the road just feet away.

The creation of projects for the sole reason that grants may be available needs to end. Time is finite and staff spends time applying for and managing these grant-driven projects whose genesis is "some free money" rather than what the Town actually needs and could implement to good effect in short order and at relatively low cost. The continuing roundabout study madness persists as an embarrassing example; the council at least twice has indicated this project has no future, yet here it is again, active "because of the grant" despite everyone knowing the plug should have been pulled long ago. We note that the roundabout consulting firm continues to recommend roundabouts. While we do no question that the subject intersections could be improved, we also note that the **City of Lafayette addressed similarly-challenging intersections on Reliez Station Rd with traffic signals for a small fraction of the cost** of Moraga's envisioned roundabouts. Even if the roundabouts would be "more effective" it seems quite clear that the marginal utility is not commensurate with the significantly increased potential price tag. We know you know this, but communicating such would be helpful as this grant-driven pipe dream draws closer to its hopeful, near conclusion.

With respect to the capital replacement plan and/or CIP activities, the ongoing/funded activities highlighted in Attachment C of the staff report generally appear reasonable, save any further discretionary time or expense associated with Livable Moraga Rd.

- We primarily note the nearly-million-dollars required for the Hacienda. The facility requires nearly \$300,000 per year in operating subsidies along with an enormous amount of capital expenses. Acknowledging the town has (and presently is) seeking ways to reduce the losses incurred there, we believe **there remains a need for the council to specifically and more clearly define the purpose of the Hacienda**. Its intended purpose is unclear: if it is a wedding and meeting venue, it's a terribly unprofitable one and begs the question why the town believes it should own a wedding and meeting venue. If it's a historic landmark the council believes is worthy of unlimited expense, it should definitively say so. If it's intended to be a public park, it absolutely fails since it is open only during business hours during weekdays. What we really have, at the moment, is a multi-million-dollar liability for which it is impossible either to gauge "success" or to make rational decisions on future investment because it really has no defined purpose against which spending and program decisions can be parsed. As with any other capital replacement and CIP activities, spending should be prioritized based on needs versus wants.

Insofar as Attachment D associated with potential CIP activities, we offer the following specific observations:

- **The proposed electricity generation study strikes us as broader than necessary.** While it clearly makes sense to (1) assess needs and approaches for electrical service in the event of PG&E disruptions and (2) ascertain the potential cost savings and ROI from solar power, spending time or money on the former seems unnecessary for either the **Hacienda or Library since neither facility is critical infrastructure** that would either need to be - or even be beneficial to have - open during power disruptions. We also note that **solar energy assessments and associated ROI are available at no cost** from solar power installers.
- See our comment(s) on the **continued level of spending at the Hacienda** and our suggestion that a definitive "statement of purpose" is needed for that facility.
- We presume that **any approval of the Moraga Wy to Sanders Dr component of complete streets study is limited to the \$32k in 2021/22 and not the eye-popping, multi-million-dollar figure shown thereafter**. Although, as was recently discussed in a council meeting, simple and inexpensive solutions for crosswalk improvements are fairly obvious on this particular stretch of roadway.
- **The Moraga Rd/St Mary's streets study - along with any engineering or construction - strikes us as premature and possibly entirely wasteful.** That intersection is subject to significant and wholesale modification if and when the MCSP is built. Further, it's entirely possible that costs associated with MCSP-related changes to half of that intersection would be borne in large part (if not entirely) by the developer.
- We also point out the apparent **wastefulness and philosophical inconsistency of investing anything in an intersection (or new, discretionary sidewalks adjacent to it) that the town already knows will require a complete redesign when the MCSP is built**. It strikes us as poor form and wasteful that the town would even consider spending money on sidewalks or anything else requiring MCSP-related demolition/removal while simultaneously asserting that harmless, temporary land use for a local-business-funded field (between Safeway's dumpsters and a junkyard, no less) ought to be strictly regulated because of an imminent MCSP build out. One costs the town time and thousands (if not hundreds of thousands) of dollars while the other costs the town absolutely nothing.

Thank you for your patience reviewing our lengthy comments!

From: Denise Coane [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 2:44 PM

To: info@mofd.org

Cc: Mike McCluer <mmccluer@moraga.ca.us>; Teresa Onoda <tonoda@moraga.ca.us>; David Stromberg <dstromberg@moraga.ca.us>; Steve Woehleke <swoehleke@moraga.ca.us>; Renata Sos <rsos@moraga.ca.us>; Marty McInturf <mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us>; Chief Dave Winnacker <dwinacker@mofd.org>; Jon King <king@moraga.ca.us>; Ron Haas <ron@moragacc.com>

Subject: LET'S END THIS TALK OF CONSOLIDATION AND MOVE ON

Dear MOFD Board of Directors: For Public Record

In a small town we work together to battle whatever comes our way. Since February 2019 I've personally along with 60 other Moraga Country Club residents sat on a Block Captain Committee established by the Moraga Country Club Home Owners Association and club management. Our mission is to primarily watch out for neighbors and their homes during fire season. We've all sat through countless presentations, Zoomed with our Fire Chief and local fire department, built relationships with Norcal and Firewise representatives, participated in evacuation drills (Dec. 2018) and Country Warning System drills. We go door to door to make sure our neighbors and especially seniors know how to get out of their home in fire and earthquake emergencies. Our monthly block party took one event to help educate neighbors about fire danger by former firemen and an MOFD Director. We all know more about this than we'd like. In addition we (along with every resident of MCC) have invested financially into the Firewise system and while I am writing you they are cutting down a significant portion of our landscaping. Our Police Chief spent over two hours answering Town Hall attendees questions after the 2018 Sanders Ranch fire and we were also there. The church on the hill has all of you, our fire chief and crew as well as town officials and educators in a prayer guide.

This is what we do to work together and watch out for each other in Moraga. A merger, consolidation or union involvement is not the answer to commendable fire service. And, how would you feel if someone died due to County Service slow response because of cut in services?

Is this all about Money ... or Saving Lives?

Respectfully,

Denise Coane
Moraga, CA 94556