

**From:** [Jim Ross](#)  
**To:** [Info](#)  
**Subject:** Agenda Item 5.2 - Zone Zero comments for January 15 MOFD meeting  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 14, 2025 10:30:09 AM

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To: Board Members of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Thank You for allowing me this forum to present my personal ideas on the agenda item 5.2 pertaining to Zone Zero. I hope to be able to attend the meeting on January 15 via zoom, but wanted to be on record should that not happen.

From my past comments you are aware that I am not a supporter of Zone Zero in so far as a mandated and immediate district wide ordinance (Option 1 on the "Options to Consider" in your agenda). I have discussed my reasoning on that in prior correspondence and at the last board meeting.

Right now we are all obviously very aware of the fires in Southern California. My heart goes out to all affected. Not just for the past week, but for the tough times ahead for all of them and they will be in my thoughts, prayers and donations. I do not feel that a Zone Zero implementation would have done much, if any, good in the Los Angeles area given the nature of the wildfires and the environmental factors they were dealing with. No need to go into more details on that out of respect for those who are being impacted.

As far as Orinda/Moraga goes, just a few thoughts:

1. Your board and the Orinda City council has discussed a few times now the need for community outreach on Zone Zero. While Zone Zero has indeed generated interest, I do not believe that either board is hearing from enough residents on this. Would you at all consider a "town hall" type of meeting at the local schools? Orinda Intermediate, Joaquin Moraga, Miramonte and Campolindo? Getting those meetings publicized to the students and their parents (handouts, school websites and social media) would enable you to perhaps receive more a of representative amount of feedback on this important matter. However, the responses you are getting, and the feedback that I am hearing around town overwhelmingly indicate the opposition to Zone Zero (Option 1).
2. I do think the city and MOFD have done a reasonable job recently to begin efforts at reducing fuel sources around the cities. Resources need to be increased in that area and making that close to a first line of defense, rather than trying to put the individual home owners at the top of the wildfire defense list. Also, drive around Orinda and Moraga. It is very easy to identify a home where wildfire mitigation needs to be addressed just by looking at the amount of dead trees, bushes, etc on the property. There are some in my neighborhood. Citing these residences and requiring clean up would help immensely.
3. Along those lines, I do believe the sources of ignition on these wildfires needs to be investigated. There are reports that at least one of the Los Angeles fires could have been started with ties to a utility. There are exposed wires all over our area with many running within trees. This needs to be looked at an addressed more aggressively.

Some general thoughts on Zone Zero:

1. In the former chiefs presentation and in public comments about Zone Zero, he continuously referenced a small town in South America and purported that it is an example of Zone Zero working. That small town is in Chile and is Villa Botania. Here is what happened there:

Before the flames crept close, the community cut back vegetation, pruned foliage and cleared trash surrounding the hilltop homes. **They also brought in water to keep soil wet, and a wall and trench around the area kept the blaze from coming closer.**

I doubt we are building any walls around or bringing truckloads of water to our area any time soon.

2. Unfortunately I do believe the very unfortunate situation in Los Angeles will lead to more insurance owes for our state and our area. Insurance companies are not coming back because we mandate Zone Zero. I am hopeful that the ongoing discussions between the California Insurance

Commission and the Insurance carriers, that deal with rate reviews and increases as well as catastrophic modeling for mandatory coverage offerings, will indeed bring carriers back to our area and promote competition.

In conclusion, while I do not believe Zone Zero is a solution for Orinda and Moraga and will not offer protection from a fire storm or bring carriers back, if the discussion to be had is keeping small house fires from igniting a neighbors home, that could be had. In those cases I do believe we are talking about individual homeowners making personal choices to mitigate exposure at their residences. Not a wide reaching, broad brush approach as is being proposed now. Of the 4 Options you are listing on your agenda for Zone Zero, I support Option 4 but with the caveat that we continue to do work around the city to reduce fuel sources and to educate residents about simple fire source clean up measures around their residences. If Option 4 at some point is not an option, I could support Options 2 or 3 but would have to know more about the specifics on each.

Regards.

Jim Ross

Orinda