



Maurice Ramirez

Cat Brooks, founder of Anti Police-Terror Project, speaks to those gathered at the Mario Gonzalez vigil on April 22 in Alameda. "Reporters called me all day yesterday wanting me to celebrate the (Derick Chauvin) verdict. I'm happy for the Floyd family, that they got a piece of something," Brooks told those gathered for the vigil. "But 20 minutes later, I got the word about the (police shooting and killing) Mah'Kia Bryant (in Columbus, Ohio) and right behind that, the word about Mario."

Gonzalez Investigations

City launches inquiries into death of man in police custody

Ekene Ikeme

Three independent investigations are being conducted to probe an Oakland man's death while in Alameda police custody Monday, April 19.

Mario Arenales Gonzalez, 26, died after a confrontation with three Alameda police officers on the 800 block of Oak Street. Shortly after he died, the Alameda Police Department (APD) asked the Alameda County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) to conduct an independent investigation, according to a press release. A spokesman for ACSO said they have begun interviewing witnesses and officers and are awaiting the results of Gonzalez's toxicology and autopsy reports.

The Alameda County District Attorney's Office (ACDAO) is conducting its own investigation. According to APD, the Alameda County Chief of Police and Sheriff's Association has a policy that persons who die while in custody or under an officer's control constitutes a critical incident, which triggered ACDAO's investigation. The two investigations are being done separately.

The City of Alameda announced Friday, April 23, it has hired Louise Renne to conduct the third independent investigation into Gonzalez's

death. Renne served 16 years as San Francisco's city attorney and eight as a member of the Board of Supervisors. She also was a state deputy attorney general for 11 years.

Renne's hiring comes after Councilmember Malia Vella called for the city to perform a true independent investigation.

"We also need to move forward with a meaningful investigation performed not by law enforcement but by an independent investigator," Vella stated on Twitter.

Vella also called for an emergency City Council meeting and for new California Attorney General Rob Bonta to get involved.

"I call on AG Bonta to take over the criminal investigation," stated Vella. "This is the type of case that requires the Attorney General, not the DA."

Vella also said the body-worn camera footage from the three officers at the scene should be made public. APD said they will not release the footage now because that may compromise ACSO and ACDAO's investigations.

"Because outside agencies are handling this investigation, all involved parties will be interviewed before the video is made public to

ensure the integrity of the investigations," stated APD in a press release. "We understand the community's frustration and are doing everything possible to provide this information to the family first and then the public as quickly as possible."

Gonzalez's family has seen the body-worn camera footage. In a statement reported by KTVU Tuesday, April 27, Gonzalez's brother, Gerardo Gonzalez, denounced the officers' actions after seeing the video.

"The medical emergency [that police described] was because they were on his back while he was lying on the ground. It was brought by the officers on top of his head," said Gerardo.

Officers initially said Gonzalez suffered a medical emergency. Gerardo said his brother never kicked or threatened the officers.

On Gonzalez's Gofundme page, his family said APD refused to provide any information on his death and denied them access to see his body to conduct their own investigation.

Gonzales leaves behind a four-year-old son. The family has retained Haddad & Sherwin, LLP for counsel. The three officers have not been identified.

Putting AB 1322 in its Proper Context

Zac Bowling

Part one in a series

News Analysis

Last week, the Sun ran a story describing Assembly Bill (AB) 1322 ("Bill Could Circumvent City Charter," April 22), explaining how the bill works. Space restraints did not allow description of the bill's history and purpose: to assist cities with issues during the Housing Element process.

Having seen some confusion and speculation in Alameda and given that I've provided input on amendments to this bill in the past, I felt it was important to explain the issues. Given the complexity, this will be a three-part series as the bill progresses through the legislature.

AB 1322, as written today, helps a number of cities, including Alameda, avoid a potentially costly legal situation when conflicts arise between locally passed voter initiatives and state laws about forming a Housing Element. The bill gives Alameda a tool to allow the city to do something close to what it's done twice before, but without incurring the legal risk it has in the past.

First some background. Right now the state is dealing with an unprecedented housing crisis: we're not building enough housing for our population. Skyrocketing housing costs, displacement and homelessness are all a result.

The state must solve this problem. One of the systems at the state's disposal to drive the development of new housing is the Housing Element process.

Since 1969, the state has required municipalities to write a new Housing Element and get it accepted by the state every eight years. A Housing Element is a plan where the city shows where they will allow for the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA), the amount of new low income, median income, and market-rate housing required by the state. For the 2022-2030 housing element cycle, Alameda's currently proposed RHNA is 5406 new units of housing.

There are a lot of rules with forming a Housing Element, including showing that housing is zoned appropriately, that some of it is multi-family, that the plan is feasible, that there is reasonable or expected interest to build new housing where it's specified, and that the plan doesn't just stick all the new housing in one spot but spreads it out to improve equity.

Local planning staff is tasked with putting these

The bill gives Alameda a tool to allow the city to do something close to what it's done twice before.

plans together, with community input, and they often have to change zoning codes, height limits and other local rules to be able to comply.

The penalties for not complying are severe. Previously the state didn't have the resources to enforce compliance, but this has changed this cycle with new laws and funding to finally crack down on cities.

With the laws in place today, a city can essentially lose all local control on housing if they fail to certify. Developers would have the freedom to bypass local zoning and restrictions and to build new housing if they can show a judge it would help meet the RHNA and provide some affordable housing. The city would also lose access to needed funding for infrastructure and other projects, like parks if they fail to certify.

This would be an absolutely terrible situation. You want the city to have a compliant Housing Element. For Alameda, this could even jeopardize the city's ability to receive funding for the completion of Jean Sweeney Park.

Now let's say your city is trying to put together a Housing Element and in doing so it realizes that it can't comply with state law because of a past voter initiative that places restrictions on new housing. When passed, these initiatives may have not forced the city out of compliance but now, as state law has evolved, they prevent the city from being able to achieve a compliant Housing Element.

For Alameda, this situation is a reality. Article 26 of the City Charter (inserted in the charter in 1973 via Measure A) has both density restrictions and single-family home restrictions, which put us in direct conflict with the state requirement to pass a compliant Housing Element. This conflict isn't new, however.

In the next part of this series, I'll dive more into this conflict in detail, how Alameda has dealt with it before, current options given new laws this cycle, and the potential costly legal situation it faces now.

Zac Bowling lives in Alameda.

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Date	Rise	Set
Today	6:17	19:57
April 30	6:15	19:58
May 1	6:14	19:59
May 2	6:12	20:00
May 3	6:11	20:01
May 4	6:10	20:02
May 5	6:09	20:03

Police Seek Arson Suspect

Sun Staff Reports

The Alameda Police Department (APD) is looking for a man they suspect of setting six fires between 10:29 p.m., Monday, April 19, and 7:31 a.m. Tuesday, April 20, on the West End.

Police say that the man, accompanied by a dog, began his spree by setting an outside fire on Grand Street between Eagle and Buena Vista avenues.

He set his second fire at 11:16 p.m. to a building at Littlejohn

Park on Pacific Avenue. APD states that he set a third fire at 12:54 a.m., April 20, this one another outside fire on Central Avenue between Fourth and Fifth streets.

At 1:10 a.m. police reported that he set a motor vehicle alight on Lincoln Avenue between Sixth and Webster streets.

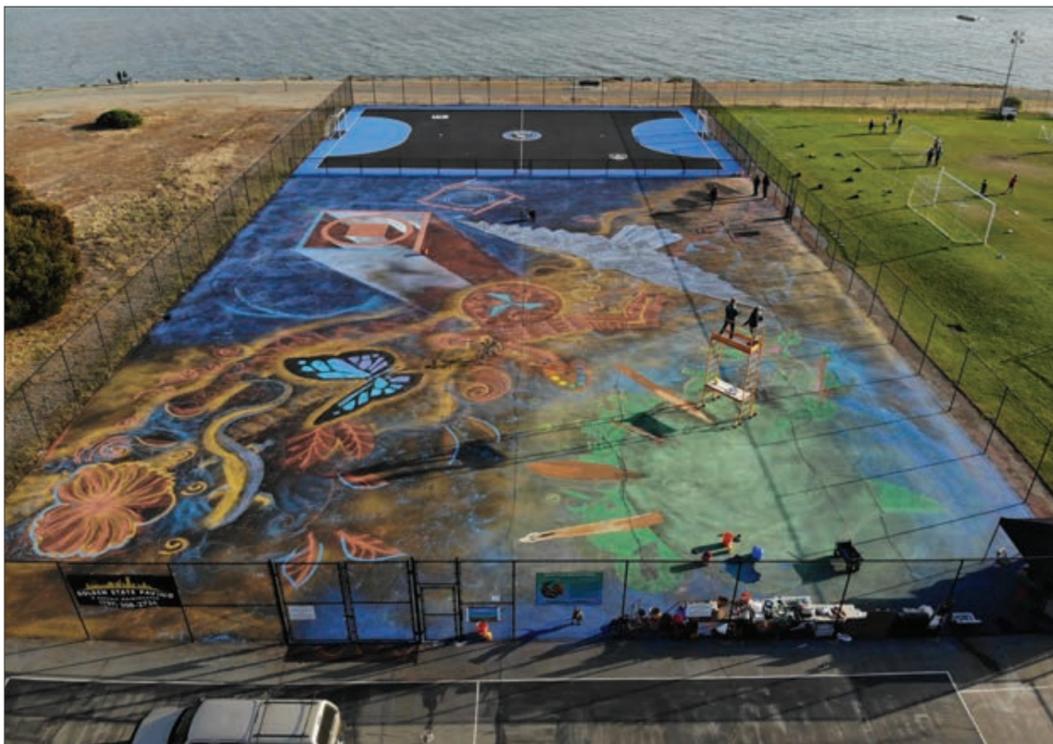
This deliberate act destroyed the vehicle. At 1:48 a.m. police say that he set a third outside fire. He returned to Littlejohn Park at 7:31

a.m. where he set his sixth and final fire.

APD is looking for a White male between 25 and 40 years old. He had a dark-colored dog and a bicycle with him. Police are hoping to review security cameras at homes and businesses near where these fires were set.

APD is asking anyone with cameras in the neighborhood of the fires, or other information, to contact Sgt. Scott Dole at (510) 337-8379.

Island Chalk Artist Breaks Own Record



Sun Staff Reports

Alameda artist Mark Lewis Wagner completed a second Guinness World Record-breaking drawing on Alameda Point this weekend. He again set a new record for largest chalk street-art by one artist at 18,500 sq. ft. The effort took six days. The art display is at Alameda Soccer's Futsal Courts.

Courtesy photo

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