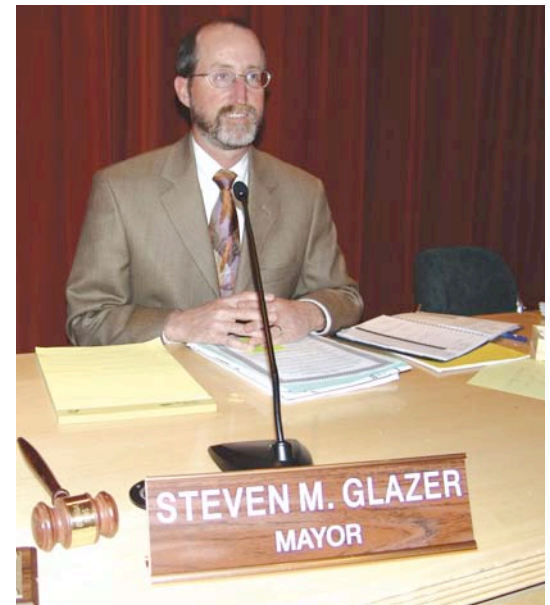


Orinda's Ballot Measure E

This is the first in a series of three interviews with Mayor Steve Glazer by the Lamorinda Weekly focusing on Orinda's ballot Measure E, which comes to a vote on June 5. It calls for floating a \$58.6 million bond to fix the city's deteriorating roads, drainage and water pipes.

This week, we focus on those taxpayers who have owned their properties the longest, and will therefore be paying lower taxation amounts to pay the bond back, should it pass. In our next issue, we will target the issue for recent buyers, and in the final part of the series before the election, we will focus on how the measure might affect prospective Orinda buyers.

By Chris Lavin and Andy Scheck



Q: There seems to be some confusion among long-time homeowners in Orinda regarding how much this is going to add to their property tax bills. Why the worries?

Glazer: We think that some homeowners don't recognize the difference between the assessed value of their property – that is the amount they are taxed on – and the resale value. Sure, a rancher could sell for \$1.5 million, but it might be appraised at only \$200,000. We're talking about a small house, only two bedrooms and one bath. In other words, if the valuation of the property is \$200,000, the cost to that homeowner will be \$38 per year in the early years, graduating up to \$60 per year. For someone with a house that is assessed at \$2 million, it will be \$380 per year, going up to \$600. Assessed valuations and resale values are different. It's a huge difference. Hug

Q: We hear a common question: Why did the city council wait so long to find the money to fix the roads, while it spent money on other things?

Glazer: That's something we have heard a lot about. What people don't understand is that we could not spend specific monies on just anything. Take the library, for instance. It cost \$10 million, and people ask, 'Why didn't you spend that on something more pressing?' And you can see their point. But you have to realize that \$5 million was raised privately. And that \$5 million we spent could not be spent on roads – only toward Orinda public facilities. Plus, now we have a jewel for Orinda in this beautiful library.

Q: So if you had spent that money on roads and drains, you could have been sued?

Glazer: Absolutely. And we would have lost. Those funds were dedicated for specific purposes, not for anything else.

Q: One of the factors in assessing the property values of long-time homeowners is remodeling. When a homeowner takes out a permit for a remodeling project, it will affect his overall assessment, right?

Glazer: Only to the extent that it improves the property in the specific area that is being remodeled. (The entire property is not reassessed.) But it does make an amazing difference. In Orinda we have 5 percent of the housing stock being remodeled every year – that is a huge percentage. We have averaged 300 remodeling permits a year for the past three years,

Q: Some people say that other agencies are not stepping up to the plate, that EBMUD or the fire district does not pay enough to maintain systems they should be responsible for. What do you say to that?

Glazer: Again, a common question. But EBMUD has a policy, an institutional policy, that it does not fix something until it's broken. Until recently, Orinda had 49 problem pipes in danger of rupture – two finally collapsed altogether and yes, EBMUD came in and fixed them. Now we have 47 problem pipes. We can't wait until they break to get them fixed.

For more information about Measure E, visit www.fixorindaroads.com.

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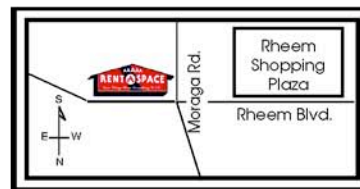
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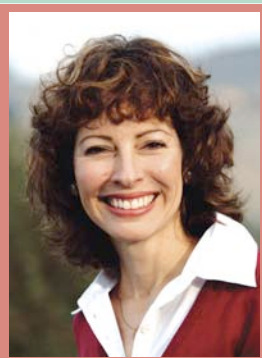
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