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Incumbents Win in Orinda

By Andrea A. Firth



Steve Glazer at Tuesday night's Europa Restaurant election party Photo Andy Scheck

In contrast to the sweeping changes in Congress and state governments across the nation last week, the face of Orinda's City Council will remain unchanged.

Incumbents Victoria Smith and Steven Glazer won their bids to return to the Council for another four years. Mayor Smith placed first in the race with 38.8% of the vote, Councilman Glazer took a close second with 36.9%, and the challenger Robert Larsen trailed the incumbents with 23.7%.

On election night, Glazer gathered with about fifty of his supporters and a few colleagues in front of the large screen televisions at Europa. In the crowd were fellow Council Members Sue Severson and Tom McCormick and Orinda City Manager Janet Keeter. The atmosphere was festive and hopeful as kids played and adults mingled.

Shortly after 8:30, preliminary local election results came in, and the group erupted in a chant of "Four More Years!" Glazer thanked his supporters, but his

victory speech was interrupted by another winner of the evening as Barack Obama appeared on the large screen ready to speak to the throngs of well wishers in Grant Park and the nation watching. Glazer quickly wrapped up as all turned their attention to the President-elect.

When asked how he felt about the election results, Glazer stated, "The results are a strong confirmation for the path that we are now on to maintain open and inclusive city government, clear focus on infrastructure improvements and public safety and tight stewardship of our budget." When asked about the campaign specifically, Glazer commented, "I was sorry to see the false statements made. I could only hope the voters would get the facts and make their best judgment. I want to focus on the positives from the election."

Smith kept her victory celebration low key and watched the results with a few close friends. "I am very pleased that the voters have shown confidence in me by re-electing me to the Council," said Smith. "I think that the election results show that voters feel that the city is headed in the right direction, and are more interested in positive results than in negative distractions," she added.

Both of the newly re-elected incumbents moved quickly to the tasks at hand for Orinda. "I think it will be very important to spend the time to thoroughly look again at the City's budget, which we will do next in the mid-year budget review, and at additional funding sources," stated Smith. She noted that the Revenue Enhancement Task Force will soon be holding a public workshop (11/12/08 7 pm. in the Del Rey Gym) and will then bring ideas to the Council on how to generate extra revenue.

Glazer also focused on the need to examine new revenue and budget options that are being explored by a number of the Orinda citizen commissions. "Their findings will be presented at various public hearings in the next few months. I hope the community will stay informed and actively participate in finding a consensus solution to this important problem."

And with their brief celebrations over, the Council Members were back to work as usual at the City Council meeting the next evening.

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