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Coming Together as Neighbors

Orinda's Mayor Steve Glazer reflects on past, speaks about role of citizenry in a democratic society

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Photo provided

Steve Glazer, unanimously re-elected by the Orinda City Council to serve another term as the City's Mayor, recently reflected on life in Orinda.

Glazer, upon his swearing in December 19th, thanked his family and Council colleagues for their support and also commended the City's staff. "They make our job so much easier - so we can do our volunteer jobs well."

He later continued to praise City staff and his fellow Council members.

"Our staff provides critical services to making our City run smoothly and efficiently. They are not recognized enough for their contributions to our quality of life," said Glazer.

Regarding the governance and public service work performed year round by the Orinda City Council, he said, "We come together as neighbors," and called his fellow Council members "citizen volunteers."

"My colleagues on the Council and the more than 60 plus residents on City commissions volunteer their time. There is not much glory in the work except for the satisfaction that we are making life better for our residents."

As he reflected on his interactions with Orindans during his past seven years on the Council, Glazer observed that most "are courteous and thankful during their engagement with the City," but also noted that "it is always healthy to remind everyone that we are just their neighbors trying to do the best we can."

"I've learned a lot in the last seven years on the

Council so knowing the history on issues helps in the decision making."

What has changed in the five years since you were last Mayor?

"We have greater citizen involvement in the affairs of the City. We have reprioritized street repair funds on the roads most traveled. Zoning changes at Theater Square have resulted in much higher occupancy rates on the ground floor, bringing renewed life to the area. We have also taken charge of a variety of infrastructure problems that have been stuck in neutral for a while. These include the replacement of the Manzanita Bridge, repair of a big Glorietta storm drain, numerous hill slides and the elimination of an abandoned home that was a magnet for crime."

Glazer went on to say, "The best part of Orinda is the lack of changes in the residential areas. We remain one of the safest cities in the state with one of the best school systems."

He also expressed pride in the City's recreational services, describing them as "fantastic."

When asked what Orinda will look like in five years, Glazer replied: "I don't think you will see a lot of changes because the heart of the City is our friendly and unpretentious residents."

"You will likely see the Wilder and Pine Grove developments start to fill in. The physical appearance of downtown might enjoy a few upgrades if property owners feel they have community support to make improvements."

What do you hope to achieve during this term that you were unable to accomplish last time?

"Most importantly, I will work with my Council colleagues and City staff to continue our conservative approach to financial affairs. This requires constant vigilance. I also hope to continue to educate our residents on the stark choices in regard to future road repairs. We have some of the worst roads in the region and they will not get better unless we are willing to tax ourselves. No one will help us except ourselves."

Citing Orinda City Council's history of "friendly and constructive problem solving," Glazer gave residents further food for thought. "Citizen decision making is one of the great virtues of our democracy and we get the benefit and burden of solving our own problems in a collective way."

"It is an honor and privilege to serve the City as Mayor," he said in closing. "I'm hoping for a fun and enjoyable year ahead. Let's do some serious work but not take ourselves too seriously."

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