



Orinda Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, Dec. 17, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Dec. 10, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Historical Landmark Committee

Tuesday, Dec. 10, 3 p.m.
Gallery Room, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Orinda:

www.cityoforinda.org
Phone (925) 253-4200

Chamber of Commerce:

www.orindachamber.org

The Orinda Association:

www.orindaassociation.org

School Board Meeting

Orinda Union School District

Monday, Dec. 9, 6 p.m.
OUSD Office, Vintage Building
25 Orinda Way, Suite 200
www.orindaschools.org

See also AUHSD meeting page A2

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Orinda City Council Adopts Housing Element

By Laurie Snyder

Kicking off the main item on the Orinda City Council's Nov. 19 agenda, planning director Emmanuel Ursu presented the Planning Commission's Oct. 29 recommendation that the City Council adopt Housing Element 2007-2014 (draft 5, revised), along with related zoning matters and an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration covering environmental issues related to the housing element – a segment of the General Plan which California cities are legally required to have and review. According to the staff report, the "Initial Study determined that the project will have a less than significant impact."

Additionally, Ursu conveyed a California Department of Housing and Community Development email

in which HCD personnel "responded to a question posed by Orinda Watch, regarding the default density and HCD's insistence on a density range." HCD's legal counsel and the head of the division which reviews housing elements "indicated that a density range is required to comply with the provisions of state law."

Ursu then addressed concerns from Santa Maria parishioners and the church's parochial administrator, Father Robert Herbst. Stressing again that "the property owner decides whether or not they will develop the property or continue to use it for the purposes for which they have historically used the property," Ursu said the proposed zoning change "would not result in anybody coming and taking that property to

develop it." In response, Herbst said "there are no plans to build anything on that space other than those small structures that are required to maintain the space as a viable multi-purpose sports field."

Observing apparent contradictions between the priest's words and what Diocesan leaders have told staff, Councilmember Steve Glazer asked for confirmation "that there's nothing that is in this rezoning that requires you to do anything different than what you're currently doing on the property." Herbst quietly said, "Right."

The anxiety that "somebody from the outside could come in and do something to that property against the church's wishes," was "coming from parishioners who see that this

is an opening of a door," said Herbst. "There are concerns that it's not the city, necessarily ... but other entities seeing this as a prime zoned area."

Mild tension then morphed into ugliness as comments by Arthur Ross moved from a depiction of council members' behavior as "ruthless and dishonorable" into a lengthy back-and-forth with Glazer. Ignoring mayor Amy Worth's signal that his three minutes were up, he attempted to proceed before interruption by Glazer asking whether he might ask Ross a question. Ross angrily refused, he said, because Glazer minimized perceived threats to Santa Maria. Ross then shocked attendees by asking, "Were I to put a gun at your chest would that be a threat?"

... continued on next page

Sharing in the Warmth of the Holidays

By Laurie Snyder



Photo(s) provided by the Orinda Parks and Recreation Department

Orindans were bitten by the holiday bug Nov. 2 when Orinda's beloved 37th Annual Holiday Bazaar opened its doors at the Orinda Community Center.

Sponsored each year by the Orinda Community Center Auxiliary (OCCA), the popular marketplace not only gives bargain hunters an early jump on their holiday shopping, but

helps generate funding to purchase equipment for Orinda's community center, its neighboring park, Concerts in the Park series, and Halloween Parade for Tots. And, it benefits Orinda's economy and cultural vitality by attracting visitors from around the East Bay who come to shop, and stay to dine and explore.

The day's events featured an arts and games corner for kids, sponsored by the Orinda Teen Advisory Council,

a Polynesian dance performance, magic tricks and balloon making with Scooter the clown, more than 40 vendors for parents' browsing pleasure, a Hawaiian serenade by the community center's enthusiastic ukulele class, music by Steve Harwood, a Zumba demonstration and, of course, a flag-raising by local Cub Scouts.

Funds raised by OCCA: \$5,000. Estimated worth in goodwill and spirits lifted: Priceless.



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