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## Six Candidates Compete for Three Orinda City Council Seats

*By Laurie Snyder*

Three seats are opening on the Orinda City Council. Six accomplished candidates are running. All six sat down for rigorous interviews, sharing their thoughts on a variety of subjects.

"Location, beauty, charm. Orinda is an idyllic, beautiful, safe place to live. It's woodsy with great schools. The people make it a really wonderful place to live," said Carlos Baltodano. The 22-year Orinda resident directed Contra Costa County's building inspection department for 11 years before serving as an interim human resources director. He was appointed to Orinda's Planning Commission in 2008, and later chaired that commission. "I started out as a planner - being an advocate for communities, and my whole life opened up. I realized it was so important to work with people, to make their dreams come true. Public agencies provide valuable services to citizens. I have always looked for ways to make things simpler - for people to get permits, find information on the web. We need people in public service who are engaged, professional and able to work with others," said Baltodano.

"Orinda's citizens are so dedicated and so brilliant, and bring so much to the table. We have tremendous resources because we have people who are experts in key areas. We need to tap their talents to come up with creative solutions to the problems we face," said Linda Delehunt. "I have a long history of being an advocate and creating policy. As a principal I tried to make sure our programs had all of the money they needed." The 34-year Orinda resident was also a teacher before joining the California Department of Education. "It was very difficult to effect policy change at the district level so I spent 10 years in state government where I could advocate for the integrity of children's programs. I consider public service a life mission for me. It has given me the opportunity to really effect change," said Delehunt.

"We are so fortunate to have a volunteer community that repeatedly steps up and works hard for the greater good - schools, swim clubs, civic organizations. The number of applications we get each year in our recruitment process for committees - the fact that we turn people away is amazing. We're filling the slots with some of the best people in their respective fields," said Dean Orr. The 14-year Orinda resident has been a principal with a medium-sized architectural firm in San Francisco since 1999. One of two incumbents running, Orr is seeking re-election to his second term. He began his civic service as a member of Orinda's Planning Commission. "People step up over and over again. It happens in ways I didn't know it could - a couple of phone calls, and you've got a house full of people drafting work plans," said Orr.

"Orinda is a special place - an oasis from the broader, busier Bay Area - a place where families come and stay. Even with very real problems like the roads, we've created a community. The people who live here care about this town," said Eve Phillips. The two-year resident of Orinda grew up in Moraga, and comes from a family of accountants. After graduating from MIT, she returned home to be near her parents, residents of Moraga for 45 years. After working in operational roles with technology firms, and performing business development functions for Amadeus Capital Partners, Vector Capital and Greylock Partners, Phillips co-founded the healthcare software company, Empower Interactive. Now the chief executive officer, she describes those early days as encompassing. "A lot of my job was and is listening - trying to reach out to other groups which have differing opinions," said Phillips.

"We're a remarkable community - unparalleled in Contra Costa County. It's because of the people who live here," said Bob Thompson. "If you look at the statistics, 76.9 percent of Orinda residents have a bachelor's degree or higher. The next closest is Moraga with 73.8. Lafayette is in the 70s. Everyone else is in the 60s." A 22-year resident who has served on boards of several nonprofit organizations, Thompson has been a member of Orinda's Finance Advisory Committee since its inception in 2008. "I have advised the city about investment policy and portfolio construction. It's been a natural extension of what I did professionally." He's running for council now because he has the time since retiring from his portfolio management position with a private

investment firm. "Before this I would not have entertained this. Serving on the city council takes so much time to do it properly," he explained.

"The connection people feel to Orinda, the sheer number of people who volunteer for parents' clubs, city commissions, service clubs? We wouldn't have the community we have without the individuals who have taken long-term commitments to the issues they work on," said Amy Worth. "Just look at the Friends of the Orinda Library. They have provided continuity, serving year after year to raise millions of dollars to create the library's permanent home, build its collections, and add new technology." A 32-year Orinda resident, Worth is a three-time mayor. "Council members put in a lot of time; we divide up our expertise." In addition to city meetings, they represent the interests of Orinda residents on everything from the library's regional board to the county's solid waste authority. "I've always felt really grateful to be in Orinda. For me, it's about giving back," said Worth.

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

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