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## Orinda Mayor Steve Glazer - Listening for Consensus

By Laurie Snyder



Steve Glazer Photo Ohlen Alexander

"The thematic elements for me, if you go back to my start on the council, are collaboration and community," says Orinda mayor Steve Glazer. Appointed to the city's top leadership post in December, 2014, Glazer has been chosen by Orindans three times in the past decade to serve four-year terms on their City Council - in November 2004, 2008 and 2012. He last served as mayor in 2012 - and before that in 2007.

As mayor, Glazer fulfills his leadership role by chairing city council meetings and serving on council task forces, such as the Audit and Finance Committee and Roads and Housing Element subcommittees, as well as being the council's representative to key city advisory bodies - the Finance Advisory Committee, Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission (CIOC), Public Safety Committee, and Mayor's Liaison Group.

One of his most recent mayoral duties was to plan and secure the council's recent adoption of the 2015 list of city and regional appointments for fellow councilmembers. His own regional responsibilities will include functioning as a voting delegate with the League of California Cities and as the city's liaison with the Lamorinda Mayors' Meeting, Contra Costa County Mayor's Conference and East Bay Municipal Water Utility District.

The water job is a clue to one of his greatest passions - preserving the environment for our children's children. In furtherance, he served on the Orinda Parks and Recreation Commission from 1997 to 1999, and helped expand recycling choices for Orindans through his prior council liaison role to the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority. Lauded by environmentalists for his pragmatism, he has partnered with The Trust for Public Land and Save the Bay to preserve California open space and water quality while also fighting to protect California's last remaining stand of privately-owned, old growth redwood trees - the Headwaters Forest Reserve.

"I can't recall a time in my adult life where I wasn't involved in a civic or charitable activity. Service is enjoyable, fulfilling and a gift to me. I am grateful to be able to serve."

Another of his hectic, high profile roles is his membership on the Board of Trustees of the California State University's 23-campus system. Appointed to the position by Gov. Jerry Brown, Glazer is finishing the fourth year of an eight-year term. Each year, trustees attend six full board sessions plus meetings of their assigned special committees. "It is a great honor and responsibility. Our challenging role as a board of trustees is to hire exceptional leaders for our campuses and set policy that ensures a high quality and affordable education is available to top performing California students."

Glazer, who has chosen to decline all compensation for his service and function as a volunteer the way he does as Orinda's mayor, is currently chairing the search for a new president for Sacramento State University. "The CSU is the largest higher education system in the United States. It provides affordable learning opportunities for almost 450,000 students and employs 45,000 faculty and staff. We award degrees to about 100,000 students annually with around 60 percent going to students who are the first in their families to graduate from college. Helping students fulfill the dream of advanced education is extraordinarily rewarding."

Running a sprawling university system spread over nearly 164,000 square miles might seem dramatically different from running a small city, but Glazer says there are genuine similarities in the

tasks he takes on. "All of our campuses are mini-cities with housing, roads, public safety, health care and educational elements. The budgets are different - \$11 million for Orinda versus \$4 billion for CSU, but you still need to set goals, instill accountability and make thoughtful choices in order to stretch every dollar."

Positioning himself as a fiscal conservative during his recent run for the California Assembly, fiscal prudence has been another of his favorite touchstones over the years. He takes great pride in Orinda's ability to maintain a balanced budget during America's recent major recession.

But what is most clear when one interacts with Orinda's mayor is that, while others would be utterly exhausted by his demanding schedule, Glazer thrives on public service the way redwoods draw strength from a dense California fog. "Sitting in the mayor's chair gives me the opportunity to work with my fellow council members and community members in finding common ground on the important issues that are before us. Building consensus in an open and respectful way is an enjoyable part of the job. Good mayors talk less because they have to listen for the common ground between their council members and the community."

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[back](#)

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