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Phillips out, Worth, Fay, and Kosla elected; both school bonds pass

By Sora O'Doherty

Although the results of the November general election won't be certified until 30 days after the election, it appears that Orinda Mayor Amy Worth won re-election with the highest number of votes cast, followed by Dennis Fay. Nick Kosla was the third top vote getter, but incumbent Eve Phillips was only about 300 votes behind, so that could possibly change before the count is finalized. At the end of polling on Nov. 6, there was still a backlog of votes to be counted, including vote-by-mail ballots, provisional ballots and conditional ballots submitted subject to approval of registration. As of 5 p.m. on Nov. 9, the number of ballots remaining to be counted was 108,000. At that time, the reported results were: Amy Worth: 4,878; Dennis Fay: 4,054; Nick Kosla: 3,892; Eve Phillips: 3,600 and Kathleen Jenkins: 2,502.

Both Orinda school bonds passed by a wide margin. A 55 percent vote was required; one bond passed with over 68 percent and the other with over 65 percent, which means that the future of Orinda schools will be filled with construction and technological upgrades. Orinda had not proposed a bond measure for the past 25 years, which left the Orinda Union School District with outdated infrastructure. Because state law limits the amount of money that can be raised with a single bond issue, Orinda placed two bond measures on the ballot. In addition, this year, in preparation for the bond issues, OUSD adopted a Facilities Master Plan, so the public can know what the funds raised by the bonds will be used for over the upcoming years.

Worth, who ran independently, will hand over the role of mayor on Dec. 11, about a week after the election is due to be certified. Traditionally in Orinda the vice mayor is selected by a vote of the city council to be mayor, and the vice mayor post is usually filled by the highest vote-getter in class. The newly elected city council members will be installed on Dec. 11 as well, and any outgoing members will be honored. Council Member Dean Orr, who decided not to run for re-election, will definitely be stepping down, and it currently appears that Nick Kosla will take the place of Eve Phillips on the council. The election of the new mayor and vice mayor is conducted in open session.

In other contests, the race for the Assembly member for the 16th district was too close to call as of Nov. 9. Democrat Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, who was challenging incumbent Catherine Baker issued a statement on Nov. 7 thanking her supporters. "Yesterday's election was historic for our country and our state," she said, adding that voters "across the country rejected divisive and destructive rhetoric and policies." Baker could not be reached for comment.

The marijuana business tax County Measure R passed with a large majority, with some 201,739 (71.86 percent) voting yes and 79,000 (28.14 percent) voting no. The measure authorizes Contra Costa County to tax commercial marijuana businesses in the unincorporated area in the amount of up to \$7 per canopy square foot for cultivation and up to 4 percent gross receipts for all other marijuana businesses to fund general county expenses.

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