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Incumbents breeze in Lamorinda fire district elections

By Nick Marnell

Unlike in the U.S. presidential race, there was no drawn out, nail-biting drama in the Nov. 3 election of Lamorinda fire agency directors, with one race redefining the term "landslide."

The closest contest occurred in Moraga-Orinda Fire District Division 2, where incumbent John Jex held off San Ramon Valley firefighter Nathan Smith. Jex won with 55% of the vote, though a flip of only 166 votes would have given the seat to Smith.

The challenger reflected on his campaign. "While I am disappointed in the ultimate outcome, I am proud of all we achieved during our campaign. Most importantly, I believe our work together illuminated how critical fire suppression is to achieving fire prevention," Smith said. "I believe this enhanced awareness will serve the MOFD better in the future."

Because the election results were not yet official, Jex declined to comment.

In a race that could safely be called no contest, Division 5 incumbent Craig Jorgens defeated challenger Sharon Girdlestone, a local business owner, who ran an on-again, off-again campaign. Jorgens garnered an astounding 84% of the vote, giving him a clear mandate to press his district fire prevention efforts.

"I want to thank all the people of Orinda who supported me and my efforts to make Orinda more Firewise," Jorgens said. "I hope MOFD will continue to make our district even safer by spending more of its \$29 million annual budget on fuel (flammable material) removal."

Girdlestone took full responsibility for her lackluster showing. "Thank you to everyone who supported me in this election. Especially MOFD," she said. "I would love to be able to say I campaigned and fought for a spot on the board, but due to personal reasons and family obligations, I was not able to fully accomplish my goal or commit to a campaign."

The County Board of Supervisors doubles as the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District board of directors, and both incumbents running for re-election won easily, none easier than District 2 Supervisor Candace Andersen, who ran unopposed.

Supervisor Federal Glover of District 5 soundly defeated Contra Costa County Assessor Gus Kramer, whose trial for misconduct over alleged sexual and racist comments he made to staff members ended in a hung jury Nov. 5. Glover hauled in 66% of the vote.

All election results reported in this article are unofficial, as of Nov. 6.

Reach the reporter at: nick@lamorindaweekly.com

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