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## Worth becomes mayor of Orinda for historic fifth term; Fay is vice mayor

By Sora O'Doherty

As Amy Worth was sworn in for her fifth term as mayor of Orinda, and Dennis Fay his first term as vice mayor, outgoing mayor Darlene Gee received acclaim from both the council and the public for her year of service, which was dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Gee and Council Member Inga Miller in November won reelection to the council for another four years.

Worth began by presenting outgoing mayor Gee with a plaque featuring a gavel, saying, "Darlene, you have done a phenomenal job." No one, she said, could have anticipated what 2020 would be like, and Worth said that under Gee's hand, the council was able to continue its work smoothly. Zoom worked beautifully, she said, and the council was able to engage the public and continue to do the public's work. The council also gave Gee flowers and a proclamation, which was read out during the meeting.

New vice mayor Fay said that he first got to know Gee professionally when they were both members of the Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission. "I see why people who have worked with her and for her like her so much and are so supportive of her," Fay said, adding to Gee, "Everybody who has known you likes you."

Nick Kosla recounted how after his election to the council, things were going beautifully, until the AirBnB shooting at Halloween, followed by Public Safety Power Shutoffs. "I thought that was the worst thing that could happen," he said. That was before 2020 began.

Melanie Light, chair of the FireWise Council, said, "I think grace under pressure is what you would apply to mayor Gee. She made us feel like we were the only crisis going on." Light also praised Gee's sense of humor as "very sly, very dry, and fantastic." Former mayor of Lafayette, Don Tatzin, who appeared on behalf of Sen. Steve Glazer, commented, "We always knew that Orinda was being well run, but we can't say that about all the cities in the Senator's district."

In response, Gee thanked everyone, saying that "2020 wasn't exactly what I was expecting, but I'm very proud of what we accomplished this year." Among the accomplishments, she counted making progress on downtown planning, having a dialog with the police, and maintaining city services. "Everybody had to adapt and to pivot, and you kept it all going." She told city manager Steve Salomon that she couldn't have done it without his knowledge and support. She thanked her family, and the community for pulling together in a tough time. "It was really inspiring, she concluded, "and now Orinda is moving forward with its most experienced mayor at the helm."

Salomon returned the compliments, saying it was a pleasure to work with Gee, who, he said, was "always available and has always given him very good, thoughtful feedback." He praised her for the suggestions she made after the Halloween shooting on how to move forward with the short-term rental ordinance, and attributed the lack of problems with it in no small measure to her contributions. "Orinda is extremely fortunate to have her on the council," Salomon concluded.

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