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City of Orinda:
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Orinda Public Meetings

City Council

Regular Meeting:
Tuesday, Feb. 2, 7 p.m. By Teleconference Only

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 7 p.m. By Teleconference Only



Orinda honors volunteers and PG&E friend



Photo Sora O'Doherty

Tom Guarino, who recently passed away, works with residents at the Lost Valley substation, November 2016.

By Sora O'Doherty

The Orinda city council took the opportunity on Jan. 12 to honor some people who have contributed to the quality of life in the city.

"Mark Roberts has served this community for so many years in so many capacities," Mayor Amy Worth said by way of introduction. While the council was specifically honoring Roberts for his service on the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee, Worth praised him for all of his volunteer efforts. Worth recalled that former mayor

Victoria Smith recommended setting up a citizen committee to respond to neighbors' safety concerns.

"Mark has been instrumental, has been like a rock on that committee," Worth said. But he has worn many hats in Orinda. Roberts was presented with a certificate honoring his many years of dedicated service on TSAC. "Volunteers like you make Orinda such a wonderful place to live," Worth concluded.

Vice Mayor Dennis Fay added his thanks, and Council Member Darlene Gee told

Roberts, "You are really, really the living embodiment of what Orinda is like with volunteers," adding that she could hardly think of anything that his name has not been associated with over the years.

Council Member Inga Miller told Roberts, "You are such a warm spirit; you are always surrounded by your friends," and hoped that the city would continue to see him at the annual Fourth of July parade.

Jane Wiser accepted honors for the Orinda Garden Club for its holiday wreath program. The mayor told Wiser, who accepted a proclamation for the hand-decorated wreaths, that she was particularly grateful for the beautiful wreaths that adorned the community during the holiday season.

"During COVID-19," she wondered, "how do we make it feel like there is some sense of joy?"

Worth said that the wreaths helped people feel a sense of place, and hoped that they encouraged people to shop locally.

Wiser said that this was the ninth year of the program, which was started because the garden club wanted to do something for the community. "The image of the wreath represents friendship," she said, "the circle of life." She thanked the director of Parks and Recreation for giving the garden club a safe place to assemble the wreaths, on tables set up outside of the community center. Wiser also gave a shout out to the clubs plant sale, which will take place April 17 at the community

center. Club members are busy propagating plants from their gardens now. She concluded her remarks by telling the council that the recognition "means the world to us, and your appreciation means so much to us."

Council Member Nick Kosla said that his children are 11 and 14 and have grown up with the tradition of the wreaths around Orinda. "This year, so many traditions didn't happen because of COVID," he said, "but this was a lovely tradition."

Agreeing that the wreaths were incredibly special, Council Member Darlene Gee said, "They are always nice, but this year it gave everybody an extra boost. Things were a little more normal and it made the holiday a little bit special." She said that the extra effort meant a lot to everyone.

The meeting was closed in honor of PG&E Senior Government Relations Representative Tom Guarino, who recently died of COVID-19. Worth said that the pandemic is so much more real when it strikes so close to home. The mayor said of Guarino, "He made us look like miracle workers." He was, she said, a tremendous friend of local government, and his loss was tremendous.

Worth recalled that Guarino was extremely supportive of charities. "He will be greatly missed," she concluded, as she adjourned the meeting in his memory and in grateful appreciation to his service to all our communities. The city of Lafayette also adjourned its recent council meeting in honor of Guarino.

No plays in the park? Enjoy 'Pinocchio' online



"Pinocchio" cast

Photo provided

By Sora O'Doherty

Recognizing that fans are missing live performances at Orinda Community Park, the Orinda Starlight Village Play-

ers (OrSVP) has released a video of its 2015 production of "Pinocchio." The free video is available through the end of January.

This year would have marked OrSVP's 37th year

producing shows in the Orinda Community Center Park Amphitheater. According to Malcolm Cowler, director of 2015's "Pinocchio," "We want to offer this delightful play for your enjoyment in

this new year."

The theater group sincerely thanked all who have joined them for Zoom murder mysteries and its Christmas show. These generous donations have made it possible for the group to continue to pay rent for storage.

Next month OrSVP will have a new online, interactive Zoom mystery, "Valentine Mobsters, Molls and Mayhem."

Marketing Director Suzan Lorraine has set up a GoFundMe page to help raise needed monies to support the little theatre company through the year. Visit www.gofundme.com/f/Orinda-Starlight-Village-Players for more information.

Visit www.orsvp.org to access the video of "Pinocchio" and also for additional donation options.

Orinda changes approach to road maintenance

By Sora O'Doherty

The city of Orinda, which was incorporated in 1985 primarily

to deal with the horrendous condition of its roads, is now taking a major step in adopting a new policy for how it will deal with road maintenance. Until the end of 2020, the focus was primarily on repairing residential roads, with those characterized as "arterials and collectors" scheduled for attention following the work on residential roads.

The new policy, adopted by the city council at its Jan. 12 meeting, was accepted by the outgoing Citizens Infrastructure Oversight Commission last July. The CIOC requested that the council approve the policy.

The old residential street policy used as its primary selection criterion working first on those streets in the worst condition. However, since all the public residential streets in Orinda have now been rehabilitated, this criterion is no longer necessary. The new policy allows the city to use StreetSaver – a pavement management program authorized by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission – for all public roads in the city. This computer-based program

uses data regarding a street's current pavement condition, maintenance and rehabilitation history, potential rehabilitation treatment, and the city's budget to provide broad level recommendations for pavement maintenance.

Field inspections of pavement condition are made every two years for arterial and collector roads, and every four years for residential/local roads and generates a pavement condition index for each public road section. The data is updated and reviewed every two years.

The new, unified policy calls for city staff to prepare a three-year rolling paving plan, using the procedures in the policy to select which streets to include in recurring pavement projects. The successor to the CIOC would review the annual projects' street lists on an annual basis and then forward to the city council for approval. Staff would obtain this approval via the Capital Improvement Plan process, which is updated annually, by including the street lists as an exhibit to the project description pages.

Although the plan is prepared annually, it should be noted that staff may determine it to be advantageous to skip doing an annual paving project in some years, and do one every other year, which would allow some flexibility in changing program priorities to perform some wildfire mitigation work.

In public comments, Charles Porges questioned how the new policy would deal with private streets, and also urged that human judgment take priority over StreetSaver. Chair of the CIOC Judd Hammon assured the city council that the members of the CIOC are all comfortable with the new policy, and assured the council that the policy does provide that human judgment will be taken into account.

Mayor Amy Worth pointed out that StreetSaver is provided free by the MTC, and thanked staff for its thoughtful analysis. The matter passed unanimously.

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