



See public meetings schedule on this pages and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements  
**City of Orinda:**  
 www.cityoforinda.org  
 Phone (925) 253-4200  
**Chamber of Commerce:**  
 www.orindachamber.org  
**The Orinda Association:**  
 www.orindaassociation.org

**Orinda Public Meetings**

**City Council**

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

**Planning Commission**

Tuesday, Feb. 23, 7 p.m. By Teleconference Only

Please...

**RECYCLE THIS**  
**NEWSPAPER**  
 ...thanks

- ◆ HARDWOODS
- ◆ CARPETS
- ◆ RUGS
- ◆ LINOLEUM
- ◆ TILE
- ◆ LAMINATE

FAMILY -OWNED  
 30 YEARS !

3344 Mt Diablo Blvd  
 in Lafayette  
 925-284-4440  
 lamorinda floors.com

**LAMORINDA FLOORS**  
*Karastan GALLERY*

# Orinda selects David Biggs as new city manager



**David Biggs** Photo provided

**By Sora O'Doherty**

After an extensive search, Orinda selected Hercules city manager David Biggs to succeed outgoing city manager Steve Salomon. Biggs, who will start with Orinda in April, has a long career in the management of cities in California. He served as city manager in Carson, Tustin, and Morgan Hill, as well as assistant city manager of Redondo Beach and other positions with other California cities. His career also included working in Australia for two and a half years for an industrial development agency. Biggs has been city manager of Hercules for about seven years.

The city council welcomed Biggs on board at its Feb. 2 meeting. Biggs, who had another meeting to attend, made time to join the Orinda meeting. Biggs told the council that he is looking for-

ward to joining them on the fifth of April, and appreciates the vote of confidence. Noting his regional and subregional experience, Biggs feels that he has "a good running start," adding, "Orinda is a beautiful island, but we are integrated." The new city manager invited people in Orinda to stop and chat with him if they see him out walking, which is his favorite lunchtime activity.

Biggs has a BA in political science from California State University at Fullerton and an MBA from UC Irvine. In addition, he completed a certificate program in Continuous Improvement and Quality Management from the UC Santa Cruz extension program. Currently the president of the California Redevelopment Association, Biggs is also an active member of the California Association for Local Economic Development, for which he is a past board member and chair; the International Association of Shopping Centers; and, the International City/County Management Association with a Credentialed Manager designation. In addition, Biggs is a member of the Urban Land Institute. During the effort to develop downtown Orinda, the city received a report from ULI.

There will be no fiscal impact to the hiring of a new city manager, as the position is al-

ready provided for in the current budget. The annual costs as outlined in the employment agreement include: a salary of \$243,000; a car/technology allowance of \$6,000; annual retirement plus Medicare taxes \$42,491; annual Life and LTD estimated at \$1,714; and estimated maximum annual health insurance benefits estimated to be \$26,927.

Biggs is married to Cate, who is from Australia, and they have two sons. Their oldest son, Adrian, works for the city of Palo Alto as assistant engineer. Their youngest son, Dylan, is on a gap year from graduate school and is living in Australia with his uncle.

Biggs welcomed the opportunity to work in Orinda, which means that he won't have to relocate from Hercules. An early riser, he hopes to miss the worst of commute traffic. Biggs says that he grew up, professionally, in the redevelopment track, and sees Orinda as a city with a great start of developing the downtown area, which is says has good bones. "I believe I'll be able to contribute to help enhance downtown," Biggs says. Since city managers get together at least once a month, Biggs knows outgoing city manager Steve Salomon, and also knows members of the city council as well as city staff members. He acknowledges that Salomon's footsteps

will be tough to step into.

Hercules and Orinda are cities with similar characteristics, according to Biggs. Both cascade down from the hills, although Hercules borders the San Pablo Bay. Hercules has a somewhat larger population, at around 25,000, than Orinda. Both Contra Costa County cities have big issues with fire safety. Biggs remarked that he walks most days at lunch, often along the densely wooded Ohlone Creek. Hercules also has Refugio Valley Creek, a permanent creek that runs through the city.

Biggs has worked on a lot of challenges facing local government, including policing issues. Along with the Hercules police chief, he has hosted two town halls, and continued to engage with the community. He has been working on an update of Hercules' safety element of general plan, as well as the hazards mitigation plan. Hercules is at the intersection of Highway 4 and Highway 80, and has a big transit center, so Biggs has enjoyed working relations with BART.

The start date in April is influenced by the fact that Biggs' contract with Hercules requires 60-days notice. Biggs says he is looking forward to starting work in Orinda, which he believes will be a very good fit.

# Orinda appoints new oversight commission to monitor sales tax spending

**By Sora O'Doherty**

When Orinda voters agreed on a new, increased sales tax, part of the equation was the formation of a new oversight committee that will monitor how the sales tax funds are being spent by the city. To accomplish this goal, the city disbanded the existing Citizen's Infrastructure Oversight Commission and has now appointed 10 members of the Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission (SSTOC).

Over the course of a weekend, the city council spent a day and a half inter-

viewing 40 applicants for the new Commission. At the Feb. 2 city council meeting they announced that the following members have been selected: Kyle Arteaga, Brad Barber, Chris Decareau (a former CIOC Commissioner), Jud Hammon (the immediate past chair of the CIOC), Rochelle Latimer, Yasmin Lee, Melanie Light, Latika Malkani, Paula Reinman and Alex Weinstein. Hammon was named temporary chair of the new commission, which is to select a chair the first time they meet.

Mayor Amy Worth expressed the council's thanks to all applicants, saying the city

is "so fortunate to have so many outstanding applicants." She noted that it was a tough decision, but that the council worked hard "to establish a balance, to incorporate diversity and to select members with a variety of experiences."

In December the city council took steps to establish the commission, as was required by the election measure adopting the new supplemental sales tax. The 10-member commission will meet at least quarterly and set a regular meeting schedule. The primary objectives and purposes of the commission will be, with respect to rev-

enue generated from the voter approved sales tax, to make recommendations and provide advice to the city council and city staff on planned expenditures for priority programs, services and projects and to review, monitor, and report on the expenditures incurred. Priority programs, services, and projects are to include efforts to reduce the threat of wildfire, disaster planning and emergency response, critical public storm drainage infrastructure, and long-term road repair and maintenance.

# Orinda wins grant to install solar panels, battery storage at community center

**By Sora O'Doherty**

The city of Orinda has won a very large grant and the city council has unanimously approved the installation of a new system of solar panels and a battery backup for the community center. One of three scenarios offered to the council, the adopted scenario, which was recommended by staff, also keeps the existing generator in place for use when peak usage must be provided. The main purpose of the system is to assure access to power for residents during public safety power shutoffs, during which the city opens

the community center to allow residents to access power.

The total cost of the system will be \$317,551, of which \$217,551 is from a state grant and \$100,000 will come from general capital project funds. The staff report was introduced Feb. 2 by Larry Theis, Assistant City Manager/Director of Public Works, and was prepared by Senior Engineer Siva Natarajan. Currently the energy costs for the community center are \$20,000 per year. With the new system it is estimated that the city can save \$133,000 over the next 20 years. Staff also looked at the possibility of installing solar panels on the library, and recommend that it be considered as part of future updates to the library. Solar power could offset about 33% of the energy the building requires.

The staff report pointed to the advantages and disadvantages of the scheme. Due to the

availability of both solar and fossil fuel systems, there is minimum to no potential for exceeding the generation capacities. There will be redundant power available even during inclement weather conditions when there is a potential for the solar system to not generate enough power to replenish the battery. Integrating the existing diesel generator will eliminate the lack of reliability compared to a purely solar system, without adding additional costs to the project. Although the option adopted is the lowest cost option, it does have the disadvantages of being partially dependent on fossil fuel.

The plan adopted also provides for the installation of a Tesla power wall battery storage for backup power. Council Member Inga Miller thanked Theis and Natarajan for what she called a phenomenal staff report and presenta-

tion. She said it was an example of the discretion that staff uses in only applying for grants the City is likely to get. "Of course," she added, "I want to go with something totally green, but at the end of the day, the best choice is to follow the staff's recommendation." She acknowledged that the scheme is "not the most green, but fits the budget and makes our residents safest during PSPSs because we have the backup generator."

Vice Mayor Dennis Fay agreed that it was the sensible approach. While delighted that the city got a grant and can move forward, Fay wondered if the system is flexible enough to allow the city to avail of better batteries that might be developed in the future. Natarajan assured him that it is. Mayor Amy Worth noted that the grant was very competitive, and Orinda was very fortunate to have received it.

**Orinda's Lowest Gas Prices**

**22 Bryant Way - Next to Casa Orinda**  
 Visit our Snack Shop & play Lotto & Lottery  
 Mon - Sat 5 am - 12 am; Sun 6 am - 11 pm

# Artify Orinda

Mayor Amy Worth has been honoring the Artify Orinda Initiative of the Lamorinda Arts Council by using one of the recent installations as her background during city council Zoom meetings.

The painting, "Sunrise from Rim Trail" by artist Judy Fine is one of three that have been added to the art niches in the side of CVS Pharmacy on Moraga Way in the Theatre District. The Artify Orinda Initiative is chaired by Maggie Boscoe.

The Orinda Garden club will be planting flowers in planter boxes below the art. Worth thanked the Arts Council, the Orinda Community Foundation for their support of this project, and the Orinda Parks & Recreation staff who worked closely with the artists and the Arts Council to make this happen.



**"Sunrise from the Rim Trail"** Artist Judith Feins. Look for 13 animals. Photo Sora O'Doherty