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New mural on library wall will literally put Orinda on the map

By Sora O'Doherty



Mock-up on building Image provided

The nature of Orinda, from plants to animals to topography, will grace the south wall of the Orinda Library next year in a mural commissioned by the Friends of the Orinda Library. The \$100,000 mural by Ink Dwell, artist Jane Kim's Bay Area studio that explores the wonders of the natural world, will be funded by the Friends of the Orinda Library, the group that raised the money to build the library 20 years ago.

President of the Friends, Nancy Ross-Madnick, presented the plans for the mural to the city council on Oct. 19, as an item for the good of the city. The mural features plants and animals that are native to Orinda and a map of the city's streets and topography. It will cover the south wall over the entrance to the garage and wrap around onto part of the front wall facing Orinda Way.

Starting work in the spring of 2022, Ink Dwell will take an estimated six weeks to paint the mural on the

building using a very durable paint. According to Ross-Madnick, the mural artist is very experienced with other locations with challenging weather. With at least four layers of clear coat on top of the mural, it is anticipating to last at least 30 years. The library building is currently owned by the Friends for the next 30 years, after which the city will take over the ownership of the building.

Katie Rittmann, an experienced fundraiser, joined the board of the Friends and she's in charge of fundraising for this project. Thus far, the Friends have spent about a year working on the project, and have contracted with Ink Dwell to create the design. The Friends paid for the design with the help of the Orinda Community Foundation. Ross-Madnick told the Lamorinda Weekly, "When we found out what the budget is, all the board members contributed." Ross-Madnick says that the Friends are confident that they will raise necessary funds.

The mural features the ecosystem flora and fauna that are particularly unique to Orinda, such as river otters, and also topographical lines and a map of the city streets. The mural is meant as an educational tool for people and to beautify Orinda. There will be brochures and there will be signage to identify the animals and plants. There will also be a freestanding sign honoring the donors to the wall with some additional explanatory text. Further, the Friends and the city will have information about the mural on their websites.

Ross-Madnick speculated that the mural might be visible from BART, since a number of trees have been cut down for fire safety. It will definitely be seen from the pedestrian bridge leading from the BART station to Orinda Village.

At the city council meeting, public speaker Nick Waranoff raised the issue of liability. In response to his written comments, the city was named as an additional insured in the mural contract. Ross-Madnick explained that there is a very extensive agreement between the Friends and Ink Dwell known as an Artwork Commission Agreement. The agreement contains specifics about insurance, liability, graffiti. Insofar as graffiti goes, Ross-Madnick says that Ink Dwell has the ability to clean it off, but to date there has never been any graffiti issues at Orinda Library. "As a greater Bay Area company, Ink Dwell will be here to help us," Ross-Madnick concluded.

Because the city will eventually own the building and provides the maintenance for the building, the Friends have chosen to donate the mural to the city now. At the meeting, the city council accepted the offer from the Friends of the Orinda Library to fund the mural and authorized the city manager to sign a letter of agreement with the Friends.

Under the agreement, the city will be painting the exterior wall of the parking garage off-white, which will be the basecoat for the mural. In addition, Orinda is planning to paint the entire building in 2022-23, which will be paid for by the city.

On Dec. 4, the Friends are having a book sale and will be commemorating the 20th anniversary of the building and officially launching the mural fundraising.

According to the Friends, donations for the mural are most easily received by mail at Friends of the Orinda Library, P.O. Box 152, Orinda, CA, 94563, and they ask that contributors please note "mural" in the memo

line on the bottom of your check. For further information, contact Mary Kate Rittmann at krittmann@hotmail.com.

More ways to support the Friends of the Orinda Library can be found on their website:
<https://friendsoftheorindalibrary.org/membership/>

Reach the reporter at: sora@lamorindaweekly.com

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