



See public meetings schedule on this page 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

- Hardwoods
- Carpets
- Rugs
- LVP
- Vinyl
- Laminate

**FAMILY OWNED
30+ YEARS!**

925-284-4440

3344 Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Lafayette

lamorindafloors.com

**LAMORINDA
FLOORS**

Special election to allow Orinda residents to vote on a new school parcel tax

By Sora O'Doherty

The only polls open in Contra Costa County on March 7 will be in Orinda, where residents will be able to vote on a new proposed parcel tax of \$295 per parcel to support Orinda schools. The new tax would last for seven years and is anticipated to provide somewhat over \$2 million per year for the schools. In order to pass, the measure needs to receive two-thirds of the votes cast. Persons over the age of 65 may opt for a waiver and not pay the tax. Because it is a special election, the Orinda Union School Board will have to bear the expense of the election, but this is common for school financing matters.

As is often heard at OUSD meetings, Orinda is among the districts receiving the lowest funding from the state of Cali-

fornia. In 2013 the state of California adopted the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) with the object of providing more state funding for districts that inherently had less money, in addition to boosting the money that flowed to school districts that had more English language learners, children from lower income households and foster youth.

Despite low funding from the state, Orinda has received a great deal of additional funding from the community itself. The parcel taxes are in addition to other funding mechanisms, such as bond measures. In addition, local schools raise funds from donations, a field that has recently been brought under the umbrella of ONE Orinda, the Orinda Network for Education, that works with all of the school parent clubs on

fundraising.

According to OUSD Superintendent Aida Glimme, the new measure, known as Measure Z, would be added to the existing two measures approved by Orinda voters in 2003 and 2009, neither of which has an end date. Measure A provides the schools with \$385 per parcel and measure B provides an additional \$124 per parcel. If Measure Z passes, Orinda residents would be paying \$804 annually per parcel for school support for the next seven years.

The new parcel tax is intended to maintain core academic instruction in science, technology, engineering, math, arts, music, reading and writing programs by attracting and retaining highly qualified teachers, specialist and staff and preserving small class sizes. The tax will not

fund administrative salaries, and will be subject to an independent citizens' oversight committee.

No argument against the proposed tax was submitted, but an argument in favor of the tax was submitted by State Sen. Steve Glazer, former mayor Sue Severson, and representatives of ONE and several parents and grandparents of Orinda students.

Polls will be open on election day from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. at Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, Santa Maria Church and St. Stephens Episcopal Church. In addition, ballots may be dropped into official ballot drop boxes located at Orinda City Hall and the Contra Costa Department of Elections in Martinez. The elections department expects to have final results of the election available by March 17.

Orinda takes return to in-person meetings slowly

By Sora O'Doherty

Mandated by the end of the COVID-19 State of Emergency to return to in-person meetings, the Orinda City Council decided on Feb. 21 to proceed slowly with a hybrid option. City Manager David Biggs, who presented the staff report to the council, noted that since he was hired during the pandemic, he has actually never attended an in-person council meeting. While the

council heard and considered options for having a hybrid option to allow members of the public to continue to attend city council meetings via the Zoom meeting platform, the council decided to try simply returning to in-person meetings for the first two meetings in March.

In March, the council will return to its usual meeting place, the Orinda Library Auditorium, with all required staff and council members present in person. The Library Auditorium appeals to the council because it is a very large venue, allowing for the attendance of many people but still permitting a degree of social distancing. Insofar as the continued use of Zoom in that room, however, it is complicated, according to Biggs and City Clerk Sheri Smith, by the fact that the venue is used by many groups for a variety of events, which means that the technical equipment cannot be left in place but needs to be reinstalled each time it is needed.

As an alternative, the council considered holding meetings in the Sarge Littlehale room, a smaller venue at city hall where there would

be less difficulty with the equipment. Currently the Moraga-Orinda Fire District has been holding hybrid Zoom meetings from the Sarge Room, as it is known. However, Mayor Inga Miller was concerned about the smaller size of the room making social distancing difficult and making it less attractive to groups who would like to attend the meetings, for example, Scout troops who might like to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice Mayor Darlene Gee said that while she has no problem starting back in the Sarge Room, she didn't favor it for the long term. She suggested that participation via Zoom has not been very high during the pandemic and that during the transition data should be collected and evaluated to determine the benefit of hybrid meetings. Council Member Latika Malkani agreed, noting that "the one thing that COVID taught us is that we have to be flexible."

Additionally, the council agreed that it would be a good idea to keep an eye on what other jurisdictions are doing and how it is working out. Council Member Janet Riley

summed it up: "I think we should take baby steps and evaluate it as we go slowly, trying different approaches."

City Attorney Osa Wolff spent some time explaining the possibility of council members attending meetings via Zoom under AB 2449. The new law provides that council members may attend via Zoom under certain circumstances, including in the event of the illness of the council member or a family member, or when the council member is traveling for the business of the council, but not for personal business travel. The procedures are rather complicated, and the council agreed that, while the possibility remains available, as a norm they prefer to simply miss a meeting in the event of illness or absence.

There was no public comment during the meeting, but Steve Cohn submitted a written comment that Zoom had been very helpful to people who might have disabilities involving mobility or hearing and he encouraged the council to continue with Zoom or a similar format.

Spring productions

... continued from Page A1

This year, the "Grease" cast created a TikTok account, and their first video went viral, reaching over 3 million views. "We decided to make a TikTok because we figured it would be a fun way for the cast to bond. We also thought it was a good way to publicize the show because many people have worked very hard to bring the show together, and it should get all the attention it deserves," said senior Sabrina Hernandez, who plays Betty Rizzo.

The cast is extremely excited for performances to begin. "I feel very proud of the show we've created. I would say that our cast has a

special bond, and we've all gotten very close over the past few months. When the show is over, I will miss playing Danny since it's grown to be one of my favorite roles. We hope to see you at Rydell High!" Aguilar said.

Acalanes's musical, "Legally Blonde," is set at a much more prestigious school: Harvard University. From March 22-25, Acalanes' theater will be home to the bubbly and sharp-witted Elle Woods – played by junior Lux Downing Griggs – and the charming and well-read Emmett Forrest – played by sophomore Cameron Zeder. Supported by her Delta Nu sorority sisters, Elle Woods chases the man of her dreams to Harvard, embarking on a journey of self-discovery which involves eventful visits to the beauty salon, many Harvard law lectures, and innumerable moments of female empowerment.

The show is directed by Hawkins, who teaches at both Miramonte and Acalanes, and drama teacher Edward Meehan. Like "Grease," "Legally Blonde" is led by

teacher directors, but is fully student produced. "All of our performers have been working very hard to fine-tune their acting, singing, and dancing. In addition, our directors, pit orchestra, stagecraft team, and costume designers have been putting in so much hard work. Everyone involved in "Legally Blonde" cares a lot about how the show will turn out," junior Monty Gumabay, who plays Professor Callahan, said.

Now, the only thing these performances need is an audience. "When we have a live audience in front of us, they bring the energy, the reactions, the applause, and the laughter, which is the last piece of the puzzle," Hawkins said.

Whether joining the newsies in their strike against newspaper publisher Joseph Pulitzer, driving around with the greasers in the automatic, systematic, and hydromatic Greased Lighting, or hanging out with Bruiser at the Old Valley Mall – or all three – come out and support these talented high schoolers!

Ticket information: For Miramonte's show, "Grease," visit www.showtix4u.com/event-details/70947. For Campolindo's show, "Newsies," visit <http://campochoir.com/tickets/>. Acalanes ticket sales open March 6 at www.ahsperformingarts.org.



City Council

Regular Meeting: Tuesday, March 7 6:00 p.m.

Planning Comm.:

Wednesday, March 14, 7:00 p.m.

Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission

Wednesday, March 8, 6:30 p.m.



**Bay Area
Drainage, Inc.**

**Have You Checked Your
Crawlspace Lately?**

- French Drains
- Underfloor Drains
- Downspout Systems
- Subdrain Systems
- Sump Pumps
- Retaining Walls
- Pavestone Driveway & Walkways

**A General Engineering Contractor
Locally owned and Operated
Contractor LIC # 762208**

925•377•9209



visit our website

www.bayareadrainage.com



**Surprisingly great rates
right around the corner.**

Kelly Sopak Insurance Agency Inc
Kelly Sopak, Agent
Insurance Lic#: 6006124
1 Northwood Drive Suite 1
Orinda, CA 94563
Mon-Thurs 9:00am to 5:00pm
Fridays 9:00am to 4:30pm
Evenings & Weekends by Appt
Hablamos Español

State Farm
Bloomington, IL
2001878

I'm your one-stop shop for the service you deserve at a price you want. Call me for surprisingly great rates and Good Neighbor service right in your neighborhood.

Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there.®

Individual premiums will vary by customer. All applicants subject to State Farm's underwriting requirements.

