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Letters to the Editor

Editor:

The personal e-mails of Orinda City Council member Sue Severson to and from a developer, concerning a desirable parcel in Orinda Village, have been publicized. The other council members just unanimously elected her to be our next mayor.

These e-mails preceded a tumultuous drafting of Orinda's Housing Element. An extremely problematic draft in June, written without any public input, enticed several hundred outraged citizens to attend city council meetings. Many Orindans concerned with preserving the semi-rural character of the city and initiating transparency in City Hall commented publicly and wrote detailed letters. Twelve hundred citizens signed a petition opposing this early draft. A recurrent complaint was that Orinda conceded more than was legally required. Initially, City Council and staff ignored and then insulted these Orinda residents, referring to us as misinformed and paranoid. Eventually, some of our edits were incorporated into the lengthy document. However, the final draft adopted by City Council contains statements that could make Orinda susceptible to manipulation by developers. They are counting on the fact that Orindans are too busy with families and careers to pay attention to these arcane issues.

If you cherish our semi-rural character or just want to have a say in our destiny, stay informed by attending council meetings or listening to the recorded audio afterward. Join a citizen group that focuses on Orinda affairs. Then, have your voice heard by writing e-mails to council members or speaking at council meetings.

Bruce London
Orinda

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