



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, Jan. 11, 7 p.m.  
 By Teleconference Only  
**Planning Commission**  
 TBA

**Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission**  
 Wednesday, Jan. 12, 6:30 p.m.  
 By Teleconference Only

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**New Mayor Dennis Fay wants to improve plight of private roads residents**



Mayor Dennis Fay Lamo archive

**By Sora O'Doherty**

As he enters the last year of his term on the Orinda City Council as mayor, Dennis Fay would like to do something to help residents of private streets not in homeowners associations. He would like to get a pilot program started this year to work with residents to bring their streets up to standard and then have those streets accepted by the city of Orinda. However, he is only talking about a specific segment of Orinda's approximately 20% of streets that are private. In fact, he is looking at helping residents on perhaps 25% of those streets, or about 5% of Orinda's streets in total.

The residents whom Fay is seeking to aid live on streets that were offered by their developers to the government – most likely the

county government before Orinda incorporated in 1985, which are also not included in HOAs. According to Fay, HOAs have budgets for street maintenance and insurance for major incidents, such as sink holes. But residents on streets without HOAs must agree to work together to maintain their streets, which can be a challenge.

During his term as vice mayor, Fay is happiest about implementing Measure R, the one-cent sales tax voters approved in 2020, as it relates to wildfires. "We need to be working on all the things that would help reduce our wild-fire risk," Fay says, "including fuels mitigation and home hardening, as well as anything new SSTOC (Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission), a commission set up to oversee the use of the Measure R funds over the 20-year life of the tax, might come up with." Fay expressed his appreciation to Moraga-Orinda Fire District Chief Dave Winnacker for providing a lot of guidance on what to work on. Fay said high on the list of things to be done is getting the word out that fire safety is an issue. "Surprisingly," he said, "some citizens are still unaware of fire danger and what they can do about it." He added that the city's work to promote fire safety has to be followed up by site visits by MOFD, which has the power to enforce the fire code.

Fay's next priority is finishing up Orinda's downtown plan, which he views as a catalyst to revitalize the downtown. Nobody can guarantee it though, he pointed out. "What gets built will be built by the private sector. The city won't be actually building in downtown, but the planning is intended to incentivize developers." Demographics are changing, Fay observed. Younger people with children have a changed perception. Fay says that when he was campaigning for his seat on the city council, he frequently heard that people wanted a more vibrant downtown. "The real question," he says, "is how do you get there."

Speaking about the effects of the pandemic on the city, Fay noted that "we've lost at least two restaurants during the pandemic, Taverna Pellegrini and Brothers Public Kitchen. There are a lot of empty spaces in Theatre Square.

"Orinda Village is kind of sad," Fay remarked, "there is almost nothing going on on Sundays. The Bank of America has closed permanently. It feels like slow decay. If we don't do something to provide opportunities and incentives, 20 years from now it will look even worse." Although he recognizes that there are some who like the current architecture, like parking right in front of stores, he wonders how good that will

be in the long run.

On the infrastructure side, Fay believes that Orinda's roads are in pretty good shape. The 2021 roads project was delayed by contract difficulties, but will start in the spring, with 2022 coming right up behind it. There will be a fair amount of road repaving activity in 2022.

Storm drains are the next priority for expenditure of Measure R funds. Fay notes that Orinda cannot afford to have large storm drains fail, because they go under the collectors and arterials. He doesn't want another Miner Road sinkhole type incident. With limited resources, the city will focus on the big drains.

Fay is in the last year of his term, having been elected in 2018. He would be up for reelection in November if he decides to run. However, he might decide that he needs more family time. His son, currently living in New York, will be moving back to the Bay Area, and his daughter lives in Huddersfield, England with her husband and child. "We haven't been able to see them during the pandemic." Fay's grandson is now 9.

In addition, Fay and his wife might be house hunting, for a place with fewer stairs. His wife recently broke her ankle, making them realize that their current home is not ideal for physical challenges.

**Administrative Services Director Paul Rankin retires**

**By Sora O'Doherty**

After a career in government that spanned 42 years, Paul Rankin, Orinda's administrative services director, is retiring. Rankin was hired by Orinda as finance director in August 2017, and became the city's administrative services director about a year and a half ago. The change acknowledged the role Rankin was playing in other areas of the city, including such diverse ar-

reas as IT, risk management, and human resources.

City manager David Biggs reported to the city council on Dec. 14 that Rankin's last day would be Dec. 20. Biggs praised Rankin as a "true professional," who plays a much broader role than just finance director. Rankin had announced his retirement earlier, but agreed to stay on longer than he had originally intended to allow the city to hire a new finance director. The city has hired Doug Alessio, formerly from the city of Livermore. (See article on Page A7.)

Rankin is a native Californian who grew up in Pico Rivera in the San Gabriel Valley. He attended Claremont Men's College (now Claremont McKenna College) before taking an MA in public administration at Cal State Long Beach.

Looking back over his 42-year career in local government, Rankin noted, "That's a lot of meetings!" He has actually enjoyed the switch to



Photo Sora O'Doherty

**Retiring Administrative Services Director Paul Rankin**

also enjoyed. He speaks with affection of the agency as having a "portfolio of little gems," unique to the Bay Area.

In Orinda, Rankin says, he truly enjoyed the city council, finding them really focused on being there to serve and to make things better, willing to spend their attention on what matters. In preparing for city council meetings, Rankin presents information like an onion, so folks can see the overview on the outside, but can dig as deep as they like.

Rankin found his education at Claremont really helped him with communications. "Sometimes you are stuck with the required way," he observed, "but you can always tell the story differently."

Rankin lives in Dublin with his wife, who is also retiring from her job as secretary to a school principal. Their three children are grown and out of the house, but are all employed and live in the Bay Area. He looks forward to having time to pursue travel when the world opens up again, and his hobbies, including photography which he hasn't touched in a while.

Rankin noted that in 42 years of public service, he'd made a lot of sacrifices - all the late evening meetings, for example. Now he definitely wants to spend more time with family. "We're excited," he concluded, "definitely excited."

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