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## Strong win likely for Orinda school parcel tax

By Sora O'Doherty

At the close of polls on March 7, Measure Z, the parcel tax for Orinda schools, was looking like passing with a three-quarters majority, while only a two-thirds majority was required for passage. This special election for the parcel tax was the only election in Contra Costa County on March 7. On March 10 the Department of Elections released the first interim update, showing that yes votes stood at 4,925, representing 76.49% of the vote, and no votes stood at 1,514, representing 23.51% of the votes. Turnout for the measure was high at nearly 43%. The target date for the count to be certified is March 17.

The results of the vote on Measure Z, which it seems will be Orinda's third school parcel tax, were similar to the two previous elections for parcel taxes. In 2003, Measure A, which provides the school district with \$385 per parcel, passed with 5,733 votes, which was a 75% pass rate. In 2009, Measure B, which provides the district with an additional \$124 per parcel passed with a 70.75% pass rate of 5,384 yes votes. Both measures A and B continue indefinitely.

Measure Z will provide the schools with an additional \$295 per parcel for a limited 7-year period and is anticipated to provide somewhat over \$2 million per year for Orinda schools. Because the district called a special election, they were required to pay the costs of the election, which were estimated by the Contra Costa Department of Elections to be between \$120,000 and \$180,000.

Measures A and B allowed for an exemption for senior citizens over the age of 65 on limited incomes.

According to Debbie Jamieson, executive assistant to the superintendent of the Orinda Union School District, there are 194 parcels that avail of this exemption. The total number of parcels subject to the parcel tax is currently 7,920, Jamieson said.

The exemption from the Measure Z parcel tax differs from those for the previous parcel taxes in that there is no income requirement. Any senior citizen over the age of 65 is entitled to claim an exemption from the new parcel tax. In order to do so, an application must be submitted by May 1, for tax year 2023-24. Along with the application, the applicant must submit proof of age and some documentation, such as a utility bill or property tax bill, indicating that the applicant is the owner of the property and that it is the applicant's primary place of residence.

The form is available at: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Lq-lZwy\\_-P8LuJ2GA2ITa8NqfKUIT2ws/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Lq-lZwy_-P8LuJ2GA2ITa8NqfKUIT2ws/view)

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