



See public meetings schedule on these pages and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements
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Orinda Public Meetings
City Council Regular Meeting:
 Tuesday, Feb. 20, 7 p.m.
 Orinda Library Auditorium, 26 Orinda Way
Planning Commission
 Tuesday, Feb. 27, 7 p.m.
 Orinda Library Auditorium, 26 Orinda Way
Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Commission
 Wednesday, Feb. 14, 7:00 p.m.
 Sarge Littlehale Community Room, 22 Orinda Way

Orinda Police Chief gives update on low property crime in the city

By Sora O'Doherty

Compared to 2019 and 2020, property crime is down in the city of Orinda, according to Orinda Police Chief Ryan Sullivan, who gave a report to the City Council Subcommittee on Public Safety on Feb. 13. The report did not include crimes against the person.

In 2023 there were 23 residential burglaries, 12 commercial burglaries, and 20 automobile burglaries. Higher numbers were reported in 2019, when there were 29 residential burglaries and 46 automobile burglaries, although the high for commercial burglaries was 19 in 2021. Sullivan reported that the department has a good closure rate, with many burglaries solved and some still in court. The rate of stolen

vehicles was down from a high of 32 in 2021 to 24 in 2023, although 2019 and 2020 saw lower rates of 17 stolen vehicles for each of those years. Although the chief reported that five stolen vehicles were recovered in 2023, he added that not all of those vehicles had been stolen from within Orinda.

In 2023, 151 suspects were arrested in Orinda. Most were not Orinda residents. Sullivan spoke about an arrest in a case where a check was stolen, washed, and cashed. The search warrant in that case yielded a lot of check equipment.

Sullivan also provided an update on personnel and equipment. Orinda has two new police officers, officer Nicholas Callejas and Officer Christopher Hamblin. Total staffing of the OPD includes the chief, a senior administrative assistant, an administrative sergeant, an investigations sergeant, a detective, a traffic officer, eight patrol officers,

and a reserve officer. Patrol officers work three days a week for 12 hour shifts, day or night.

In 2023 the office purchased two Chevrolet Tahoes to replace two 2016 Ford Explorers, and another two older vehicles are being replaced this year as well.

Sullivan also talked about automatic license plate reader (ALPR) cameras in the city. Orinda, which has several ALPA cameras around the city, both mobile and stationary, is purchasing additional cameras for better coverage. There are also several privately owned ALPR cameras scattered throughout the city, Sullivan added. OPD vehicles are equipped with cameras and officers wear body-worn cameras.

Sullivan stressed the importance of good relations between the community and the police department. He spoke about the efforts being made by the department to have positive interac-

tions with citizens. In 2023, the OPD hosted a National Night Out event at the police station and a Coffee with the Cops at the community center, in addition to participating in a campus safety and safe gun storage education night at Miramonte High School.

OPD has similar events planned for 2024, including a Lunch with Cops event at Orinda Intermediate School and Miramonte High School, and "Recess with the Cops" at the elementary schools. OPD will again host National Night Out and is planning monthly Coffee with the Cops events.

Orinda law requires that firearms be stored safely, and OPD offers free gunlocks. OPD will also take possession of and destroy any unwanted firearms and/or ammunition. An officer can come to your home to receive unwanted items, or you can bring them to the police department, but if you choose to bring them to

the station, leave the items in your car until instructed otherwise by an officer.

Sullivan stressed the importance of neighborhood involvement. OPD Officer Johnson is assigned to Neighborhood Watch, and can be contacted at (925) 254-6820 by any neighbors who wish to form a Neighborhood Watch group. Neighbors looking out for any unusual activity, such as garage doors open when you know your neighbor is away, can help to prevent crimes or lead to the arrest of criminals.

Most importantly, Sullivan and the subcommittee members urged the public to communicate with OPD if they see anything suspicious, rather than posting to social media. For times when a member of the public doesn't feel it is appropriate to use the 911 emergency call line, Sullivan urged them to call the non-emergency dispatch number, (925) 646-2441.



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Inga Miller announces she will not run for reelection on Orinda City Council

By Sora O'Doherty



Inga Miller Photo S. O'Doherty

Having been asked by a member of the public if she planned to run for city council again, Council Member Inga Miller gave it some thought and decided that she would not run, with the intention of leaving the field clear for others interested in stepping up. She announced her decision at the conclusion of the Feb. 20 city council meeting. To her surprise, she almost immediately discovered that someone was interested in replacing her, and she is enthusiastically endorsing Cara Hoxie, whose term as president of the Orinda Union School District Board expires at the end of the

year. First elected in 2016, and serving as mayor of Orinda twice, Miller reflected upon her eight years on the council. She recalled that the 2016 election was a very charged one nationally, and it was her goal to maintain the charm and friendliness of Orinda, to preserve the city's sense of community and caring. She considers her contribution to that goal her main achievement as a city council member.

Before becoming a city council member, Miller served on the Parks and Rec Commission. Raised in Orinda, Miller attended Miramonte High School and felt a debt of gratitude to her native city. She is very proud of the work done to adopt the downtown Orinda plan, which she hopes will reverse the decline of the downtown and what she views as "tremendous retail leakage."

Her worst experience in office was the AirBnB shooting that occurred when she was serving as mayor in 2019. "Anytime there is a

loss of life," Miller said, "it is devastating." She was glad that something good came from the incident, insofar as laws were changed locally and beyond after the shooting to prevent future occurrences.

Her belief that no one should die is also key to her absolute dedication to Orinda's evacuation planning. "Preparation is everything," she believes. While she is happy that Sleepy Hollow Elementary School has been prepared as a "place of last resort," she firmly believes that in most circumstances there will be sufficient warning to evacuate students from the schools. She noted that since the destructive wildfires in Australia, they have mandated places of last resort, or neighborhood safe places.

Miller had words of praise for many of Orinda's former mayors, whose ranks she will soon join. Miller recalled the many volunteer activities they have undertaken since leaving the council, adding that Orinda is a place where

there is a huge willingness to volunteer.

The outgoing city council member, who will serve until the end of the year, had many good things to say about the candidity of Hoxie, whom she is endorsing. As a lawyer, like Miller, with eight years of experience serving on the school board and dealing with the passage of a school bond, Hoxie understands infrastructure and contracts, Miller said. She has been a host family for a student from the Czech Republic and has visited the Tabor Meetings with the Orinda Tabor Sister City Foundation. She has also been involved in building bridges between the school district and the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, Miller added.

The other council member whose term expires at the end of the year is current Mayor Darlene Gee. Gee was appointed to fill the vacancy left when council member Steve Glazer was elected to the California Senate in 2015, and won election to the council in 2016 and 2020.

Correction: The Chinese New Year's Lion Dance and a martial arts demonstration on Feb. 10 in Orinda was performed by Tomizaki's Champions Kung Fu school and its students. Concord Kung Fu, a different school, was erroneously named in the article in the Feb. 14 issue of The Lamorinda Weekly. The names of Dr. Weylin Eng and Dick Heggie were misspelled in the same story. We apologize for these errors.

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