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## Orinda Establishes Environmental Sustainability Working Group

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"The concept of undertaking local environmental initiatives and steps to reduce energy consumption is one that many of us were independently thinking about," states Emmanuel Ursu, Planning Director for the City of Orinda. "I have long thought about actions the city can take such as encouraging renewable energy production and increasing access to local foods, including community gardens," he adds. During the City Council's recent strategic planning sessions, Council Member Steve Glazer suggested that the city develop a comprehensive approach to environmental sustainability initiatives, and so the Environmental Sustainability Working Group (the ESWG) was established.

The ESWG, comprised of Planning Commissioners Louise Adamson, Chris Kniel and Richard Westin and members at large David Mayeri, Kent Pavey, and Rick Kattenburg met for the first time in late July.

The group's established mission is to promote and implement initiatives throughout the city that reduce energy consumption, increase the quality of life of residents, and preserve the community for future generations.

The working group's primary areas of focus will be improved home efficiency through the creation of checklists that will describe actions property owners can undertake to reduce residential energy consumption; community outreach and education to provide residents with information on available programs, grants, and opportunities to increase energy efficiency in their homes; and the launching of strategies to encourage developers and property owners to undertake energy efficient projects, such as the implementation of a green building code (Orinda currently does not have any green building requirements).

The next meeting of the ESWG will be held on Monday, August 24th at 4:00 p.m. in the Planning Conference Room at City Hall.

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