

Orinda

Lamorinda Community

Orinda

Calendar

City Council 7pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way
Tuesday, August 18

Planning Comm. 7pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way
Tuesday, August 11

Historic Landmarks Comm. 3pm
Gallery Room, Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way
Tuesday, August 25

Mayor's Com. Liaison 8:30am
Community Room at City Hall
22 Orinda Way
Monday, September 8

City of Orinda:
<http://www.cityoforinda.org>
• all meeting notes
• calendar updates

Chamber of Commerce:
<http://www.orindachamber.org>
• local businesses
• upcoming events



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Orinda's Council Talks Revenues and Investments

By Andrea A. Firth

Orinda stands to lose just over \$400,000 in property tax revenue during this fiscal year if the State "borrows" the full eight percent of the Proposition 1A tax grab outlined in the recently passed budget. Orinda's Finance Advisory Committee will be recommending to the Council that it use reserves to cover the shortfall when they weigh in on this at the mid-year budget review, which should occur in January, according to Administrative and Financial Services Director Beverly

Marshall. The State is required to pay back the cities and counties within three years, however the specific terms of the repayment and the interest rate to be paid are unknown at this point. Orinda maintains a minimum of \$5 million in reserves.

The State's attempt to take the Highway Users Tax, or gas tax, was not included in the final budget. The gas tax represents \$265,000 a year to the City and is designated for infrastructure projects.

Although tax revenue will decline through the State's "borrowing," property tax growth in Orinda looks to be better than expected. The City's current budget conservatively includes a property tax growth rate of 1.6%. According to the County Assessor's report to the Board of Supervisors, the assessed value in Orinda has increased by 5.39%. At the most recent City Council meeting, Marshall recommended to the Council that a larger, but still conservative,

factor of 3% growth be incorporated at the mid-year budget review. At this same meeting, the City Council members also discussed the City's investment policies citing some concern over the fact that the City has two investments with the fledgling CIT Group, which represent \$750,000 combined. Mayor Sue Severson and Council Member Steve Glazer both expressed the need to revise the City's investment policies to ensure greater diversification, noting

their surprise that the City had recently made a second investment in General Electric. Bob Thompson, a member of the Finance Advisory Committee, was on hand at the meeting and advised the Council to take a wait and see approach to the CIT Group situation. He also explained that the Finance Committee was in the process of reviewing the investment approach and that a revised policy would be coming to the Council for review in the fall.



Felony vandalism, 7/28/09 Someone used an unknown object to cause damage to the front and rear driver's side of a police vehicle while it was parked unattended on Highland Road between 7/28 and 7/29. Estimated damage \$500. Unbelievable, clearly the culprit is unaware of budget cuts.

Car vandalism, 7/28/09 Sometime during the night an unknown suspect smashed the front right passenger window of a car parked in an Overhill Road carport directly adjacent to the house. The owner said he didn't hear or see anything during the night. Perhaps someone had green envy and wanted to trash this fairly new Toyota Prius. Maybe the same unknown suspect that trashed the police car?

Identity theft, 7/12/09 A semi-unknown suspect attempted to open three credit card accounts in a St. James Circle resident's name and also charged \$50 worth of gas at the Orinda Chevron station. The victim had the credit card in her possession and doesn't know how the suspect obtained her credit card number. The victim believes the suspect is a family member who is a parolee and is currently at large.

Busted hanging around, 7/20/09 In the middle of the afternoon, a concerned citizen noticed a subject loitering at Broadview Terrace and Overhill Road and placed him under citizens arrest. Turns out the loiterer was an unemployed man who had no business being there and happened to be on parole.



Photo Steve Glazer

Matt Moran, who was recently elected to the Orinda Union School District Governing Board, receives a city pin from Mayor Sue Severson. Accompanying Matt is his nine year-old daughter, Reilly, a 5th-grader at Glorietta School.

A Hidden Gem in the Orinda Hills

Oak Springs Pool Turns 80

By Andrea A. Firth



Photo provided by Orinda Historical Society

As you walk down the steps alongside hand-laid stone walls to the entrance of the Oak Springs Pool, it is like taking steps back in time. The tear-drop shaped pool, nestled against an ivy-covered hillside and surrounded by oak trees, looks much the same today as it did 80 years ago when the natural spring on the hill was tapped to create the neighborhood pool.

"It really is a hidden gem. It's an oasis," says Kathy Duffy, a member for over twenty years, as she looks out at the pool which is located a short distance from the bustle of Highway 24 but feels far removed from the hectic pace of a commuter's life. "It's like having your own backyard pool, and it's a great place for kids," she adds as she observes two children who have the pool to themselves on a warm and sunny July afternoon. The diving board, a feature that has disappeared from most modern pools, is a big draw, and pool toys, noodles, and floats are always permissible explains Duffy.

Built in 1929, when mostly trees populated the Oak Springs neighborhood and just a few cottages dotted the hill, the effort to create a spring-fed pool for the benefit of the neighbors was spearheaded by longtime Orinda resident Nathan Gray. "[Gray] owned about 200 parcels and sub-divided a lot of the hill," says Chris Flum, who grew up in the neighborhood and remembers hearing stories about the development of the area from Gray.

By the mid-1940's a clubhouse was added, a homeowners' association was formed, and the pool became the central meeting place for the growing community that had settled in the area. Kids' game nights and parent socials were all part of the draw. And rumor has it that in the early days, the sheriff, highway patrol, and other local officials would drop by the clubhouse

during their breaks to do a bit of gambling.

"Back when I was growing up, it really was the mecca of the hill," recalls Flum. "It was a warm and friendly place," he adds, which is a big reason he joined the pool when he returned to the neighborhood to raise his own family. Flum also remembers that the starting blocks had to be strategically placed around the odd-shaped pool to ensure competitors at the swim meets each swam the same distance. Oak Springs Pool no longer supports a swim team, which is an attractive feature for members who appreciate the unrestricted access to the pool throughout the summer.

Solar panels were installed on the lot adjacent to pool in the mid-1980's long before being green was cool, and the pool is kept at a comfortable 80° throughout the season which runs from late Spring to early Fall. The clubhouse, which was updated along the way to include a fully-functioning kitchen, retains the charm of an old cabin in the woods with knotty pine paneling, single panel windows, a brick fireplace, and twinkle lights strung from the ceiling. For a modest fee, the clubhouse can be rented all throughout the year, notes Duffy. "People have used it for all sorts of activities from ballet and karate classes to African drumming, book clubs, and birthday parties."

With 40 member families, Oak Springs Pool is never crowded. "We could probably grow to a hundred families, and it still would not have a negative impact," states Duffy who is working with the Board to increase the membership. As the Treasurer on the pool's Board, Duffy is acutely aware of the costs associated with maintaining the facility. "We don't want to lose this," she says. "We think it is important to keep this going."

Flum, who enjoys the space and solitude that the pool provides,

agrees that membership needs to grow in order to adequately maintain the facility and provide the amenities people want, such as Wi-Fi which was recently added pool-side. He is trying to bring back the game nights that he enjoyed as a child to share with his boys, seven year-old Gavin and nine-year old Phoenix. "I want to bring back that community feel," concludes Flum.

For more information about the Oak Springs Pool go to www.oakspringspool.com.



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