

Transportation executive Darlene Gee steps up as vice mayor



Photo Sora O'Doherty

Vice Mayor Darlene Gee

By Sora O'Doherty

Not surprisingly, Darlene Gee's most passionate issue on the Orinda City Council continues to be the roads program. "With good luck and timing, we managed to do an awful lot of repair in Orinda," she says, adding, "But while the condition of residential streets is much better, we still have to find real solutions for longer-term maintenance, as well as addressing the larger roads classified as collectors and arterials, and storm drains. We really need to understand all the financial considerations."

As her second top priority, Gee believes that Orinda has to step up and be proactive about potential redevelopment around the Orinda BART station. She cites multiple actions at state level to take away local control of BART land. "There will continue to be a struggle regarding the balance of power between state control and local control. We need to stop putting our heads under the covers and pretending that the issue will go away. Especially we need to concentrate on the BART area. If we don't do something, the chances are that the state will step in."

Gee was in a minority on the city council this past year on the subject of private roads. "I don't have a preconceived answer and I'm not sure that there will be one, but it is an issue that affects 20 percent of our residents, one fifth of the community."

"I think that a task force was warranted, and I still support that," Gee maintains. "I believe that the topic will come back," she adds, because the private road residents want a better method of communication than what was available, which was written communication to the city council, and public conversations at Citizens' Infra-

structure Oversight Committee. But in Gee's opinion this was not robust enough to fully air the issue.

She remains empathetic to what people living on private roads are facing, and says that she is sensitive to their perception of inequities. They are charged for things that they don't benefit from, like the extra fee on garbage collection. "I understand their frustration," she says. "We all know that life is not fair. You can't make a perfectly fair system." She will continue advocating for their desire to have the task force and a more robust conversation, she says, although she fully comprehends that it is a very complicated issue that doesn't have an easy solution. Still, she supports better public conversation.

Gee's company represents major transportation agencies, including Caltrans and BART, and she is always very mindful of that, she says, adding that it came up during the election. She emphasizes that the transportation consulting business she works for does not do business with Orinda and stresses that if she feels that there is anything that would be a conflict of interest, she would recuse herself. But she believes that her level of expertise is helpful to the community and she tries to contribute the benefit of her experience in dealing with challenges of roads and infrastructure that is subject to hilly terrain, and poor soil. She is also very aware of concerns about fire safety and evacuation capability.

Gee has lived in Orinda since 1989. Because her husband works for PG&E, she recuses herself on energy issues. Gee grew up in Illinois, and moved to the Bay Area in 1980. She has two grown sons, ages 23 and 26. The 26-year-old is an attorney in Union city, and her younger son is in Davis law school.

New council member Kosla

... continued from Page A6

He also points out that people in Lafayette are beginning to move, to downsize. "It would be great," he says, "if people in Orinda could also downsize but stay in Orinda." Currently, there are not a lot of options, in his opinion. He points to Orindawoods, which has some smaller houses.

Also high on Kosla's agenda this coming year is the issue of fire safety, which

he feels personally as he lives with his family high in the Orinda hills. He is interested in exploring ways to allow Orindans to evacuate in the event of wild fire, such as installing combination locks on existing fire gates.

Kosla's and his, wife Larissa have two daughters. The younger one, Grace, is at Wagner Ranch in third grade and her older sister, Audrey, is in sixth grade at Orinda Intermediate School.

Selling a Home in 2019?

Analysts expect the seller's market to continue, albeit at a more moderate pace. It will take thoughtful strategy, cost-effective preparation and top-notch marketing to obtain superior results.

Call me for a free consultation and expert advice on how to maximize the net return on your sale.

Integrity ♦ Knowledge ♦ Results



Frank Woodward

Realtor®, Luxury Property Specialist
T. 925.788.4963
E.Frank@FrankWoodward.com



RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE

©2019 Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC. All Rights Reserved. Coldwell Banker® is a registered trademark licensed to Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC. An Equal Opportunity Company. Equal Housing Opportunity. Each Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage Office is Owned by a Subsidiary of NRT LLC. Real estate agents affiliated with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage are independent contractor sales associates and are not employees of Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC, Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage or NRT LLC. CalBRE License #01908304.



Bay Area
Greenscapes, Inc.
Synthetic Grass - Installation - Landscaping

1801 Saint Mary's Rd. Moraga, CA 94556

Phone (925) 819-2100

- Design & Consulting
- New Landscape Installation • Re-Landscape & Remodel
- Residential & Commercial • Green Landscape Options
- Maintenance & Clean Ups • Synthetic Lawn Installation

CA Lic# 938445

Cheers to a great 2018...



1871 Rice Way, Walnut Creek	\$2,020,000	Represented Buyers
486 Fernwood Drive, Moraga	\$1,680,000	Represented Sellers
1873 St. Andrews Drive, Moraga	\$1,537,500	Represented Buyers
857 Las Trampas Road, Lafayette	\$1,511,280	Represented Sellers
777 Reliez Station Road, Lafayette	\$1,275,000	Represented Buyers
1831 St. Andrews Drive, Moraga	\$1,190,000	Represented Buyers
49 Mathews Place, Alamo	\$1,150,000	Represented Buyers
3342 Helen Lane, Lafayette	\$1,105,000	Represented Buyers
17 Allendale Court, Walnut Creek	\$929,000	Represented Buyers
7 Saxton Court, Walnut Creek	\$910,000	Represented Sellers

...and an even better 2019



Kirsten Buckley
The Elena Hood Group
510.612.6173
kirsten@orinda.com
DRE 01922658

COMPASS



Orinda
Public
Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, Jan. 22, 7 p.m.
Library Auditorium, Orinda
Library, 26 Orinda Way
Planning Commission
Tuesday, Jan. 15, 7 p.m.
Library Auditorium, Orinda
Library, 26 Orinda Way

Citizens' Infrastructure
Oversight Commission
Wednesday, Jan. 9, 6:30 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,
22 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

Orinda Union High School
District Board Meetings

Monday, Jan. 14, 6 p.m.
Regular Board Meeting
8 Altarinda Rd., Orinda
www.orindaschools.org
See also AUHSD meeting page A2