

Published August 2nd, 2023

New Rec Coordinator manages fields and gyms in Orinda

By Sora O'Doherty



New Parks & Rec Recreation Coordinator Mark Callaway. Photo Sora O'Doherty

Mark Callaway, a Walnut Creek native, comes to Orinda with 15 years of experience working for Walnut Creek's Parks & Rec Department. Callaway, who started in Orinda in June, formerly worked with Todd Trimble, Director of Parks and Rec in Walnut Creek, and is happy to be working with him again.

One of three Recreational Coordinators, Callaway is in charge of the rentals of fields and gyms in the city, which provides a substantial contribution to the city's revenue. His domain includes the fields and gyms of the Orinda Unified School District, which has a deal with the city under which the city handles reservations.

Including the field at Wilder, Orinda fields are sought by a number of large sports clubs, including the Lamorinda Soccer Club, Eclipse Soccer, and Cal Magic, plus lacrosse and rugby. Callaway's job is to manage who uses which field when, based on factors such as the number of persons involved, how much field time has the group had in the past, whether the group is local and/or nonprofit. Nonprofits don't get priority, but they do pay a reduced

rental fee. Twice a year the department does big seasonal allocations for the period of September to February and March through August.

One thing that Callaway likes about working for Orinda is that, because it is a much smaller city than Walnut Creek, parks and rec staff get to work on multiple assignments, such as helping out at community events or summer camps.

Callaway acknowledged that the issue of having an online reservation system for tennis courts has been raised recently, and noted the rising popularity of sports such as pickleball and ultimate Frisbee.

Callaway, who was born and raised in Walnut Creek, still lives there. He and his wife will be celebrating their first anniversary in September.

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