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Dennis Fay Takes Reins as Mayor Effective Dec. 14

By KATHY BOHANAN ENZERINK
Assistant Editor

Hitting the ground running, Dennis Fay set fire prevention as his number one priority after taking the reins as Mayor of Orinda Dec. 14. Other priorities for Fay include making meaningful progress revitalizing downtown and dealing with climate change at the local level.

Adding to goals during his one-year tenure, Fay said the issue of public versus private roads is complicated and “has been around way too long and needs to be dealt with.”

Compliance with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District’s fire code is essential, according to Fay. Establishing new Firewise neighborhoods, removing dead and dying trees on personal property and “home hardening” to save structures against potential wildfires are proactive measures for fire prevention, he said. “We all have to do our part.”

Fay said, major projects removing dead pine trees from EBMUD property and the existing fuel break on the north side of town will be extended along the west side



Dennis Fay was sworn in as Mayor of Orinda Dec. 14, 2021 and has set fire prevention as his number one priority.

of Orinda to Moraga by MOFD.

Referring to the Downtown Precise Plan and Housing Element, Fay said, “we have to get it done, as younger residents want a more vibrant downtown.”

He sees incentives for adjacent property

owners of large parcels as a way to implement revitalization of both the Theatre and Village districts.

As a small community, Fay said Orinda should do whatever it can to lessen the effects of climate change, “There are practical

ways to reduce our dependence on the grid. Converting the fleet of police vehicles from gas to electric is one way. Installing solar panels or a windmill to generate electricity are other possibilities to research. It’s time to think creatively.”

As mayor, Fay plans to meet with the City Manager and the Public Works staff to explore resolutions to the private roads issue.

“A pilot program to gradually bring some of the older private roads into the public system is a possibility,” he said. “Private roads within Homeowners Associations, such as Orinda Woods and Wilder, are newer and less costly to the individual owner,” Fay said, “and are not top priorities,” before concluding, “we need to work on this as one community.”

Inga Miller, now vice-mayor, serves with Fay, Darlene Gee, Nick Kosla and Amy Worth on Orinda’s City Council. Meetings, which continue via Zoom, are open to the public. Visit www.cityoforinda.org for the 2022 schedule.

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Hillary Clinton Attends Dedication Ceremony for Caldecott’s Fourth Bore

By ANDREA MADISON
Staff Writer

For many Bay Area commuters, the Caldecott Tunnel is a familiar sight on their daily drive on Highway 24. Those who drive through the fourth bore, heading westbound from Orinda, will notice a fresh new sign in memoriam of U.S. Representative Ellen O’Kane Tauscher.

The life and accomplishments of Rep. Tauscher, who represented the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa and Solano in Congress from 1997 to 2009, were celebrated at a dedication ceremony for the Caldecott Tunnel’s fourth bore, held Nov. 22 at the Blackhawk Country Club in Danville. Former Democratic presidential candidate

and U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton spoke of her friendship with Tauscher, who died of pneumonia in 2019 at age 67.

Clinton was one of five speakers at the event, attended by Tauscher’s friends and local dignitaries. Tauscher’s daughter Katie also spoke at the dedication ceremony held in honor of her late mother. Congresswoman Tauscher lobbied for expansion of the Caldecott Tunnel and helped secure \$33 million for transportation projects within her district.

“[Clinton] was very warm, charming, gracious ... very grateful to all of the staff,” Blackhawk Country Club’s Executive Director of Club Operations Charles Lewis said. He remarked that Clinton’s participa-

[SEE TUNNEL page 6]



California Rep. Ellen O’Kane Tauscher’s new memorial sign greets drivers heading from Orinda toward the Bay.

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