

# Lamorinda Community, Calendar, Agendas, Notes, News

# Moraga

## Calendar

<b>City Council</b> 7:30pm
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School 1010 Camino Pablo Wednesday, Apr 11 Wednesday, Apr 25
<b>Planning Comm.</b> 7:30pm
Hacienda, La Sala Room 2100 Donald Drive Monday, Apr 16 Monday, May 7
<b>Design Review</b> 7:30pm
Hacienda, La Sala Room 2100 Donald Drive Monday, Apr 9 Monday, Apr 23
<b>Park &amp; Rec.</b> 7:30pm
Hacienda, Mosaic Room 2100 Donald Drive Tuesday, Apr 17

**Youth Involvement** 7:30pm  
Community Center, Manzanita Room  
500 St Mary's Road  
Thursday, Apr 12

**Liaison** 8:00am  
Fire Station  
1280 Moraga Way  
Friday, Apr 13

check online:  
Town of Moraga:  
<http://www.ci.moraga.ca.us>  
for:  
• all meeting notes  
• calendar updates

## Moraga Joins Regional Communications System

By Steve Angelides

The Moraga Town Council has unanimously agreed to sign a letter of intent to join the East Bay Regional Communication System (EBRCS) to provide radio communications for its police and public works departments.

This new system, which is eventually expected to provide coordinated emergency communications for all public agencies in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, except BART, is not yet funded, but is expected to cost \$60 million, according to Moraga Police Chief Mark Ruppenthal. Ruppenthal said the plan is to seek federal funding for the new system. The letter of intent does not bind Moraga to join the system, but allows the Town to get in on the ground floor of the planning.

As a show of good faith, the town is also putting up \$4,400 along with its letter of intent. That amount

is calculated based on \$100 per radio. Between the Police Department and the Public Works Department, the Town currently has 44 radios.

Emergency communications for the Town are currently provided through the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department. Using the current system, the police departments of Moraga, Orinda, and Lafayette can easily communicate with each other. However, with all of the other local agencies expected to join the new system, the Town would have no choice but to follow suit.

Ruppenthal explained that during any emergency it is necessary for all of the agencies to be able to communicate with each other in order to do their work. He said that this became apparent locally after the Loma Prieta earthquake and the Oakland Hills Fire, and became apparent nationally after 2001.

## Town Council Moves Quickly to Seek New Traffic Signal

By Steve Angelides

The Town of Moraga is moving rapidly to take advantage of opportunities to enhance traffic safety. The newly formed Traffic Safety Advisory Committee held its first meeting last week, and on March 28 the Town Council authorized Town Engineer Jill Mercurio to apply for a \$710,000 fast-track grant to fund a traffic signal and other safety improvements at the intersection of Moraga Rd. and Ascot Dr.

If approved, the Highway Safety Improve-

ment Program grant will meet 90% of the funding requirement, and the remaining 10% will come out of the Town's Measure C transportation funds of approximately \$125,000

per year. The application is due April 13 and will be approved or denied by May 15. During the discussion, Mayor Mike Metcalf initially suggested that the Town's newly-formed Traffic Safety Advisory Committee first study the question, pointing out that some residents oppose a traffic signal at that intersection. Council member Rochelle Bird commented that residents want to be safer, but there are those who do not want to be slowed down by traffic

signals. According to Police Chief Mark Ruppenthal, there is a partially completed study by a traffic engineering consultant, which the Town decided not to con-

tinue, that indicates a traffic signal at that location is warranted. Mercurio explained that waiting for a study would cause the grant opportunity to be lost. She plans to incorporate preliminary plans for a meridian, part of the Town's beautification plan, into the grant submission as well. The Council voted unanimously to proceed with the grant process. In the grant selection process, priority will be given to projects that will start by



## Town Council Moves Palos Colorados Another Step Forward

By Steve Angelides

The Moraga Town Council skittishly but inexorably moved the proposed Palos Colorados subdivision another step forward tonight by deciding that 4 miles of trails, 386 acres of open space, and a 1.4 acre "pocket park" were enough to satisfy the developer's park obligations.

According to Lori Salamack, Town Planning Director, a single acre of parkland would have been enough to satisfy the developer's obligations under the town code. The code allows a 50% credit for trails and a 50% credit for open space, so Salamack said the developer would have met the park requirement even without the pocket park. With the pocket park she said the developer was providing "more than 100% more" than required.


The Town's Park and Recreation Commission and Planning Commission, in a special joint meeting on March 5, had previously made a unanimous preliminary decision after two hours of discussion that the proposed parkland was "adequate, sufficient and appropriate." Despite that recommendation, and the non-discretionary nature of the issue, the Town Council deliberated for more than an hour before a dwindling audience before making its own final decision on the parkland issue.

Much of the delay came as council members repeatedly sought assurances from Town staff, and from each other, that the

Council retained discretion in later stages of the approval process over the placement and construction of the trails and the pocket park. Only after they were repeatedly assured of that by Salamack, Town Manager Phil Vince, and each other, did the council members eventually unanimously adopt Trotter's carefully-worded motion which approved Richfield's parkland deal and allowed the development proposal to move forward.

Salamack said that the Town Planning Department is currently working on the conditions of approval of the Palos Colorados subdivi-


vision. She hopes the conditions will be ready for a study session by the Planning Commission in April, and a public hearing in May, allowing time for further modifications and approval of the Vesting Tentative Map sometime in June. Richfield attorney Alicia Guerra said she hoped to submit the Precise Development Plan in the fourth quarter of 2007, and Vince said he thought it might be approved by around April, 2008. So after years of controversy and delay, Moraga gets another step closer to the Town's \$14 million payment.



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