

Moraga Library – Needed Improvements Could Be Coming Soon

By Sophie Bracinni

Orinda has a state of the art library, Lafayette is preparing to build one, while Moraga is struggling to find parts for its vintage heating and air conditioning system. The Moraga Library is a vital part of the community. In 2006, there were 97,580 visitors to the Library. Yes, Moragans love their library. It's just that 33 years of service to the community has taken its toll. As the 2007/2008 town budget is being discussed, the opportunity to remedy this situation is manifest.

The County has been providing a library system to Moraga since 1918; it was located in different buildings until the present site was built in 1974. The title on the building was transferred by the County to the Town of Moraga at that time, although the Contra Costa County Library continues to manage operations.

Problems on the premises are numerous: the outside woodwork is discolored, the sign lighting is broken, there are large cracks in the parking lot, there are no smoke alarms, and the powered flagpole doesn't work. But what's really worrisome is what's not in the public view: after heavy rains, water flows into the rear of the library (the hillside requires proper grading and drainage), the heating and air conditioning system is on the verge of failure and nobody is able to fix it, and the original roof that was partially repaired in 2006 needs to have its liner replaced.

At the June 13th Town Council meeting, the Friends of the Moraga Library presented a request for \$18,000 to take care of the most immediate maintenance issues. By the end of the meeting, it was decided that these

repairs would be included in the Capital Improvement budget that will be discussed at the Town Council meeting on June 27th. The estimated costs for replacing the Library's heating and air conditioning system and repairing the roof are \$229,500 (Source: "Capital Improvement Programs" budget presented to the Town's "Audit and Finance Committee" on May 29, 2007, p. 37).

The asset replacement fund is not yet available to cover the project so it's likely the Council will have to use some of the "Palos Colorados" money. This money comes in installments from the developer of the Palos Colorados project over a 10 year period. The first installment of \$225,000 has already been paid to the Town.

During the June 13th Town Council meeting, it appeared Council Members were supportive of the library. Mayor Metcalf believes Palos Colorados money should only be spent on non-recurring projects like library repair and maintenance. Council Member Bird, who consistently focuses on the town's financial stability, believes we need to address the maintenance and repair of existing infrastructure such as the library.

The Friends of Moraga Library will also attend the next Council Meeting on June 27th to support their beloved institution. David Kruegel, President of the Friends, encourages all Moraga residents to support this much needed maintenance. All Moragans are welcome to come and voice their opinion during the public comments period of the meeting, which will be held at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School at 7:30pm.



The Moraga Library at 1500 St. Mary's Road



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