

## Council Applies Green Building Guidelines to New Subdivisions

By Steve Angelides

Taking its first step to implement the political statement on global warming it adopted in May, the Moraga Town Council added a green building provision for new subdivisions to the Town's Design Guidelines at its meeting on July 11.

"New subdivision development should meet Build it Green guidelines for new home construction or equivalent standards," the provision states.

The Town has been working on revising its Design Guidelines since 2005 as part of the process of implementing its 2002 General Plan. The Town's Planning Commission adopted the revised guidelines on June 4 without a green building provision.

Vice Mayor Lynda Deschambault appealed the Planning Commission decision to the Council because she wanted to add energy efficiency and sustainability to the guidelines. Deschambault works for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and heads the local environmental group Generation Green.

When the Council made its political statement on global warming in May by endorsing the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, it was the first time it had ever taken a position on a national or international issue. The green building guidelines represent another historic first for Moraga, because its Design Guidelines had previously covered only the external features of a building.

The Green Building Guidelines cover both the external and the internal features of a building, including the site, foundation, landscaping, structural frame and building envelope, exterior finish, insulation, plumbing, heating, ventilation and air conditioning, renewable energy, building performance, finishes, flooring, appliances, and other features. The guidelines use a point sys-

tem, with a minimum number of points in specific categories.

The Green Building Guidelines were developed by Build it Green, a Bay Area non-profit group whose mission is to promote green building. The group's Development Director, Bruce Mast, addressed the Council meeting and presented copies of the guidelines. Other speakers at the meeting included Bill Durkin, head of the local environmental group Sustainable Moraga, and Deva Rajan of Canyon Construction, a local "sustainable builder."

The Council struggled with how to address the green building issue for over an hour before councilmember Dave Trotter, an attorney, proposed the language which ultimately was adopted. The final vote to amend the Design Guidelines was 3 to 2, with Trotter, the swing vote on the Council, siding with Deschambault and Councilmember Ken Chew, an engineering project manager. Mayor Mike Metcalf, an engineer retired from Chevron, and Councilmember Rochelle Bird, a former aide to Republican Assemblyman Guy Houston, were in the minority.

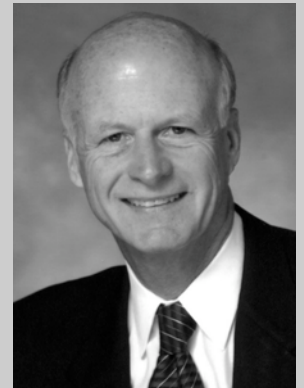
During the discussion Metcalf and Bird, and at times Trotter, expressed the view that an ordinance might be a better way to approach the green building issue, but that approach would have delayed action on the issue. The Council majority preferred to act quickly to take advantage of the opportunity, as Chew stated, to apply the green building provision to the new Palos Colorado subdivision, approval of which is currently pending before the Town.

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