

# Tashiro Named Interim Manager

By Sophie Braccini

The Town of Moraga has appointed Jay Tashiro as interim Town Manager. Tashiro will start on June 3rd 2008, when Phil Vince steps down. The two men are making the transition as smooth as possible by spending a few days together before Vince leaves to assume his new position as Manager of the City of Martinez.

Tashiro, a long-time resident of Moraga, has worked in the public sector for thirty years. He held different positions in southern California before coming to the City of Orinda in 1988 as Planning Director. He was then appointed to the same position in Moraga in 1991, where he stayed for eight and half years. He was hired by the city of Corte Madera to be the City Manager at the end of 1999 and led the town until his retirement in 2006.

“The Marin County town is very similar to Moraga,” says Tashiro, “a highly educated community, where volunteers are a key factor to the success of public affairs.” Council members in Corte Madera have praised Tashiro's work, commenting on his grace under pressure during difficult projects, his thoroughness in preparing material for the Council, and his likable personality.

Corte Madera's Mayor, Michael Lappert, was Mayor then as well and comments, “In small towns like ours the City Manager is the person who runs the town. Jay was very good at taking away some of the pressure from the City Council, so we didn't get in trouble over small issues.” He remembers that Tashiro was a natural at leading department heads and that he affected change for the town, improving customer service in key areas. When Tashiro retired from Corte Madera, Lappert told him he was too young and healthy to do so and that he would be back. He was right.

Tashiro heard from another Moraga resident that Vince was leaving. “I know what a Manager means for a town,” he said, “and it takes time to appoint somebody. I was not looking for anything, but thought I could help.”

“The best part about Jay is that he knows and loves our community,” says Mayor Lynda Deschambault. “Even while serving as the City Manager of Corte Madera he chose to maintain his permanent residence in lovely Moraga and commuted to work each day. His experience in a small semi rural community will be a great resource. Corte Madera addressed the same contrast facing Moraga, blending rural sprawling hill-sides to its high end homes and growing businesses.” She believes that his experience as a former Planning Commissioner and his familiarity with the General Plan will be valuable in the coming months.

Tashiro has been following the town's affairs though the newspapers and is doing some catching up with Vince. “I haven't met with the Council yet, but I know that one of my roles will be to help recruit the right person for the job and manage the day to day operations,” Tashiro adds.

Tashiro is aware that, like many Bay Area cities, one of the challenges of Moraga is its financial situation. “In Corte Madera, 50% of the income was coming from sales taxes; we had a regional shopping



Phil Vince (right) welcomes Jay Tashiro

Photo Sophie Braccini

center in town. Here sales tax represent only 20% of the income, it's a different type of challenge.”

As a former Planning Director, who initiated the study of the General Plan that is in use today, Tashiro takes a great interest in the two competing initiatives that will be on the ballot in November and that could greatly impact land use in town.

That's one of the reasons why he believes that the next Town Manager should have a strong background in planning. “It will all depend on what the Council's needs are, they will establish the criteria for recruitment,” explains Tashiro. “They will probably want someone with strong economic development and financial acumen as well.” In the meantime, the town rests in his steady and capable hands.