

Civic News



Moraga

Public Meetings

Town Council Wednesday, January 13, 7:30 pm
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, 1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission Monday, January 4, 7:30 pm
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

Design Review Monday, January 11, 7:00 pm
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

Liaison Friday, January 8, 8:00 am
Fire Station, 1280 Moraga Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements
Town of Moraga online: www.moraga.ca.us

Chamber of Commerce: www.moragachamber.org

**The Town offices will be closed
December 25, 2009 to January 1, 2010**

• Police Report •



Smoke filled car, 12/12/09 Three vehicles were parked at an undisclosed Moraga school, after regular class hours. Only one of the cars was occupied, presumably with friends from the other two vehicles. As a police officer approached, he noticed a heavy cloud of marijuana smoke inside which wafted out when the driver opened the window. The five 17-year-olds in the car admitted they had smoked pot and that there was beer in the trunk. No actual pot was found – possibly up in smoke, but three glass pipes were identified. All the kids' parents were contacted, and their kids were released to their custody after a serious talk with the officer. Both the beer and the pipes were properly disposed of.

Indecent exposure, 12/09/09 A student from JM was walking home around 2:30 on Camino Pablo, just east of Dickenson Drive. The student walked by a grey compact car and was contacted by the driver through the open passenger window. The white male in his 30's or 40's exposed himself. The student just kept on walking and the flasher drove away. This case is under investigation.

Tire stolen, 12/02/09 Sometime between 8:20 in the morning and 2:20 in the afternoon, the left front tire from a 1996 green Jeep Grand Cherokee was removed while it was parked at the Campolindo Cabana Swim Club. A concrete cinder block was placed under the vehicle where the tire was missing. Total value of the tire, including missing lug nuts is \$270. Is some under-privileged Moraga child getting a tire swing for Christmas? Or perhaps this is the work of some high school hooligans?

State of the Town

By Sophie Braccini



Dave Trotter mingles with the community after his presentation

Photo Andy Scheck

On December 7th, Dave Trotter presented the State of the Town address to a crowd of about 80 residents who gathered in the community room of the Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Church. Moraga's State of the Town presentation is traditionally offered in December, at the end of each Mayor's tenure, giving outgoing mayors the opportunity to highlight accomplishments for which they would like to be remembered.

The Mayor's chair seemed to suit Dave Trotter; he was able to provide leadership and the ability to move discussions forward while avoiding conflicts. In his address, the outgoing Mayor portrayed a year that has been both challenging and rewarding, with a balanced budget in spite of the tough economy, and with significant progress made on some of the town's largest development

projects. His conclusion indicated that the challenges in the coming years will be to find new sources of revenue, if the town's residents want to maintain the quality of service to which they are accustomed.

Trotter presented the year's results according to the seven objectives he set last December when his fellow council members elected him mayor. The first one was to select a new town manager. This was achieved by the hiring of Michael Segrest last April. Trotter's second objective was to get the Moraga Center Specific Plan approved. The plan is now in its final phase, and should not be delayed beyond the first semester of 2010. With the Specific Plan Trotter's objective #3 should also be adopted; the housing element, a plan that will define higher density housing in the down town, and will

permit the town to satisfy its State obligation to plan for different types of housing needs.

Other development projects moved forward in 2009. Of particular importance is the final approval of the Palos Colorados project, which will build 123 homes, after 20 years in the planning phase. \$17 millions in impact fees for the town are associated with this project.

Goal #4 had to do with a balanced budget and Trotter congratulated staff on being able to curtail spending and to have released a surplus for the 2008/2009 budget period, as well as approving a balanced budget for 2009/2010 with a \$450,000 projected excess.

However, the funding of the infrastructure maintenance stays below the needed levels and to remedy this situation Trotter was pleased to recall that goal #5 had been achieved, the establishment of a Revenue Enhancement Committee that worked over six months in 2009 and presented its report to Council at the end of November. "Implementing the recommendations of the Committee will be one of the major tasks of the coming year," added Trotter. Among the proposals made by that committee, suggestions pertained to the business community and what needs to be done to revive Moraga's business life. It was Trotter's 6th objective to enhance the com-

mercial centers; his success in this area is more arguable, although he highlighted the passage of a measure waiving certain fees for businesses in transition.

There's no argument as far as objective #7 is concerned. It had been Trotter's intention to restore civility on the Council. Those who went to the meetings throughout the year witnessed very courteous and cooperative deliberations.

2009 brought a few unanticipated elements to the forefront. Among them was the move of Town staff to the Hacienda de las Flores, which was very badly received by the community. Trotter was congratulated by resident Ellen Beans on the Council's quick action in bringing this topic to the agenda. The result was a change in the initial decision and instructions given to staff to vacate the Hacienda as quickly as possible.

Trotter concluded his presentation by saying that he enjoyed his year as a mayor and will continue to serve as a Council member in 2010. In Moraga, the Mayor has the same voting power as the other members of the Council, so Trotter shared the credits of the year's successes with his fellow council members and staff. Trotter would not confirm if he will run for an additional 4 years when his current term ends.

Being a Part of Moraga Politics

By Sophie Braccini

Christine Kuckuk always felt that Moraga was a special place to live in and that investing time in the community was the right thing to do. Kuckuk decided to volunteer, first serving on the town's Beautification Committee and later on the Design Review Board. This month the Town of Moraga is recruiting for positions on the Boards and Commissions that are staffed by resident-volunteers like Kuckuk. "The Town of Moraga depends on its volunteers to assist in a number of venues," says Town Clerk Marty McInturf, "All of the Boards, Commissions, and Committees depend on citizen involvement." Positions are open at the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Planning Commission, the Design Review Board (DRB), the Traffic Safety and Advisory Committee, the Americans with Disabilities Act Commission, and the Urban Forest sub-committee. "The way to keep Moraga a special place is by getting involved, and the town needs its volun-

teers," says Kuckuk.

"As a member of the Moraga Parks and Recreation Commission for the past three years, I have realized how volunteering for the town can have such an impact on the recreation programs and services offered," says Liz Faoro. The Parks and Recreation Commission has worked on a variety of issues and projects in recent years, such as the development of a sound ordinance, updating the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and replacing several play structures and the splash pad at the Moraga Commons. "While these are only a few of the undertakings, we also worked throughout the year on supporting Jay Ingram (Parks and Recreation Director) to provide many special town events," says Faoro, who adds that she hopes Moraga residents will consider being a part of the Parks and Recreation Commission, which currently meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

The demand on DRB members is higher as they meet

bi-monthly, on the second and fourth Monday of each month. Dick Socolich was part of the Design Review Board (DRB) and after two years applied to be on the Planning Commission. "DRB's primary responsibility is to review projects that are ready for construction," says Socolich, "they have to meet the town design guidelines." Socolich is a retired engineer who felt that his expertise could be put to good use for the benefit of the town. "I enjoyed listening to people, hearing their side of the story and seeing the project once it is finished," he adds. On the same Board, Kuckuk, who is a banker by training, was recruited as a "lay" person. "I find the work on the DRB very rewarding," she says, "it can be complicated when we work on a project such as the Palos Colorados development, but it is very rewarding to have an impact." Kuckuk estimates that she spends a maximum of ten hours of preparation before each monthly meeting.

Now on Planning Com-

mission, Socolich enjoys working on the big picture. "We've been working on the Specific Plan and the Housing Element for the Town," he explains, "our guidelines are the General Plan, and the Open Space Ordinance." Next year projects such as the Rancho Laguna development or the Hetfield project will be reviewed by the seven-member commission, and possibly the specific plan for the Rheem Center as well.

"I feel that I have an impact," says Socolich, "there are seven of us on the commission; sometimes my point of view is shared by others, sometimes not."

"Moraga needs its volunteers," concludes Kuckuk, "the recommendations of the commissions are important and working for the town raised my awareness about what is happening here."

For more information on the open positions or to send an application, go to http://moraga.ca.us/production/moraga_employment_volunteer.php?mn=6. The deadline to submit an application is Friday, January 8th.

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