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New Appointees for Commissions and Boards

By Sophie Braccini



Lori Salamack and Jay Ingram (right side of photo) set up charts to facilitate the Council's discussion
Photo Sophie Braccini

be appointed," said Council Member Dave Trotter. At the conclusion of the Council meeting, Town Manager Mike Segrest said it would be appropriate for individual council members to contact applicants to informally encourage them to reapply when new openings come up next year.

The Council also decided to reappoint Commissioner Bruce Whitley to the Planning Commission for a fourth term, even though the usual maximum number of appointments is three. "An attorney with land use experience is valuable, based on my experience as a planning commissioner," said Council Member Mike Metcalf, "the slate of applicants for the Planning Commission does not have an attorney and Bruce leaving would leave the commission without that expertise." Planning Director Lori Salamack confirmed that the Council could decide to invite him to serve for a 4th term if they found it to be beneficial to the town.

Commissioners Russell Driver and Stacia Levenfeld were reappointed as well. The Council chose Tom Richards to fill the fourth vacant seat. Richards, a father of two young children, presented himself as knowledgeable about land use through family experience. He declared a desire to protect open space, keep Moraga beautiful, but still support some development.

The Traffic Safety Advisory Committee's (TSAC) call for volunteers was not as fruitful; the Council was unable to fill all of the vacant seats. Metcalf wondered if it was time to disband it, but Council Member Howard Harpham argued it is a valuable committee. "There are still many neighborhood groups that would like to work with TSAC to resolve traffic issues," said Public Works Director and Town Engineer Jill Mercurio, who serves as the staff person on that committee, "Over the past two years the projects that came in front of us did not lead to actions because of lack of support by adjacent neighbors, that may have created a feeling of uselessness, when in fact the projects simply take longer to mature." The open positions on TSAC will be re-advertised; interested residents of Moraga are encouraged to apply.

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For the Town of Moraga to have six applicants for four vacant chairs on the Planning Commission is not unusual; however, that the Town received 13 applications for 4 chairs on the Parks and Recreation Commission indicates uncommon enthusiasm for voluntary service to the Town, possibly due in part to the interest many dog owners have taken of late in that commission's proceedings. Despite of the surge of new volunteers the Council, which interviewed all of the applicants between February 3rd and 9th, decided to reappoint the incumbents, who had all reapplied for their seats.

The two-year term on the Parks and Recreation Commission was up for Harry Crouch, John Haffner, Ravi Mallela and Karen Reed. They were interviewed by the Council and asked to respond to six questions, as were the first-time applicants. The questions had to do with motivation, qualifications, position on environmental issues, tolerance for opposing views and listening skills, availability to serve and perception of the main issues the town would face in the future in the area of Parks and Recreation.

The Town Council expressed appreciation for the large number of highly qualified applicants who sought to serve. "It was a competitive process with a limited number of openings. As a result, some good people who had made a positive impression on the Council could not