



**Independent, locally owned and operated!**

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published April 28th, 2010

## Moraga Town Council wants to go to Bed Earlier

*By Sophie Braccini*

Moraga Town Council meetings have an unfortunate tendency to end in the middle of the night. In addition to the obvious constraints on the (volunteer) council members and Town staff, the late hours may influence the public's interest in attending the meetings. One of the Council's goals this year is to end meetings at an earlier time, and that's the plan. But instead of moving the discussion of issues that might interest the public to an earlier place on its agenda, the Council decided to start its meetings half an hour earlier with routine matters; matters experienced Council-watchers note that in the past almost nobody stayed to listen to anyway. For the public, the result will be seamless; for the Council and staff, it should mean an earlier bed-time.

"Our late hours are one of the biggest criticisms I hear from residents," said Vice-Mayor Karen Mendonca during the last Council meeting. A 6:30 p.m. time was proposed as a new start time, but Council Member Dave Trotter opposed. "Some of us still work for a living," he said, "7:00 p.m. would be a better compromise." All agreed on that new start time.

When it came to defining the content of this additional half hour, the members decided to start the meeting with routine items such as "reports from council members," "approval of minutes," and "consent agenda," leaving the more debatable questions for the usual 7:30 p.m. meeting. For a public that almost never stay for the routine questions, the 7:30 starting point will stay the same, or might even be delayed if the routine agenda items take more than a half hour.

The change of time is part of a broader effort to amend the meeting rules of proceedings. Another change that council members asked for was that documents of more than one page in length be submitted more than 24 hours before the date of a meeting, so they could be given proper attention.

Reach the reporter at: [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA