


Civic News Moraga



Public Meetings	
Town Council	Wednesday, May 26, 7:30 pm Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, 1010 Camino Pablo
Planning Commission	Monday, May 17, 7:30 pm Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd
Design Review	Monday, May 24, 7:00 pm Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd
Liaison	Friday, May 14, 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
 Moraga Citizens' Network: www.moragacitizensnetwork.org

• Police Report •



Lacrosse bag gone, 5/03/10 The parent of a 14-year old Campolindo student called in a report of a theft of a lacrosse gym bag and lacrosse stick sometime between 8:00 and 9:45 a.m. The bag was placed under the student's Campo hallway locker. No suspects at this time. Doesn't make sense... have stick and a bag - but no team.

Where my golf clubs at? 4/25/10 A Williams Drive resident came to the lobby of the police department to report stolen golf clubs. The gentleman last reported seeing them in his garage on 03/04/10 and went

looking for them on 4/25/10, when it finally stopped raining - and couldn't find them. They were here last month.

Very petty theft, 5/01/10 A Williams Drive resident reported a theft from a Subaru Outback parked in the driveway. The unknown thief took the garage door remote and \$3 in quarters. Nothing else was missing or disturbed. Worrisome that the home could be broken into via the garage remote. Is it possible to change your remote frequency?

Loud party, 5/01/10 Moraga Officers responded to a Whitethorne Drive home after receiving a complaint of a loud party. The landlord was mailed a Town of Moraga Loud-party Ordinance notice. How late was this rip-roaring party disturbing the neighbors? 6:18 p.m.

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Senior Health Faire

Tuesday May 25th 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Hacienda de las Flores- 2100 Donald Drive

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Analysis: Why Isn't the Off-Leash Dog Issue Over?

By Sophie Braccini

At the April 28th meeting of the Moraga Town Council, members decided to table the question of where and when dogs could be permitted to roam off-leash at Rancho Laguna Park. A plan under discussion that night, that proposed to allow dogs in an area of the Moraga Commons Park known as the "Back 40" in the afternoon, died right there. However, the issue is still not completely resolved, and staff will be looking into putting the dog question on the November ballot.

The consensus seems to be that there is no alternative to Rancho Laguna for off-leash hours, so why continue to beat the "dead dog?" This canine vortex did not exist until someone got a ticket for letting a dog roam off leash, and the Town decided to clarify its policy. But if the momentum can't be stopped now, it may be because some real issues have surfaced along the way.

It is a reality in Moraga that residents have to share a limited amount of parks and fields amongst competing needs. During the April

28th meeting, Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram said the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends eight acres of community park per 1000 residents; the ratio in Moraga is only 2.89 acres. Ingram added that he feels pressure from recreational sports leagues for more practice fields and he would like to use the field at Rancho Laguna Park for that purpose. That field is the only one that belongs to the Town; all the others belong to the school district.

But then, Rancho Laguna is the only facility in all of Lamorinda where off-leash dogs are allowed. If there are indeed almost 4000 licensed dogs in Moraga, as one resident said at the meeting (at press time we are waiting for Contra Costa Animal Services to confirm that figure), there could be over 10,000 in Lamorinda. Is one part-time off-leash facility really enough for that many dogs? Pressure from Lafayette and Orinda is not always welcome in Moraga. "I'm personally offended when people from other jurisdictions come here and tell us what we are going to do,"

said Council Member Mike Metcalf during the debate. When Mayor Ken Chew raised the issue at the last tri-city meeting on February 11th, Orinda Mayor Thomas McCormick countered, "You use our roads; we use your parks."

Another issue that has been articulated more and more clearly by dog owners is that the daily off-leash gathering at Rancho Laguna has become, for residents of all ages, an important part of their social lives. Ingram's offer to give handicapped dog owners an option to stay at Rancho Laguna was seen as segregating these residents who need the help of other dog owners to get in and out of their cars, and who appreciate being included in a multi-generational group. Younger residents explained that the park was their only venue for socializing. Proposing alternatives to Rancho Laguna became not just an issue of relocating dogs, but of disturbing the fabric of these residents' social network.

A fourth problem has arisen from the popularity of the off-leash hours. Some residents have com-

plained that the off-leash activities are becoming so well-liked at Rancho Laguna that it has turned the park into a de facto dog park, scaring other users away; among the correspondence sent to the Town are letters from residents who voice that concern. Only a small number of them have been known to come to public meetings. Are they, as Council Member Karen Mendonca said, "Intimidated by a well organized pro-dog user group?"

Mendonca proposed limiting the off-leash period to the morning hours. Council Member Howard Harpham asked for the reconsideration of a plan to construct a barrier between dogs and the play structure areas. Neither of these suggestions was picked up by the Council. However, when Council Member Mike Metcalf proposed exploring the inclusion of the issue on the November ballot, his idea received a 4/1 majority. Now staff will have to come up with clear language asking Moraga voters whether they want shared-use at Rancho Laguna Park and whether the temporal separation now in place should endure.

Hacienda Master Plan – Where Will the Money Come From?

By Sophie Braccini



George Fisher, of the Moraga Movers, donned a sombrero to greet Cinco de Mayo guests at the Hacienda de las Flores

Photo Sophie Braccini

Cinco de Mayo in Moraga this year was just as beautiful and successful as last year. The Hacienda de las Flores was dressed up to greet guests, thanks

to the volunteers of the Hacienda Foundation and of Kiwanis (check out the updated ladies' lounge on the first floor.) The outdoor festivities showcased the

facility at its best. But there is still a long way and a lot of dollars to go before the Hacienda can really become the community center the Foundation would like it to be. Although the Town Council confirmed, at a joint meeting with the Parks and Recreation Commission (the Commission) on April 28th, that renovation of the Hacienda was an important goal for the town, there is no money to finance the design of a master plan for the facility; not to mention financing the work that the implementation of such a plan would entail.

"We agree that before major projects are begun, a master plan for the property should be done," said Hacienda Foundation President Claire Roth, "Unfortunately the Foundation lacks the resources at present to begin that process. We hope the Town Council will decide it is a priority. In the meantime, the Foundation will continue to work on the considerable project of continuing to refurbish the Fireside Room and the bathrooms in the main Hacienda building."

"At this time we have a business plan (drafted in 2008 by Moore Iacofano Goltzman for the Town)," says Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram, "the Town wants the Commission to

look back at it and see if they want to take further steps in phase one and phase two." Phase 1 of the business plan aims to increase revenues from weddings by holding two weddings a day and improving signage; it does not require a major investment from the Town but requires increased marketing efforts of the facility as a wedding site. It does not impact the community center function of the Hacienda or what the residents can get from it. Phase 2 requires the modification of La Sala building and increases revenue from non-wedding activities. More parking spaces are needed for that phase.

Recently the Town decided to move its professional equipment (the corporation yard) out of the parking area located close to the Pavilion at the Moraga Road entrance of the facility. The first declared objective was to free space for additional parking at the Hacienda, but the conversion of the former corp yard to a public parking area will happen anytime soon. "At this time we have no budget," said Ingram.

Ingram believes that in two or three years there might be enough funding to commission a master plan. "We need more community knowledge about the Hacienda," he said, "We need to give the community a vision of what this beautiful space can become." He believes that it is the Town's responsibility to define that vision, while the Foundation's responsibility is to raise funds to finance the many improvements needed. For example, the Pavilion area needs new drainage, the electricity, bathrooms and insulation need upgrading, and an elevator should be installed in the main building.

The Foundation, comforted by the success of popular events, remains optimistic as far as the future of the Hacienda is concerned. "I would reiterate that we are most grateful to the Council and the Parks Commission for their support of our mission," said Roth, "With all of us working together, we will make the Hacienda the Community Center that Moraga deserves."