



Moraga

Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, May 11, 7:00 pm
Wednesday, May 25, 7:00 pm
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Monday, May 16, 7:30 pm
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

Design Review

Monday, May 23, 7:00 pm
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

Liaison

Friday, May 13, 8:00 am
Fire Station, 1280 Moraga Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

Town of Moraga:

www.moraga.ca.us

Chamber of Commerce:

www.moragachamber.org

Moraga Citizens' Network:

www.moragacitizensnetwork.org



Police Report

Crack leads to meth paraphernalia, 4/11/11 At Moraga Road and Devin Drive, cops stopped a red Kia for a broken windshield. Turns out police were familiar with the 21-year-old driver, from an unspecified prior contact, usually not a good sign. Two glass pipes and one plastic straw that can be used to smoke methamphetamine were found in the car. He was taken to jail.

Hit and run at Safeway, 4/22/11 A witness saw a green Audi A8 impact the driver's side rear bumper of a Honda Pilot in the Safeway parking lot. The driver of the Audi allegedly left the scene without exchanging information.

Stolen car found, 4/22/11 A Toyota was stolen from a Sanders Drive residence sometime during the night, but was found in San Pablo – apparently abandoned. No leads at this time, but cops get points for finding the car so darn promptly.

Second stolen car found, 4/23/11 A stolen car was parked on Sanders Drive near the home location of the Toyota listed above. Looks like the car thief was switching cars. No suspects but physical evidence was collected. The found car was returned to the owner.

Attempted burglary for booze, 4/24/11 On Easter Sunday a juvenile suspect was detained by Birchwood Drive homeowners for illegally entering the garage to steal alcohol. The homeowner and the kid's parents agreed to handle the issue – so no charges were pressed.

Loud party, 4/24/11 In the very early hours of Easter Sunday, at just after 1:00 a.m., cops responded to a Lakefield Drive residence to check on a report of a loud party. Turns out it was indeed loud, and, in fact, a party. Police broke up the fiesta and the tenants were issued a Loud Party Warning notice.



Look Forward to Coming Home to Lamorinda

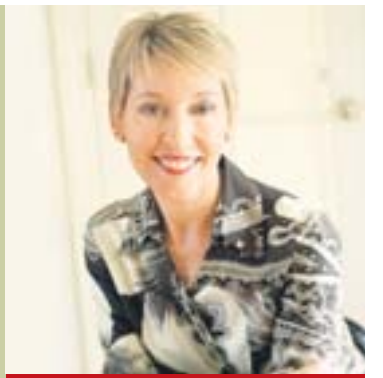
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Keep Them Wild

And off the streets... and out of yards (turkeys, that is)

By Sophie Braccini

Following a resident's complaint that turkeys are becoming a nuisance in the Town of Moraga, Chief of Police Robert Priebe reported on the current situation and possible regulation at a recent Town Council meeting. "A large part of the problem is that people feed turkeys," said the Chief, "They reproduce, congregate in large rafters and lose their fear of men."

Priebe explained that the turkey issue is not one that the Town can regulate; residents who have problems with the animals should contact Nicole Kosicki, the Fish and Games Warden for the Town of Moraga, who will ascertain the degree of depredation. If a nuisance is found, the resident can ask for the removal of the animal(s) by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG).

The real solution is to make sure that the birds keep their natural fear of humans.

According to the DFG, California's wild turkeys now occupy about 18 percent of our state. They were imported from the East Coast about 100 years ago as upland game birds. Many people like to see the turkeys

wandering in the hills and wooded areas, but only from afar. The "Keep Me Wild" campaign material produced by the DFG indicates that adult wild turkeys, which can weigh upwards of 20 pounds, can destroy flowers and vegetable gardens, leave their droppings on patios and decks, and roost on cars, scratching the paint.

In the same document, DFG touches on how to control the turkey population. "Hunting turkeys helps to control their populations and maintain their natural wariness of people. Where safe and legal, hunt wild turkeys on your property, or allow others to hunt them." Please note that the discharging of firearms is not allowed within Town limits (see Title 9, Public Peace and Welfare, on the Town's new website).

During the meeting, Council Member Dave Trotter asked Priebe if hunting turkeys with a bow and arrow would be permitted in season in the Town of Moraga. Priebe confirmed that as long as the arrows remain inside a private yard, there's nothing that specifically prohibits that use. He noted that the Town does have an or-

dinance that prohibits the use of bows and arrows in the public parks. The spring archery season for hunting wild turkeys starts the last Saturday in March and lasts for 51 consecutive days – that's May 21. (Read a related article in our archives at www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0106/pdf/fowlplay.pdf)

The resident who raised the turkey issue, Kiwanis President John Haffner, regretted that the matter was not considered more seriously by the Council. "To snicker at this is not the

right thing to do," he said, "if we need to spend money let's do it, it is a sanitation issue; I press staff to find a solution."

Council Member Mike Metcalf asked Kosicki what to do if a rafter of turkeys blocked car circulation and became a public hazard. "Drivers do not have to stop for turkeys," said Kosicki, "and if there is an immediate danger, the Police Department can go and shoot the turkeys."

No action was taken by the Council.



Action Team Charts Ambitious Course

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Economic Development Action Team has given itself five months to set in motion what others have only attempted to study. By September, the Team plans to meet two goals: write a retail ordinance that will give predictability of outcome to businesses that are applying for a use permit in Moraga, and engage partners in the revitalization of the Rheem Center. Team members will meet the third Wednesday evening of every month, and will be doing a lot of homework between meetings.

"Whatever plan is sketched by the Town or (the Team), it will take the business owners' buy-in to become a reality," commented commercial real estate broker and Team member Dave Schnayer, who also represents Kimco Realty, the company that owns the majority of the Rheem Center. Schnayer brings the property owner's perspective to the table, as well as his past experience as the property manager of the

Rheem Center, "three owners ago," he recalled.

One possible plan to revive the shopping center that sports a plethora of "For Lease" signs was mentioned by Team member Hollie Lucas-Alcalay at a recent meeting. "The Town has overbuilt retail," she said, "are we setting these (new) businesses up for failure if we don't have the population to support them?" She wondered if it might be time to explore other options, such as mix-use for the Center. Planning Director Lori Salamack concurred, but Town Council Member Howard Harpham noted, "The owners may already have a strategy; we are not working with a blank slate."

After the meeting, Schnayer explained that there are at least seven different property owners in the Rheem Center that are bound together by commercial contracts that define the use of the Center, despite any new zoning the Town might approve. However, "the property owners can't do it alone, and com-

mercial real estate can't do it alone either," added Schnayer.

According to Team member Renee Zeimer, the Town needs a vision. "We need to define what we want to see happen," she said, "Since the community does not want to grow, we have to become a destination, give people a reason to take that road."

The first concrete task the Team is taking on is the drafting of a retail ordinance. During previous discussions, Town Manager Jill Keimach indicated that the purpose of such an ordinance would be to define acceptable business uses for the Town, so businesses that fit the definition would be able to get a use permit 'over the counter'; while less obvious businesses would have to go through a more complex process. "The ordinance will remove the uncertainty that presently can make the process frustrating," she said.

The next Team meeting will be on May 18 at 7:00 p.m. at the Hacienda de las Flores.

New Businesses at Rheem?

News of a produce store coming to the Rheem Center has come and gone over the past few months. The offspring of Walnut Creek Produce, on Olympic Boulevard, is back according to commercial real estate broker Dave Schnayer. "The deal is not done," he said recently, "but it is very close." Schnayer indicated that the property owners will want to work with the local community, from the farmers on the supply side, to restaurants and senior facilities on the consumer side.

Schnayer also confirmed that he is working with a Moraga family interested in opening a frozen yogurt store next to Lamorinda Pizza. "Those would be great additions to the Center," he said.

New and Improved: The Town of Moraga Website

By Sophie Braccini



It's been a long time coming, but the Town of Moraga recently launched its new web site. Now when residents go online at www.moraga.ca.us, they experience the new face of the Town: friendly, helpful, efficient... and good looking. There are still a few glitches, but the main objectives have been reached – residents can find relevant

and current information, the site can be easily updated by staff members so the content will stay fresh and relevant, without increasing their workload. "We have a very dynamic web site that will change constantly," said Town Engineer Jill Mercurio in presenting the new site at the April 27 Town Council meeting, "our objective was to make the

site very user friendly and informative."

Each department will maintain its own page and decide on the content. The Planning Department, to illustrate, added a FAQ for homeowners and uploaded photos. The website provides access to multiple resources, and it's clear that a lot of thought went into how an average

person would go about finding what he or she needs – for example, agendas for upcoming meetings can be found on the left column and can be accessed through the general calendar or at the bottom of each page where committees and commissions are listed with their respective meeting schedules. Minutes of previous meetings are also included, which improves government transparency.

"I felt that I wanted to do this web site since I moved here nine years ago," said Tiraporn Olsen of Happy Pixel Studio in Moraga, which designed the new web site, "I solicited them so many times." When the request for public bids went out last year, Happy Pixel made the most competitive offer. "Everything is easy to update, we created a new process on how to do things and we combine usability and accessibility," said Olsen, "so they can work quicker and smarter."

The new site's web master is Town accountant Yuliya Elbo, but ten staff members have been trained in how to update the site.