



Moraga

Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, August 24, 7:00 pm
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Tuesday, September 6, 7:30 pm
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

Design Review

Monday, August 22, 7:00 pm
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

Liaison

Friday, September 9, 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

Semi-invisible party, 8/10/11 Police responded to an alleged loud party on Hardie Drive around 9:00 p.m. Officers checked the interior and exterior with permission and surprisingly all the partygoers had fled. Oddly enough, alcoholic beverages were found, and what appeared to be the remains of a planned fiesta – the homeowners were out of town at the time. A source reported that the family's daughter was safe and back with a responsible adult. Booze was poured out and a relative ended up staying at the house that night.

Sarah Lane Over-trim, 8/09/11 One neighbor gave permission to another to trim pine trees, but not oak trees. The clip-per neighbor entered the rear yard of the clip-ee and cut the tops off several trees inside the yard. Cops tried to smooth things over with both parties.

Drunk at Safeway, 8/08/11 Grocery store staff assisted a customer who appeared intoxicated at 8:30 in the morning. Officers arrived and felt the person was unable to care for him or herself – the police report for this incident is genderless. Subject was arrested and taken to the Martinez Detention facility, to sober up and think about shopping when not under the influence.

Bike Accident, 8/08/11 A bicycle rider was unable to negotiate a driveway on School Street and injured his head and hand. MOFD was already on the scene treating the gentleman when police arrived. He was taken to Kaiser for further evaluation.

Mystery car in driveway, 8/06/11 At 11:00pm cops went to a Corte Yolanda home on a report of a red Mercury Sable parked in the driveway. The homeowner had no idea who owned the car, hadn't seen it before and wondered why it was in his driveway. A computer check revealed that the car's registered owner lives in Walnut Creek. The homeowner asked that it be towed away. His wish was granted.

Gas leak, 8/05/11 Moraga police joined the Moraga Orinda Fire Department to help PG&E with a gas leak on Paseo Del Rio. The homeowner was digging a post hole when he broke the gas pipe buried in his side yard. PG&E fixed the leak and the erstwhile digger was allowed back into his home.

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Moragans Called Upon to Create a Vision for Rheem Center

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Renée Zeimer will ask people to list, on this board, what they love about the Town of Moraga
Photo Sophie Braccini

"We want people to dream but not to fantasize," says Renée Zeimer of the Economic Development Action Committee, who has been working on the method and setting of the workshops, "First we'll ask residents to focus on what can be done on the short term – the low hanging fruit; then to expand their vision to the long term of the Rheem area."

Zeimer, who is one of the three volunteers who were recruited by the

Town to share the role of Economic Development Director (with Mary Coe and Rich Larsen), would like to put Moraga on the map and she sees the Rheem Center as a vital piece to create a sense of place in Moraga. The old shopping center does not have much to show for itself in terms of charm and appeal, but the plan is to focus on its existing positive traits and build from what works. This brainstorming method is called Ap-

preciative Inquiry (AI).

Zeimer used to work for the city of Walnut Creek as a Program Analyst for the City Manager. She participated in AI sessions there and experienced how they created a positive involvement of residents in the management of the city's affairs. "It resulted in very practical things that residents devised to address the issues at hand," remembers Zeimer, "it helped avoiding polarization and made working with city's government more effective."

Moraga Mayor Karen Mendonca has also worked with similar methods. "I'm familiar with this communication technique that helps all ideas come the forefront," says Mendonca, "it's a way to get out many ideas without negative comments, and it can prove very productive." The Mayor plans to participate in both sessions.

In their book, *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry*, authors Diana Whitney and Amanda Trosten-Bloom describe the different steps of the method that was created by

David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastava at Case Western Reserve University in 1987 as a tool for organizational change. The first step consists in exploring the best of what life gives to a given system—the appreciation part— then imagining what opportunities the future can bring—the inquiry. The process continues until it produces the design of an ideal organization, and defines the steps to delivering the vision. "Appreciation and inquiry combine to produce a vital, powerful and catalytic effect on leadership and organization," wrote Whitney.

"This is our town, and it is our job to make it whatever the people want," says Zeimer. "We already have a lot of material, we need to start to try things to attract businesses to visit Moraga so they can see that there is a potential for profit here."

Residents of all ages are encouraged to come and participate in the process. "People have the power to change things," says Zeimer, "they just have to come (to a meeting) and make it happen."

Moraga Art Gallery Loses its Space

By Sophie Braccini

The cooperative Moraga Art Gallery will lose its home in the Rheem Shopping Center at the end of October. The space has been sublet to the organization at no cost by the primary occupant, Comcast, for ten years. Comcast is now asking the Gallery to either pay a \$2,000 monthly rent or go. In the back of the building, the communication giant operates technical equipment and has crews coming around from time to time. Now that the agreement has been rescinded the artists are looking for a new place to display and sell

their creations.

The Gallery's Nancy Slack says that her organization is appealing to Comcast to change its mind. "They need to access the building frequently, I do not see how they would be able to rent such a space anyway," says Slack.

Andrew Johnson, Regional VP of Communications for Comcast, explains that the driving force behind the new demand is the substantial increase in its own rent that occurred when Comcast negotiated a new lease with the property owner, Kimco Re-

alty, earlier this year. "We supported the Gallery for 10 years with an in-kind donation and are now asking them to pay for a small portion of the rent," says Johnson, "we hope that they can find the funds to continue to be our tenant." He notes that Comcast operates telecommunication equipment for the Lamorinda area in this location and that it does not have any other plan for the long term use of the space at this time.

In the meantime, Moraga Art Gallery volunteers are meeting with everyone in town who might have an idea of where they could operate their store. "This is very unfortunate," says Slack, "we had just finalized discussions with the Campolindo High School A.P. Art teacher and were planning on displaying the advanced students' work in the gallery. We also were planning to start our new

monthly art and music nights."

The Gallery is an all-volunteer organization run by the artists themselves. Their funding comes from the 10% that artists give back to the organization when they sell a piece. According to Slack, the rent asked by Comcast is beyond their means.

"We are gathering information about art-loving corporate sponsors and lower lease options and hope to have something settled by our deadline," adds Slack.

The Gallery opened its new show, "Navigating with Color," on August 16. Gallery Member Nancy Robinson and Guest Artist Ellen Heathcote will be featured until October 29. The public is invited to view their art, along with the work of other gallery members, at the show's opening reception on Saturday, August 20, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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