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RECON on Roads

By Sophie Braccini



Jill Keimach (left) and Howard Harpham (right) with two members of the Moraga Lions Club Photo Sophie Braccini

Moraga Town Council Member Howard Harpham and Town Manager Jill Keimach recently met with the Moraga Lions Club. The topic of discussion was, in Harpham's words, "not the most glamorous."

Roads and potholes, and the Town's financial capacity to address these problems, comprised the agenda that these two members of the RECON (Revenue Enhancement Community Outreach to Neighborhoods) committee were tasked with presenting. This presentation was one of the first in an ambitious plan to reach out to every Moraga resident to

provide information about the state of the Town's roads.

"It is our duty to inform residents about the situation," said Harpham, "you may say that you do not care about it and decide to let the infrastructure deteriorate. But at least you will do so knowingly." Harpham started the presentation by telling the story of his homeowners' association and how it is required by law to set aside reserves to maintain its capital assets. Unfortunately, according to the council member, such a reserve was not set up when the Town was incorporated. Today Moraga has a bal-

anced operating budget, but does not have the means to set aside the reserves that would be necessary to address the delayed infrastructure maintenance.

According to the report Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Moraga's roads are 'at risk'.* "The cost of repairing deteriorating roads is exponential," said Keimach, "What we can do today to save our roads, we might not be able to do ten years from now." The Lions in attendance reacted to that statement, "It's like a leak in your house," said one, "if you do not fix it immediately, it might become very expensive in the future."

The group wanted to know if the Town was liable if something happens because of a pot-hole and why the Town could not get grants to fix neighborhood roads. But most of their questions were about how to fix the problem, including, "Couldn't the Town pass a bond? How about an assessment district? Have you thought about privatization of the neighborhood roads?"

"In fact, you are coming to meet all the groups in Town to sell the voters," concluded one person.

"We are here just to inform you of the reality of our infrastructure," Harpham responded, "what will be done about it will be your decision." Keimach reminded the group that Orinda tried twice to pass such a bond and that the population twice rejected it.

Ellen Beans, who is also a RECON member, is setting up meetings with community groups. "Our plan is to be done by the end of February," she said. Anyone can ask to host a coffee in a home and have a presentation made for neighbors. So far only community service groups,

neighborhood associations, and local clubs have been contacted. For more information, email Beans at ellen.beans@gmail.com.

*Read a related article in our archive: <http://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0512/pdf/Moraga-far-only-community-service-groups-Roads-at-Risk.pdf>

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