



## Moraga Civic News

### Public Meetings

#### Town Council

Wednesday, December 14, 7:00pm  
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,  
1010 Camino Pablo

#### Planning Commission

Monday, December 19, 7:00 pm  
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

#### Design Review

Monday, December 12, 7:00 pm  
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

#### School Board Meeting

##### Moraga School District

Tuesday, December 13, 7:30 pm  
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate  
School Auditorium  
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga  
www.moraga.k12.ca.us  
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

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

**Attempted car theft thwarted, 11/28/11** In the middle of the afternoon at Moraga Commons Park, the owner of a truck witnessed someone attempt to take his vehicle. He was able to reach the truck as it was pulling away from the curb and jumped into the bed as the truck drove north on Moraga Road. The owner was yelling at the would-be thief, after a short distance, the thief pulled over and fled to a passenger car that was tailing the stolen car. A search of the area ensued, but the thief and his/her accomplice were gone.

**D.U.I. 11/26/11** A middle aged man who should have known better was doing double the speed limit late at night on Camino Ricardo, driving on the wrong side of the road, and failing to use his turn signal. Police were not surprised to notice objective signs of alcohol on the 46-year-old male. He flunked the breathalyzer test, was cited and later was released to a friend.

**Fishing for door prank, 11/26/11** Sullivan Drive residents came home after they were out for the evening and found a long piece of fishing line had been attached to their front door knocker. The homeowners wanted to have documentation of the incident in case the vandals strike again.

**Coffee with your donut? 11/25/11** School was not in session on a recent Friday night around 11:00 p.m. when a driver had lost control of his car after doing donuts and crashed into a chain link fence by the baseball field. Police report notes "moderate damage" to both the car and the fence. The driver was later arrested for D.U. I. Methinks there will soon be moderate to severe damage to the future cost of his car insurance.

**Drinking at Rheem School, 1/23/11** Two cars, two juveniles and one semi-mature 18-year-old adult were parked at the Rheem School on Laird Drive with a case of beer in the back seat of one of the cars around 10:00 p.m. Cops spied the young men and figured they were not doing their homework. Everyone was released at the scene to their parents. Beer was photographed, then disposed.

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## Planning, Deciding, Developing - Moraga Joins Forces for Economic Vitality

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Town Council and the Planning Commission got together on November 30th to hear the Economic Development Action Team's (EDAT) report on the Rheem Center and to approve the recommendations of the Team so staff can move forward. More than ever, reviving the Rheem Center is at the forefront of concerns. Moraga's new Planning Director, Shawna Brekke-Read, reframed the question to include it in a global rethinking of the General Plan that would benefit the whole town.

EDAT presented the results of seven months of work. The Team had been tasked with finding ways to revitalize the Rheem Valley area—the shopping center and surrounding lots along Moraga Road—and streamlining the approval process for community supported retail.

One piece of the engine that will

move the Town forward was not included in the elaboration of the EDAT's plan: the property owners. None of the owners of retail property in the Rheem area participated in the discussion.

From the Team's work, a vision for the Rheem Center area emerged, developed from the public input sessions that were organized last August. Behind the tag line "I ♥ ToM" (Town of Moraga), EDAT identified four action items that most residents believe are needed: Improvement of the pedestrian experience and approach, creation of gathering places, expansion of the retail variety, and broader diversity of land use.

For each of these aspects, EDAT proposed short, medium and long-term plans. "We are the third task force appointed to propose actions geared at improving the business climate of the town," said EDAT's Hol-

lie Lucas-Alcalay, "we want some projects to start now so the residents can start seeing improvements." The report proposes beautification projects such as reconfiguring and replanting the concrete planters to break-up the perspective, and starting to apply for grants for pedestrian and bicycle circulation.

The medium term would include amendment of the General Plan, streetscape and signage upgrades, and a marketing plan to support business owners.

For the long term, EDAT proposes the study of a strategic plan for the area.

The Team also recommended that a part time Economic Development Coordinator be hired to drive the proposed actions. Both the Council and the Commission supported the idea, pending the identification of a viable funding

source. After the meeting, Keimach indicated that recommendation would be reviewed by the Council at its mid-year budget review in February.

Both the bodies also approved the Planning Director's proposal to start a review of the General Plan that should address some of the main hindrances to economic development. "If that is your recommendation, go for it," said Vice Mayor Mike Metcalf, "but it will take a lot of drive to reach that goal." Metcalf referred to many wide reaching plans that took years to achieve because Planning Directors get bogged down by ongoing business.

"This makes a lot of sense to me," said Planning Commission Vice Chair Dick Socolich, "this will provide the framework under which we will later develop a Rheem Specific Plan."

## Council Okays Creation of Climate Action Task Force

By Sophie Braccini

On a four-to-one vote, the Moraga Town Council approved the creation of a Climate Action Task Force chartered with drafting a Climate Action Plan, or greenhouse gas reduction strategy, for the Town of Moraga. The Task Force will be selected and appointed by Town staff, and will not include members of the Council.

A Climate Action Plan (CAP), according to the staff report, "outlines transportation, water, agriculture, and waste GHG (greenhouse gas) reduction measures to achieve the reduction target, and proposes a timeline for implementation." Having a CAP in place would eliminate the need for new businesses and development projects to undergo additional environmental reviews mandated by the Bay Area Air Quality District's new 2010 CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) regulations that were established following the passage of AB32, the Global Warming Solutions Act, which set the State's 2020 greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal into law.

The Council agreed that establishing a CAP would be in Moraga's best interest and would bring the Town into compliance with the goals of AB32. No one expects Moraga's impact on global warming to be of major significance, but a CAP will streamline residential and business application processes. The five-member Council also agreed that the members of the Climate Action Task Force (CATF) should be appointed by staff.

What the Council did not agree on, however, was whether or not two of its own should sit on the CATF. The final vote was obtained only after a spirited debate.

"I will hold my nose and cross my fingers and vote for it (a CATF with no Council representation)," said Council Member Dave Trotter. He added that he was disappointed that he could not get a majority of three votes to support the direct participation of Council members on the CATF.

Vice Mayor Mike Metcalf voted

against the constitution of a CATF sans Council members without any qualms, "We are about to make a very foolish decision, we are abdicating our responsibility," rapped out the Vice Mayor.

Metcalf and Trotter both argued that there is risk that a Task Force without Council participation would become unruly and drive the Town

in a direction it would rather avoid. They both wanted Council members to be able to monitor a process that they feared could become a stage for the promotion of a political agenda. "For some people in this Town, (the topic) is a religion," said Metcalf.

Metcalf's passionate argument persuaded Council Member

Howard Harpham to qualify his initial position of supporting the non-participation of Council Members in the CATF. Harpham asked the Town Manager not to hesitate to come back to Council to change the CATF's charter to include Council members if debates became too difficult to manage.

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