



Moraga Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

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

Planning Commission

Monday, August 6, 7:00 pm
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

Design Review

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

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

Town of Moraga:

www.moraga.ca.us
Phone: (925) 888-7022

Chamber of Commerce:

www.moragachamber.org

Moraga Citizens' Network:

www.moragacitizensnetwork.org



Police Report

Fireworks confiscated, 7/04/12
Given the option of turning in their fireworks or receiving citations, revelers on Laird Drive and at other locations throughout Moraga chose to give up the goods. The illegal fireworks were later given to Moraga Orinda Fire Department personnel to be destroyed.

Slightly stolen golf cart, 7/04/12
A Moraga Country Club resident said he left his golf cart in the driveway of a neighbors home while attending a party – and left the keys to the cart in the ignition. When it was time to go home, the fellow noticed his cart had vanished. Would-be thieves or merry pranksters only took it as far as Augusta Drive – not far from the cart owner's home. No suspects or witnesses at this point.

D.U.I., 7/07/12 Maybe it was the hour, just after 2 a.m., or the illegal u-turn across double solid yellow lines, but surely the red, watery eyes, slurred speech and odor of alcohol was the real tip-off that this driver was less than sober. The subject flunked the breathalyzer test and was taken to the Moraga Police Department where a forced blood draw was conducted.

Welfare check reveals abuse, 7/07/12 Cops were dispatched to Ascot Drive for a welfare check. The very brief police report categorizes the incident as "Incest" and only notes that the juvenile "had been the victim of assault." The matter remains under investigation.

Argument gets physical, 7/09/12 A 49-year-old female was being restrained at a home on Canyon Road by two adult males. The woman was attempting to visit her 86-year-old mother, but got into a fight with her 60-year-old brother, slapping and biting him. The bite-ee declined prosecution and both siblings left without further incident.

Car fraud, 6/28/12 An Ascot Drive resident thought he was getting a good deal on a used car. He contacted a seller on Craigslist who identified herself as being in the British military and said she was about to be deployed to Afghanistan and needed to sell her car. The wanna-be buyer wired \$4,850 to a third party in England using an eBay holding account. The car was supposed to have been shipped from Illinois to arrive on July 9 or 10. Alas the money is gone and the car never arrived.

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Moraga Rescinds Dog Park Ordinance

By Sophie Braccini

Was it a decision based on fear, or made for the greater good? The answer depends on who you ask. The bottom line – dogs are allowed to play off-leash at Rancho Laguna Park during established hours for at least one more year.

Confronted with a petition signed by over 20 percent of the voting population, the Moraga Town Council had to decide whether to put the dog park issue to a popular referendum or rescind its own ordinance. The Council quickly arrived at a decision July 11, voting three to two to rescind the ordinance that suspended off-leash activity at the park until and unless a dedicated dog park is created.

A large majority of public comments, heard before the Council's decision, were in favor of rescinding the ordinance. "I hope you will listen to the town tonight," said Dick Ayres. "This is a night for courage," said Larry Bare. "Rescind and let the path

of compromise and healing begin," said Tina Brier.

Dale Walwark supported rescinding the ordinance because in his view the Town has more important questions to put on the ballot, namely a tax measure to salvage Moraga's infrastructure. "It's very important that we deal with the infrastructure, anything else would be a distraction," he said.

Donna Ward didn't agree, arguing that the issue had to go to the ballot and so the whole population could weigh in. "We need to put this to rest by a vote of the total community," she said.

Council Members Karen Mendonca and Ken Chew supported the referendum option. "Because I am a strong believer in well-designed and thoughtful public policies, it is never my first choice to make public policy through a referendum," said Mendonca. "However, after four years of witnessing a public process that has

been thwarted by those who have no desire to maximize shared access for all, I firmly believe that it is time for the people of Moraga to provide their input." Chew agreed, adding that putting a referendum on the ballot would not impede the chances of a tax measure to pass and that refusing to do so was a denial of a democratic option based on fear.

Vice Mayor Howard Harpham noted that although political decisions are made about ideas, emotions must be taken into account. He developed the idea that if people were to see a tax measure to support the infrastructure and a referendum about supporting a fenced dog park on the same ballot, they could unconsciously establish a connection between the two. "We are human beings, we are not always logical; we have feelings and feelings always win," he said.

Mayor Mike Metcalf, who has been working on infrastructure issues

for two years, stated up front that he would support rescinding the dog park ordinance so everyone's energy could be focused on the roads. Council Member Dave Trotter concurred.

Town Attorney Karen Murphy confirmed that, once rescinded, no similar ordinance could be adopted by the Town before the end of August, 2013, but she indicated that the Council could begin discussions around a new plan earlier if it were so inclined. "If the Council wanted to pick up the thread, discussions could start at some point in time after the November ballot," suggested Trotter.

Correction

Issue date 07/03/12, *The Future of Rancho Laguna Park*: We incorrectly identified Moraga resident Tina Brier as a member of Lamorinda Dogs.

Town to Study Traffic Plan

The area around Moraga Road and Rheem Boulevard will benefit from CCTA grant

By Sophie Braccini

Moraga Planning Director Shawna Brekke-Read recently announced that the Town has been awarded a \$325,000 grant from the Contra Costa County Transportation Agency (CCTA) under a program called Transportation for Livable Communities.

The award document states that the grant should "fund transportation projects that improve the range of transportation choices between key activity nodes – such as shopping areas, office centers, sports arenas, and convention centers – and the transportation facilities that serve them. TLC projects add or improve pedestrian, transit, and bicycle facilities, and support well-designed, high density housing and mixed-use near

transit." It's not a construction grant—its purpose is the creation of a plan and development of shelf-ready projects that can take advantage of other sources of funding when they become available.

"The money will serve to design a plan to make the Rheem area more inviting, to reduce congestion and slow down traffic, and also beautify Moraga Road," said Brekke-Read, noting that the timing of the grant was aligned with the Economic Development Action Team's report and the visioning that had been done with the community, recommending that the Rheem area become mixed use, more compact, and pedestrian friendly. "These objectives are also consistent with the

General Plan policies," she added.

"We would also like to study how to create a sense of entry into Moraga and the Rheem area; maybe create a gateway at the intersection of Rheem Boulevard and Moraga Road," said Brekke-Read.

When she presented the application for the grant to the Town Council last November, Brekke-Read did not shy away from a controversial issue—the narrowing of Moraga Road as a way to improve traffic. "There is nothing in the grant application for anything that would narrow Moraga Road from four lanes to two lanes," she said, "although in my professional opinion it would be something worth considering."

Brekke-Read's approach to the

design of a plan includes community outreach. "The grant requires a lot of community input," she said. "We will organize workshops for the Campolindo High School community, businesses and the community at large." The plan requires hiring a traffic engineering firm and modeling potential designs for Moraga Road and the Rheem intersection.

Brekke-Read believes that there is enough money in the grant to also plan for an improved bicycle route between Campolindo Drive and Corliss Drive.

"The funding should become available within a month and we will start working on the plan in the fall," said Brekke-Read.

Moraga Hires a New Town Engineer

By Sophie Braccini

On Monday, July 2, Moraga Town Council member Ken Chew was in a meeting with Supervisor John Gioia (Contra Costa Board of Supervisors, representing District One that includes the cities of Richmond, San Pablo, El Cerrito, and part of Pinole) when the discussion turned to Edric Kwan. "We had just received the announcement from Jill Keimach that she had hired Edric Kwan as the

new Town Engineer and Public Works Director," said Chew. "Supervisor Gioia turned to me and said, 'sounds like you've hired our best employee!'"

Kwan was Capital Projects Manager for the City of Richmond; he takes up his new post in Moraga on July 23.

Moraga Town Manager Jill Keimach wrote, "Edric started in

2008 as Richmond's Capital Projects Manager... (and) was then promoted to Richmond City Engineer in 2010 where he was responsible for Engineering, Wastewater and Stormwater Divisions."

In that capacity Kwan managed a staff of 30 employees. A few months into the job, he made national news when Richmond had a sinkhole 30-feet deep. "Under

Edric's leadership, and because of the cooperative teamwork from a multiple of agencies, the City was able to quickly build a bypass road and work on the final reconstruction of the storm drain and road," wrote Keimach. The project was recently awarded the "Emergency Project of the Year" by the American Public Works Association Northern California Chapter.

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