

Published September 12th, 2012

Meet the Moraga Council Candidates: Seth Freeman

By Sophie Braccini



Seth Freeman

Seth Freeman is running for Council for the second time. He was not elected two years ago. Freeman is the CEO of an emerging markets investment management, mutual fund and restructuring company headquartered in Moraga, with staff in Hong Kong, Singapore, India, China and Vietnam. He holds an M.B.A. from Thunderbird School of Global Management; a B.A. in Management from Saint Mary's and is a Certified Insolvency and Restructuring Advisor.

"We need to have the entrepreneurial approach on the Council," said Freeman. Unlike his opponents, Freeman believes that the Town is not well managed and that savings could be made. "The Council recently hired new managers and directors without taking that opportunity to hire qualified people who would work for less, or change the pension plans," said Freeman noting that in Lafayette city employees are part of a 401K plan, not a pension.

Freeman has an extensive list of what he believes is Town waste. "The Council gave the Town Manager a \$50,000 discretionary budget two years ago, this is a typical trick of mismanagement," said Freeman (Town Manager Jill Keimach indicated that about \$20,000 of the fund called Community Contingency has been used this year, and that the balance will go back to the General Fund).

The handling of the Rancho Laguna Park issue also shows, in Freeman's view, how the Council wastes public money. "This was not even an issue listed in the Town's priorities at the beginning of the year," he says, "but over

the last 18 months some \$100,000 has been spent in unnecessary legal and consultant fees."

Freeman says that, if elected, he will take an entrepreneurial approach to costs, reassess benefits and salaries, and reevaluate priorities. "I believe we could save about \$200,000 per year," he said. Some of Freeman's priorities are services for seniors and teens. "It is unacceptable that the Town refused \$3,000 to the Spirit Van when it wastes thousands otherwise," he said. Freeman adds that he would like to see a private/public partnership to create a teen center in Moraga.

Freeman believes that the current rules protecting open space are good, and that there is a fine line between diminishing a property owner's rights and protecting the community's values.

Freeman supports Measure K, "because the roads need it," he said. However, he does not have confidence in the incumbents' ability to manage this revenue. "The incumbents who were in power are the ones who failed to act when their engineers warned them in 2007 and 2009," he said. "There should be an independent board of trustees to manage this money."

Another big issue for Freeman is transparent democracy and how technology should be used to provide live video streaming of public meetings. He added that he'd like to see free Wi-Fi in the parks, coupled with cameras for safety reasons.

"There are many underutilized assets in this town," concludes Freeman. "Students could get valuable skills doing research for the town, the band shell in the Commons and the amphitheater at Rancho Laguna are under-utilized and could offer more music and plays that would raise Moraga's cultural level."

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