



Moraga Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, Aug. 28, 7 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Monday, Aug. 5, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd.

Design Review

Monday, July 22, 7 p.m.
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

Phone scam, 7/8/13 A Greenbriar Drive resident got a phone call informing her that she had won a \$3.7 million dollar lottery and she had to pay \$2,000 to release her winnings. The subject followed instructions and sent a \$2,000 check to Washington. Oddly enough, there was another call asking for a \$32,000 payment to cover federal taxes, so she sent another check, then called her bank, which informed her she had been involved in a scam.

Yelling and walking in the street, 7/08/13 In the middle of the afternoon a woman was yelling and walking into oncoming traffic at Moraga Road near Ascot. Cops made contact and determined that she was a danger to herself and noted her prior history of mental instability. She was transported by ambulance to a hospital for a 72-hour psychiatric hold.

Unlicensed driver, 7/7/13 An 18-year-old male was driving a 2003 Yamaha off-road dirt bike on Moraga Road at Buckingham Drive. Perhaps he wasn't aware of the meaning of "off-road?" The fellow was cited for not having a motorcycle license endorsement, proof of insurance, and registration. The bike was towed from the scene.

Illegal fireworks, 7/05/13 An anonymous caller alerted police about illegal fireworks occurring near the intersection of Paseo Del Rio and Campolindo Drive around 1:30 a.m. When the police arrived they were unable to locate anyone using illegal fireworks.

Up in smoke, 7/04/13 Moraga Country Club security staff informed police that they suspected approximately 50 underage people were drinking and smoking marijuana on the second fairway during the fireworks show. Police were unable to corral the alleged suspects before the event ended.

Juveniles drinking, 7/4/13 At 11:30 p.m., long after the fireworks show had ended, police were dispatched to Augusta Drive on a report of 20 to 50 juveniles drinking alcohol. When the cops arrived they were unable to locate the involved parties. What are the odds they figured the party's over?



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Moraga Will Clarify Setback Rules in Older Neighborhoods

By Sophie Braccini

Many Moraga residents wanting to remodel their older homes have had to struggle with what rules to apply to the setbacks of their homes. In an effort to simplify the process and make the rules fair for everyone, the Planning Department recently initiated a review of different sections of the town's municipal code.

A rule that clarifies where the setback should be measured from was easy enough – going forward setbacks will be measured from the basement – but other rules addressing the discrepancy between the old county zoning rules and Moraga's current code will require more meetings, including a Town Council hearing in the fall. According to town staff this could impact about 3,000 properties.

"When the town incorporated in 1974 it took existing neighborhoods and changed the zoning," said resident and property owner Dave Bruzone during a Planning Commission meeting July 1. "The lots were already there, the homes were already

there, and neighborhoods that were R10 under the county's rule became 3DUA under town regulations."

R10 means lots that are a minimum of 10,000 square feet, and 3DUA means three homes per acre. The sizes are fairly similar; but county setbacks were very different than those established by the town. In addition, the county was lenient in the interpretation of its own rules – some homes were built encroaching on county setbacks.

The O'Donnells have lived on Hodges Drive for 47 years. When they decided to remodel their 50-year-old home they found out that they were encroaching the setback by a few inches. They have been working with staff since March trying to find a way to add a new bathroom to their home. Jim Schmidt, who lives on Camino Ricardo, wants to remodel his home that was built under the county setback of 10 feet. "This is exactly what the whole neighborhood looks like," he said. The town currently requires that the property have a 20-foot setback. "We are

stuck in the mud," he commented.

"We are recommending that the code be amended and clarified," said Pierce Macdonald Powell, the town's senior planner. Staff proposed four different options: Option A would allow residential additions to follow the old county zoning setback standards; option B would allow residential additions to extend and follow existing building lines provided the addition does not further encroach into the town-established setback (this approach would require a variance and Design Review Board approval for additions which encroach further into town setbacks than the existing building walls); option C would authorize only those remodels that would not increase the home floor area; and option D would extend county setback standards to all properties in a zoning district regardless of the date of construction.

"When we went from county (rules) to town (rules) it was because we wanted to look different," said commissioner Tom Marnane. "I don't like a system where people will

'play' to beat the code. I'd want to stick as much as we can to the Moraga code. If that was locked in a little bit better, we might see more innovation and creativity in additions (remodels) to meet the code, rather than to find ways to beat the code." Commissioner Jim Kline favored Option D. Commission chair Frank Compelli described Option D as going too far, adding that he could support A or B and allow homes to be remodeled under the rules they were built, unless a second story or more than 50 feet of wall are added. He also said that homes that were not compliant with the rule of the time should undergo an appropriate review. A majority of planning commissioners indicated they could support A or B. The Planning Commission held a second hearing July 15, after our press deadline, to decide what recommendation to make to the Town Council.

The Town Council meetings scheduled for July 24 and Aug. 7 have been canceled. The next meeting will be held Aug. 28.

Kids' Day for Special Olympics a Big Success

By Celia Magidson



Buki the Clown was a favorite for face and body art. Photo Celia Magidson

The weather was sunny during Kids' Day at the New Rheem Theatre in Moraga last Saturday. The Moraga Police Officer's Association, in collaboration with the theater, organized the event to raise money for the Special Olympics of Northern California, a non-profit that provides athletic opportunities to children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

As a part of their commitment to community service, the Moraga Police Officer's Association, in conjunction with other service organizations, helped carry the Special Olympics torch across different parts of the state during the Northern California Law Enforcement Torch Run. Sergeant Brian South of the Moraga Police Department and president of the Moraga Police Officers Association said, "That is how we got in-

involved. We did a movie night last year and this year, a Kids' Day. We're really excited to support Special Olympics and to do a community event."

After a special matinee showing of the movie "Despicable Me," children ages 3 to 10 were able to enjoy all sorts of fun activities such as balloon animals, face painting with Buki the Clown, carnival games with prizes, finger-printing and, of course, food. The event was entirely staffed by Moraga police officers. One mother, Christina Polk, commented on the nice crowd; and Max, a young participant, said: "I had fun at the frog throwing."

Rheem Theatre manager Lindsey Pirkle said they sold 155 tickets, three times more than last year; all proceeds benefitted Special Olympics of Northern California.

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