



Moraga Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, Nov. 13, 7 p.m.
Wednesday, Oct. 23, 7 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Monday, Nov. 4, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Rd.

Design Review

Monday, Oct. 28, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's 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

A Message from the Moraga Police Department:

Early in the afternoon of Oct. 12 Moraga police officers responded to the Moraga Safeway. It was reported that two subjects had taken a shopping cart full of groceries from Safeway and fled in a van towards Orinda. Orinda police located the vehicle near Beverages and More and detained three female occupants.

Subsequent investigation revealed that a full shopping cart had been staged inside the Moraga Safeway by two of the suspects and the third suspect later entered Safeway, located the filled shopping cart, and exited the store without paying for the items, valued at over \$1,000. An alert Safeway employee witnessed the theft and notified the police. A search of the vehicle also revealed suspected rock cocaine.

Moraga police arrested the three suspects, who are all Oakland residents, and multiple felony charges have been filed.

Further investigation has indicated that this commercial burglary crew has been active throughout the Bay Area and they have been linked with thefts and attempted thefts using the same method. Anyone who has any information regarding this investigation is asked to contact Moraga's detective sergeant Brian South at (925) 888-7052.

Moraga blotter

A parent's nightmare, 10/17/13 A family discovered early in the morning that a 12-year-old girl had left home the night before with a backpack and sleeping bag, but without her parent's knowledge. The community mobilized to search for the child, who was reunited with her family that evening.

Garage band complaint, 10/14/13 It was only 3:30 p.m. but musicians at a Crossbrook Drive house received an official shush by Moraga police spurred by an anonymous complaint. The band was advised to close the windows and turn down the volume.

D.U.I. 10/14/13 Police observed a Rav 4 without its headlights on, late at night, run two stop signs on Camino Pablo near Sanders Ranch Road. The 22-year-old driver from Lafayette happened to have a 17-year-old female with her who was hiding on the rear floorboard of the car. Turns out the girl had consumed alcohol; she was later released to her mother. Cops smelled booze on the breath of the female driver, who flunked her field sobriety test. She was arrested for driving while intoxicated.

Pink petty theft, 10/12/13 Someone entered an unlocked Toyota Siena parked in a Carter Avenue driveway and stole a small pink cloth purse that contained approximately \$10 in change sometime during the late afternoon or evening. No suspects or leads at this time.



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Measure K Success

By Sophie Braccini

Sales tax revenue from Moraga's Measure K is higher than expected, town manager Jill Keimach announced at a Town Council meeting Oct. 9. "We had an estimate that the 1 percent sales tax would produce \$1 million annually for the roads," said Keimach. The first period was expected to

yield about \$250,000, but the town actually received \$330,000.

Other positive results include higher revenue from the planning department and lower expenses elsewhere. "This year, instead of a result close to zero, we have a surplus of \$384,000," added Keimach. "This year we can bring our re-

serve to 58 percent of our budget." Last November the residents of Moraga approved a 1 percent additional sales tax that would go to the General Fund and that the Town Council pledged to use only for the roads. A portion of the sales tax was bonded to produce an immediate \$7 million for road repairs. The

first part of the campaign was just completed with half of the town's neighborhood streets repaved. Next year the rest of the neighborhood streets will be restored, after an assessment of the state of the underground storm drain system is completed.

New Young Staff Faces in Moraga

By Sophie Braccini



From left, standing: Lawrence Tam, Ella Samonsky; seated: Ellen Clark, Clinton Calkins, Laurie Suggang. Photo Sophie Braccini

A couple of years ago Moraga recruited new department heads to consolidate the town's service framework. This year the town filled the middle management positions where big gaps were impacting service to residents. Five new staff have been hired in 2013: senior planner Ellen Clark and associate planner Ella Samonsky (Planning); senior civil engineer Laurie Suggang and engineering technician/inspector Lawrence Tam (Public Works); and recreation assistant Clinton Calkins (Parks and Recreation).

"I came from a much bigger agency and chose Moraga for the diversity of the things I can take charge

of," says Calkins. Suggang, who was previously in a large public works group at the county level, agrees, saying that she enjoys the different aspects of public works in Moraga – the intimate setting and the contact with the public. Tam adds that he likes the direct contact with the hierarchy. "Here you can even talk to the town manager directly," notes Clark, who remarks that Moraga may be small but the projects are large and have a complexity she enjoys. Samonsky, who just arrived from San Jose, also appreciates the transparency and open atmosphere of the small staff where everyone knows everybody else.

Setback Solution

By Sophie Braccini

No one knows exactly how many homes were built in Moraga before November of 1980, but it is a large number. These houses, built before the town adopted its own zoning ordinance, were subject to county regulations. For current homeowners wanting to remodel their older homes the question was, which rules should apply – the town's or the county's? Moraga's municipal code was ambiguous. After months of debate and testimony from frustrated

residents, the Moraga Planning Commission decided on Oct. 7 that the rule used at the time of construction should apply to additions. The Town Council will have the final say in the matter.

Many Moraga residents have been anxiously awaiting this decision; they own homes with a certain setback, but when they planned to extend their living space, some found out that they could not do it without applying for a variance to the town's

zoning regulations; a long, uncertain and costly process.

"This issue affects a lot of people in our town, many of us purchased our homes with the understanding that the county setback would apply to us," said Moraga resident Shannon Walkman. "Some people have projects on hold ... all we want is to improve our homes and our neighborhoods." Walkman added that she even emailed the planning department to make sure that the county rules would apply to her home before she purchased it.

Making matters more complex, some homes were developed as part of a large, planned development, with setbacks that were different than the county's standard of the time. "The people who developed the Rheem Valley Manor had years of experience developing areas that are hilly," explained resident Stan Raleigh. "My entire street has a single minimum side yard setback of 5 feet, but with an aggregate of 25." He concluded

that imposing county setbacks to homeowners who want to modernize their homes now would not make sense. "Don't get hung-up on the property line, you have to consider the total layout of the land," he said.

The commission modified the proposed text to read that the front and side yard setbacks applicable to a lot which was developed before November 1980 will be the front and side yard setbacks that were in effect at the time of development, per the subdivision recorded development setbacks or the county zoning. In order to avoid ruling on Moraga Country Club homes that require a different study altogether, the commission specified that this new rule applies only to detached, single-family residences.

The Council will review the Commission's proposal at its earliest opportunity. If approved, and nobody appeals the decision, the new rules would become effective a month later.

SAVE THE DATE - TOWN OF MORAGA STATE OF THE TOWN & VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION NIGHT THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21 - 6:00 PM, MORAGA COUNTRY CLUB

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Keep all candy and chocolate away from pets
Don't allow pets to play with or chew on glowsticks
If strangers at the door in costume upset your pet, talk to your veterinarian about a possible sedative
Make sure costumes aren't too tight or feature parts that your pet can chew off and swallow
Keep your pets indoors on Halloween; sadly there are tales of vicious pranksters harming pets

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