

Civic News Moraga

Balanced Budget For Moraga

... continued from page A4

The town will spend about 70 percent of its budget on personnel – including salaries, pension benefits and health care – up from 65 percent in fiscal year 2013-14. Viewed by department, the biggest share of the budget pie goes to police services, with expenditures totaling 30 percent of the budget.

The expense trend is reflected in Hom's five-year projection. "This five-year financial plan is somewhat less optimistic," said Hom. Over the next five years the town will "face an increase in staff time and resources required to bring considerably larger pavement projects through the public bid and construction processes, further burdening the general fund," she said.

Some of the reductions that have already been implemented include lowering the town manager's contingency, reducing contract services when possible, and reducing or eliminating other miscellaneous expenditures.

On the capital side, in addition to the 2014 road repair campaign that represents the bulk of his budget, public works director Edric Kwan anticipates electrical work and turf renovation at the Hacienda de las Flores, upgrades to the restrooms at the Moraga library, the bicycle and pedestrian master plan update, the resurfacing of Moraga Road from St. Mary's Road to Draeger Drive, and the completion of the town chambers at 331 Rheem.

Council Declines to Increase Support for Spirit Van

During the town's budget process, Lamorinda Spirit Van Program director Mary Bruns asked the Moraga Town Council to increase its annual contribution to the program from \$9,000 to \$15,000. The council declined, citing the town's less than optimistic budget outlook.

The Spirit Van is an 8-year-old, low cost transportation program serving Lamorinda seniors. Bruns reported that ridership and service hours increased this year, along with fares for certain trips, and that the program entered into a new contract with Eden Housing's Belle Terre in Lafayette to provide transportation for that facility's low-income seniors, which will add \$6,000 per year to the program.

Councilmember David Trotter supported not raising the town's donation to the Spirit Van. He asked Bruns if she was comfortable asking for private donations – Bruns replied that even coming to council meetings to ask for money was painful for her. Trotter pledged to personally raise \$3,000 from the Moraga community for the Spirit Van to bridge the gap. "Moraga is a great community in which to live, raise a family and age gracefully at home – and Moragans have always answered the call when the cause is right," Trotter said later. Councilmember Philip Arth immediately offered a personal donation to the program.

For more information about the Spirit Van Program visit www.ci.lafayette.ca.us, and click on Services, then Senior Services, and select Lamorinda Spirit Van from the menu on the left.

The Hills of Moraga

... continued from page A4

Other questions are posed regarding permitted grading – should that be allowed only when necessary to mitigate a potential danger?

Why is this important?

The rules that are currently being discussed will not impact the center of Moraga, which is presently zoned to accommodate more than half of the new development in town including the possibility for upwards of 650 new housing units in the Moraga Center Specific Plan area. They will, however, be very important for large undeveloped properties such as Bollinger Canyon, which lies northeast of Saint Mary's College, bordering Lafayette; the "Painted Rocks" property along Moraga Road and Rheem Boulevard; and Indian Valley, the hilly area between Canyon Road and the Moraga Country Club, near the Valle Vista Staging Area.

The potential new regulations could also affect property owners whose homes are on sloped lots, who might want to remodel or build additions on these smaller properties.

Residents who participated in the initial workshops expressed the opinion that regulating how to build, or not to build, on ridgelines and slopes is very important to the town's character. Many asked questions regarding what it means to be a semi-rural community and about the long range vision for Moraga.

What is happening now?

A consultant was hired by the town to analyze the regulations, engage residents on the issues, and propose changes to the rules. Two public workshops have been held, and public comments gathered at meetings and online will be incorporated in the consultant's recommendation to the town council.

During the most recent workshop on June 5, at which residents were asked to prioritize issues, the number one concern was – which ridgelines are protected and what

does it mean to protect them? This was followed by another five issues that residents found roughly equally important: determining the formula to calculate slopes; whether remediation should be allowed in open space area and under what circumstances; how the town should protect major views; what triggers the need for a hillside development permit; and should the process for development of larger projects be modified.

What can residents do?

First, do your homework – get educated, if you are not already, on these issues. A very good tool is the document called Understanding Moraga's Hillside Regulations, drafted by town staff, that's available online at www.moraga.ca.us/open-townhall, where you can also submit your thoughts about what issues are important and how they should be prioritized. Another interesting page is www.moraga.ca.us/hillsides, which has links to all of the town's documents – and you can sign up on this page to receive email updates.

What happens next?

The online gathering of comments will continue until the end of the month. They will be made available to the task force that meets periodically to discuss progress, the Planning Commission and the Town Council. The council will then decide which issues to focus on. Once that step is achieved, the discussion on options to change the regulations should happen between August and October. Review and adoption of the new rules is scheduled to take place between March and April, 2015.

The final decision makers are the five members of the Town Council. The terms of Mayor Ken Chew and Councilmember Dave Trotter will end this year and both plan to run for re-election in November.

Just Listed!



312 Camino Sobrante
Orinda

5BR | 3BA | 3628 SF

Elegant contemporary
in the heart of Orinda's
Country Club!

\$1,549,000

3299 Beechwood Dr.
Lafayette

2BR | 1 BA | 1278 SF

Classic Trails
neighborhood cottage!

\$810,000



Coming Soon!
20 Saint Hill Road, Orinda

5BR | 3BA | 3693 SF

Stunning contemporary with panoramic Mt. Diablo views!
Watch for details!



925 | 708-1396 Tony Conte
925 | 324-6246 Mary Beth MacLennan
tconte2001@hotmail.com
mbmacLennan@gmail.com
CalBRE License #: 00959101 | 01480008



Announcing a home loan with a welcoming waiver.

\$3,000*
FEE WAIVER

If you're buying a home, you deserve a nice housewarming gift to go with it. That's why, for a limited time, SAFE is waiving closing costs on our Conventional and Jumbo Home Loans—a savings of up to \$3,000 for you! Plus, you get the benefits of historically low rates and local decision-making from one of the region's leading lenders. Now there's a welcome offer.



NMLS# 466072

*Credits for closing costs cannot be applied to discount points or loan-level price adjustments. Offer only available to members who live or work in Contra Costa County. Complete application must be submitted by 7/31/14. See SAFE for details.