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At the Town Council

By Sophie Braccini

Did you miss the last meeting of the Moraga Town Council? Below are some of the notable items approved unanimously by council members July 16.

Bay Cities Awarded Pavement Project

The town council awarded a nearly \$3.3 million contract for the 2014 pavement project to low bidder Bay Cities Paving and Grading, one of the largest Hispanic-owned firms in the United States. The company is own by Orinda resident Ben Rodriguez.

Public works director Edric Kwan presented the results of the bidding process to the council. "We received five bids and the rule is that we have to choose the lowest responsible bidder," said Kwan, who recommended going with a bid alternate that would apply rubberized asphalt instead of conventional asphalt to 21 of the 28 street segments that will be repaired this year. "It's 10 percent more expensive, but the treatment will last twice as long and it dampens sound as cars drive by," Kwan explained, adding that using rubberized asphalt would divert 12,000 old tires from landfill.

Work will start in August - for details about the project visit www.moraga.ca.us/paving. (Read the related article, "August Start for Pavement Project," published July 16, in our archive at www.lamorindaweekly.com.)

Town Gets GHAD

Council members also agreed to subject Moraga to the California Public Resources Code regarding Geologic Hazard Abatement Districts, also known as "GHAD Law." This means that if one of the conditions of approval for a development is the formation of a GHAD, the project will be included in the Moraga GHAD. Other projects, such as those that have already been approved or do not require the formation of a GHAD, will be able to voluntarily join the new legal structure but the town cannot require them to do so.

GHADs are legal entities formed to fund the prevention and remediation of landslides and other earth movements for a group of property owners. A complete list of the properties initially included in Moraga's GHAD will be compiled at a future council meeting. At this time three projects are required to be part of the GHAD: Palos Colorados, Hetfield and Rancho Laguna. (Read the related article, Town of Moraga to Form a GHAD, published June 4, in our archive.)

And Finally - Well Behaved Cows Welcome

If you walk on Mulholland Ridge, you've probably seen John Hoover's cows. And yes, they get to stay for at least a few more years.

"The Hoover cattle are very well mannered," said Jay Ingram, parks and recreation director, advocating for the renewal of the cattle grazing agreement between the town and Hoover, a Moraga resident. According to Ingram the agreement has been working well for years; the extension approved by the council gives Hoover grazing rights until 2019.

The town benefits from having Hoover's cattle roaming the fields around Mulholland Ridge. He and his team build and maintain fire breaks on the hillsides, maintain a fence all around the property and provide water for the cattle that also serves the local wildlife. He reminded council members that his family, along with the Carrs, has been raising cattle in the hills of Moraga since the early 1900s.

"Other benefits include keeping the weeds and some invasive (plants) down," added Ingram. The town contracts for the services of the Contra Costa County Department of Agriculture to reduce the spread of purple star and artichoke thistles. Rent collected from Hoover helps defray the cost of that service. The grazing fee is currently \$2,378 per year and will be adjusted upward annually based on the consumer price index.

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