

Town Accepts the Climate Action Plan

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Staff presented to the Town Council the 40 measures that were proposed by the task force to reduce Moraga's carbon dioxide emissions 4 percent by 2020 (read the related article in our archive at www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0816/Moraga-Planning-Commission-Says-Climate-Action-Plan-Needs-More-Work.html).

Councilmember Mike Metcalf said the measures that addressed transportation and construction were by far the most effective to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. "The most bang for the buck comes from carpool and rideshare programs," he said, "and we are already working on that with CCTA

(Contra Costa Transportation Authority)." He proposed to not spend any more money on the plan to get it to a point where it could be submitted for certification by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, which has oversight of local climate action plans, but rather to use it simply as a guideline – his motion met with unanimous approval.

After the meeting, Mayor Ken Chew said the council could have done more to implement the climate action plan. "The CAP was started quite a few years ago since I got on the council in 2006," he said. "Unfortunately, I thought last year the CAP task force was set up for failure. Some of the members on the task

force were not too thrilled about the town having a CAP in the first place."

"Adopting the plan would provide more 'teeth,'" confirmed Ellen Clark, planning director, "but the council's decision doesn't foreclose taking action on the strategies or even necessarily delay their implementation, depending when and how they're integrated into our future work program."

A few days after the meeting, Moraga resident and former council member Lynda Deschambault alerted town staff to a grant opportunity – the California Youth Energy Services Rising Sun program, which hires young adults, ages 15 to 22, and trains them to serve communi-

ties across the Bay Area with no-cost Green House Calls. At each Green House Call, interns check the home for efficiency, install energy and water-saving equipment, and provide personalized recommenda-

tions for further savings. "(Moraga) is pursuing a grant in partnership with Lafayette to fund a CYES team in Moraga and Lafayette," confirmed Ella Samonsky, associate planner.

Deschambault Honored by Sustainable Contra Costa

Sustainable Contra Costa honored nonprofits, businesses, community groups, educators and individuals on Oct. 15 for their efforts toward sustainability at the sixth annual Contra Costa Leadership in Sustainability and Green Building Awards Gala in Concord. Moraga's Lynda Deschambault won the Leadership in Sustainability award in the Individual category, and the nonprofit she founded and directs, Contra Costa County Climate Leaders (4CL), was voted the "Seed of Change" winner for this year. Lafayette-based Ecohouse was one of two Green Building Award winners.

Moraga's New Planning Director: Ellen Clark

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Clark especially appreciates that residents are interested, involved and actively participate in the public process. She says that it is sometimes hard to engage people, but there have been good turnouts at outreach sessions for the Livable Moraga Road project and the review of development rules for ridgelines and slopes. Clark seeks community consensus on issues before plans are brought to the Town Council for final approval.

There was some reluctance to put

topics on the council's agenda, in the weeks leading up to the recent election, which might become overly politicized. Now the process to study possible amendments to the town's code regarding development on ridgelines and slopes will move forward; the council will work on zoning changes in the area of the Moraga Center Specific Plan; and a new project proposed by Jerry Loving for multi-family housing next to the Rheem Theatre will start its rounds of

study sessions – while several in-progress developments, including Rancho Laguna II, off Rheem Boulevard; Via Moraga, across from the Rheem Shopping Center; the City Ventures project on Moraga Way; and Summerhill Homes' Camino Ricardo project, proceed along the sinuous development pathway.

To these relatively short term projects Clark adds some long term objectives. "The plan to improve the Rheem Shopping Center has gone on the

back-burner," she says. "The General Plan envisioned a Specific Plan for that area; the question is should we invest in a plan for that center or can we work on focused General Plan amendments and zoning changes?" She knows that the crafting of the Moraga Center Specific Plan cost \$1 million and took seven years. She also sees tremendous opportunity for improvements to the existing municipal code, which she views as a very old fashion and cumbersome document. She acknowl-

edges that some work has already been done, including a review of the sign ordinance, but she would like to have time to do a complete clean-up.

When she is not in the town offices or spending time with her family, Clark runs. She already has four marathons under her belt. She says that sometimes, in the middle of a run, she may wonder why she is doing something so hard; but at the end of the race she derives great happiness from a sense of achievement.



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Livable Moraga Road Project Starts to Gel

Moraga's Planning Commission, Design Review Board, and Parks and Recreation Commission met in October to discuss the recommendation of the Livable Moraga Road advisory committee regarding reconfigurations of Moraga Road designed to make the arterial more friendly and safe to all types of users.

Over the course of several public workshops, the two areas found to be most in need of improvement are the Campolindo High School area, where drop-off and pick-up creates havoc on weekdays during the school year, and the section of Moraga Road between Corliss Drive and Donald Drive where several adjacent streets merge, more or less efficiently, onto the arterial.

Town staff proposed a new configuration for drop-off at the high school, but has not yet been able to get a commitment from the school district to work with the town on the project. It is essential to have the district's support since some modifications are likely to be necessary on the campus itself. Moraga's planning director noted that grants such as Safe Routes to Schools are available to fund such projects.

Of the different configurations to improve the Donald Drive to Corliss Drive section of Moraga Road, an alternative that envisions two northbound lanes, one traffic lane southbound, one center turning lane, and parking on alternate sides, as well as sidewalks, bike lanes and a multi-use path, garnered a majority of support.

Shopping Small is Big in Lamorinda

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"This is about awareness," said Moraga Hardware and Lumber owner Bill Snider, a Moraga resident. "The whole idea is to remind people that there is more than Amazon and Walmart, and let's not forget the small businesses that support the local scout troops and education foundations."

Both chambers of commerce plan to post information about participating businesses on their websites – www.orindachamber.org and www.moragachamber.org (click on the Shop Moraga First tab).

Jay Lifson, executive director of

the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, sees Small Business Saturday as the prelude to the city's largest retail event of the year, which takes place the following week – "It's a Wonderful Life in Lafayette," a festive family event from 4 to 7 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 6 at Lafayette Plaza. The fun-filled evening includes visits with Santa, the official holiday tree lighting ceremony, one-of-a-kind photo ops, live musical entertainment, crafts, treats and a holiday sing-a-long. "This event is designed as a time for gathering, giving and gratitude," said Lifson.

As seen in Moraga ...

Wardrobe Panache



From left: Erwin Santos, Ricky Hinojsa, Raymund Respicio, Igor Kipnis.
Photo Cathy Dausman

How to reconcile "casual Friday" dress code with proper bank attire? This foursome, all employees at the Moraga branch of Wells Fargo Bank, has done so simply by swapping out their ties for bow ties. "Bow tie Friday" began about a year ago, said branch manager Erwin Santos (left). And yes – the ties you see are real bow ties, not the clip-on variety. "I didn't know how to tie [a bow tie], until I watched a YouTube video," Santos said. He must be a fast learner, because now he helps others tie their bow ties. - C. Dausman

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