



Moraga Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, Dec. 10, 7 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Monday, Dec. 15, 6 p.m.
Hacienda De las Flores, La Sala,
2100 Donald Dr.

Design Review

Monday, Dec. 8, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Rd.

School Board Meeting Moraga School District

Tuesday, Dec. 9, 7:30 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate
School Auditorium
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga
www.moraga.k12.ca.us
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

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



Moraga Police Department

Residential burglary, 11/19/14 Sometime between 1 and 10 a.m. a Benedita Place garage was entered through the partially open garage door. The suspect(s) entered a vehicle parked inside and rifled through its contents – several items including a spare car key and set of silverware were taken.

Truck stolen, 11/20/14 A fellow left the keys under the front seat of his 1993 Toyota pickup while he was doing lawn maintenance in the rear of a Tharp Drive home. A witness saw a male between 20 and 30 years old, wearing a white jacket, take off in the truck. Motive plus opportunity = bumper.

Residential burglary, 11/21/14 Jewelry and electronics valued at \$2,500 were taken from a Calle La Mesa home. No signs of forced entry; the incident is under investigation.

Hit and Run, 11/21/14 A car was parked overnight on Sanders Drive and was struck by an unknown vehicle. The person who reported the incident didn't see or hear anyone hit his car, but obviously noticed damage in the morning. Sadly, no note was left by the scofflaw. No suspects or leads at this time. 'Fess up, possible culprit – it's the holidays.

Bicyclist vs. Car, 11/23/14 Officers located a bicyclist on the ground at the intersection of St. Mary's Road and Bollinger Canyon Road. A witness saw the cyclist riding his bike at a faster speed than the vehicle in front of him. The biker hit the car and fell to the ground. The cyclist stated he was riding when a vehicle crowded him on the left side while attempting to pass him. As the car slowed down the biker rear ended the car in front of him. The car that he bumped kept going. The fire department arrived on the scene and took the cyclist to the hospital.

Car stolen, 11/23/14 A red 1994 Jeep Wrangler was taken from a carport sometime between Nov. 23 and Nov. 24 at an apartment complex on Moraga Road. No suspects or leads at this time.

Invisible concert tickets, 11/21/14 A Saint Mary's College student attempted to buy concert tickets, so sent \$300 to the alleged seller via a pre-

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Paradigm Shift for Hacienda de las Flores

By Sophie Braccini

The historic Hacienda de las Flores held the Moraga Town Council's attention on Nov. 18 when the financial report on the town's cost to maintain the beautiful buildings and grounds was on the agenda – along with a vision-altering plan presented by resident Joao Magalhaes to transform the charming property into a world class leisure public/private facility. It was not the first time the retired Bechtel executive has suggested that the town kick it up a notch when it projects itself into the future, but it was the first time that the council embraced the idea and decided to move forward.

The plan has enough bells and whistles to dazzle anyone. It focuses on expanding the utilization of the Hacienda and increasing revenues, while preserving the building's historical value. Magalhaes believes that harnessing the professionalism and capitalistic energy of world class architects and operators in a public/private

partnership could transform the Hacienda de las Flores into an attractive facility that would draw more people to Moraga while continuing to serve residents.

According to Magalhaes, the Hacienda of the future could include new classrooms, event venues and a multi-generational community center for the town; and space leased to a private partner could end up as a bed and breakfast/restaurant, a tea room/library, a swimming pool/spa at the Pavilion, and a wine cave/cellar for rehearsal dinners. His financial analysis leads him to believe that the facility would produce half a million dollars in revenue per year that would be split between the town and its partner.

For the Moraga resident who says that all he wants is to see our little town flourish, the most important thing at this time is the selection of a first class architecture firm that will have the vision and the connections to create something special in Moraga.

As Councilmember Mike Metcalf noted, the town has operated the Hacienda at a loss for several years and the structure is in need of major repairs. Although the Hacienda Foundation has done a lot to maintain and improve the facility, much work remains; so Metcalf welcomed Magalhaes' proposal to change the way things are done.

Councilmember Dave Trotter and vice mayor Roger Wykle both predicted that the interface between the private and public future use of the building would be the most challenging articulation to plan.

Members of the Hacienda Foundation who were present at the meeting all confirmed that they wholeheartedly support Magalhaes' approach and its objective to expand utilization and generate revenues. Town staff also recommended moving forward with the first phase, including issuing a Request for Qualifications for architectural firms

to prepare conceptual plans for the best use of the property. This phase will cost the town only staff time. Council members asked to see the RFQ before it is sent out, because they want to make sure that the terms are open enough to let creative juices flow. Staff expects to have a draft ready in February.

Even if everything runs smoothly, it is likely that the project will generate a lot of public debate when the preliminary concepts are designed, when the analysis to confirm the viability of the concept is considered, and when potential end-operators are selected. In the meantime, and to improve revenues now, staff proposed to extend the hours of operation for weddings to 10 p.m., since closing at 9 p.m. seems to be the reason many rental opportunities are lost; and to reconsider the rule that prohibits hard alcohol on the premises. These measures will be brought back at a future council meeting; neighbors will be duly notified.

Town Falling Behind on Asset Replacement

By Sophie Braccini

A subgroup of Moraga's Audit and Finance Committee recently presented the results of its study of the town's asset replacement plan. The two volunteers assessed the value of town-owned properties – leaving out roads, drains and building frames. They calculated the annual amount the town should set aside to replace these assets and how much should have been saved by now, and presented their stark findings to the Town Council. According to the two financiers, the town should be saving more than \$600,000 a year; since that hasn't happened, they estimate the current unfunded depreciation balance to be more than \$5 million.

"We used the same rules homeowner associations employ," explained Tom Kennedy, who formed the subcommittee along with Tim Freeman. "HOAs have the legal obligation to save for asset replacement, but cities do not."

The methodology was simple: they listed all the town's assets that will have to be replaced in the foreseeable future, excluding roads and drains that are part of the Measure K plan, and building frames because, if properly maintained, those can last for a very long time. Included are building components that will have to be replaced such as roofs, lighting, carpeting, windows, landscaping; park components such as irrigation, lighting, restrooms; parking lots; traffic signals; police and public works vehicles; and information technology equipment.

Freeman and Kennedy worked

paid credit card, as requested. The reporting person never received the tickets and the phone number for the "seller" is no longer working.

In addition, the following crimes were reported in Moraga Nov. 18-25:

Identity Theft

Ascot Dr

False Alarm

Country Club Dr

Alderbrook

School St

Tharp Dr

Violin and Flute Stolen

Camino Pablo

Petty Theft

Shuey Dr

Woodside Dr

Rimer Dr

with Moraga's Engineering Department to determine when the assets were purchased, when they should be replaced and how much that would cost. "We looked at data indicating what the useful life of an asset is supposed to be, and added a few years to it since we know Moraga's frugal practices," said Freeman.

Their calculations indicated a need to save \$627,000 per year to compensate for the depreciation of the town's assets. As of now, the asset replacement fund that was established in 1989 has a balance of \$114,000, while the unfunded accumulated depreciation is just over \$5.1 million according to Freeman and Kennedy. Their recommendations are to modify the town's reserve pol-

icy so when the General Fund balance exceeds 50 percent of the expenditures, the excess is placed in the asset replacement fund; to immediately transfer \$1 million of the Palos Colorados Development Fund to asset replacement; and to move forward with transferring 50 percent of future development fees coming from that project to asset replacement.

Councilmember Phil Arth agreed. "Depreciation is a silent killer, like high pressure for humans," he said.

Councilmember Mike Metcalf challenged the subcommittee to present the list of all of the assets and their valuation, and suggested that many of them were probably associated with the Hacienda de las Flores; if the plans changed for that property, he

noted, all figures would have to be re-evaluated. Councilmember Dave Trotter indicated that the Palos developer fees had been forecast for recreation use, and that he could not agree to diverting so much of the money to an asset replacement fund unless a comprehensive discussion about the spending priorities for those funds is conducted.

Mayor Ken Chew, whose term ends this month, insisted on prudent management of future revenue. "I don't know why people would have a problem with saving money," he said.

The council agreed to continue the discussion and consider questions related to finding the means for asset replacement and spending priorities for the Palos Colorados developer fees.

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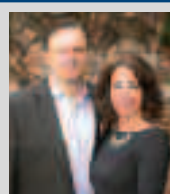
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On behalf of the Taylor Family Foundation and the children and the families they serve, we "thank you" from the bottom of our hearts! Please visit the Taylor Family Foundation at tfff.org



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