



Moraga

Public Meetings

City Council

Wednesday, May 25, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, June 8, 7 p.m.

Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, June 6, 7 p.m.

Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, May 23, 7 p.m.

Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Moraga School District

Tuesday, June 7, 7 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

Report

April 26 through May 3



Tennis dispute 4/30/16: A verbal altercation was reported at the Moraga Country Club tennis courts. The reporting person said that when he returned home, the wife of his tennis acquaintance showed up at his front door. The reporting person said he felt threatened by a statement she made and requested documentation. Cops advised the reporting person of possible solutions to preventing further conflicts. No arrests were made.

Larceny 4/29/16: Cops responded to a report of shoplifting from a local retail store. The establishment's loss prevention officer reported that a suspect had been discovered making fraudulent returns via video surveillance footage. Upon investigation, the suspect had stolen over \$3,000 in merchandise at multiple stores. The suspect was not in custody at that moment, but the reporting person requested prosecution.

Huffing induced convulsions 4/27/16: In the middle of the afternoon near the intersection of Moraga Road and Moraga Way, an individual was having difficulty breathing and had empty bottles of aerosol dusting spray that had recently been used on the ground next to him. The subject was seen experiencing convulsions and had a difficult time trying to stand and sit. He was taken by Moraga-Orinda Fire District to Kaiser Hospital. Cops determined that he was on misdemeanor probation for huffing. Police will refer the matter to the District Attorney for possession of toluene with intent to inhale, public intoxication and misdemeanor probation violation. Toluene is a benzene derivative commonly also found in glue; it can cause severe neurological harm.

Mail theft 4/27/16: At 9:15 a.m. a Wandel Drive resident observed a blue late 1990s minivan stop in front of his residence; an adult male wearing an orange safety vest exited the minivan and removed a piece of mail from his mailbox. Oddly the mail was a misaddressed piece of junk mail and had no real value. Cops checked the neighborhood with negative results. One man's junk is apparently another man's treasure.

Smash and grab 4/26/16: An unknown suspect smashed a car window to grab a handbag that

Planning Commission Nixes Large New Home on Rheem

By Sophie Braccini



Image provided

No harmony with the neighborhood, out of character on a scenic corridor — these were some of the elements found to be non-compliant by the Moraga Planning Commission for a 4,600-square-foot home proposed on Rheem Boulevard. The decision was based on the town's design guidelines rather than strict rules, an avenue the design review board did not pursue and that may create a precedent.

The frustrated property owner, Richard Yu, along with his representative Steve Cheng, made a passionate plea to the commission for his dream home. He explained that the process had been continuing for over a year and that they had complied with every Moraga rule, as well as with the DRB's requests.

Though sympathetic with the property owners, the planning com-

missioners denied the application.

Where the DRB members had seen a well-designed house that complied with Moraga's regulation, the planning commissioners saw a mansion out of character with a neighborhood made of less than 2,000-square foot ranch homes, and a proposed home that blocked ridge views and negatively impacted the neighbors.

The commissioners first decided that the new home should not be considered a remodel since it would be completely redone. It means that it should abide by new Moraga regulations that require 20-foot setbacks on both sides, rather than the 10-foot county rules in effect when the old home was built. New commissioner Kymberleigh Korpus said it was clear to her this was a teardown, and all other commissioners agreed with her.

The commissioners extensively analyzed the compatibility of the new home with the neighborhood. This concept is part of the design guidelines, but since it is a subjective notion planners do not always use it. Commissioner Ravi Mallela explained that the guidelines have been written to maintain harmony within neighborhoods and that the design should be reviewed.

The shadow study showed that the closest neighbors were losing an hour-and-a-half of sunlight because of the second story so close to their home. The commissioners also believed that adding such a large and different home among the smaller ranch-style houses would diminish the value of these homes. The commissioners expect that both negative impacts should be changed.

The commissioners also ques-

tioned the style of the home. The new proposed construction would be a brightly colored Spanish/Mediterranean building, with metal balconies and many architectural details. All the commissioners agreed that it was a beautiful project, but it differed from the feel along the Moraga scenic corridor. Korpus said that Moraga did not want to become Blackhawk, and acting chair Tom Marnane said the new construction would not blend in and was at odds with Moraga's semi-rural character.

The planning commission asked the Yu family to come back with a new project, which size would be more consistent with the neighborhood, that would respect the 20-foot setback and would blend in harmoniously with the hill and the neighborhood. They added they would not oppose a second story and expansion of the home, but that it had to be done in the "spirit of Moraga's character."

After the meeting, Mike Hollingsworth, who is the closest neighbor to the Yu property, said that he and his wife were pleased that the planning commission had set boundaries for out-of-scale construction in residential neighborhoods, especially in the scenic corridor.

"It's unfortunate that we have had to go through this process for the past year and that our neighbors weren't given better direction at the onset so that they could develop a workable design for a more comfortable home," he added.

Rheem Boulevard Reopened, For Now

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Public Works and Police departments were able to reopen Rheem Boulevard May 11 at the intersection of Moraga Road with two lanes — enough to get traffic through and avoid the sinkhole that formed two months ago.

Edric Kwan, the Public Works director leading the repair project, said that testing was done to make sure that no other hole would form in that area before reopening traffic.

A circuit marked out in red guides drivers through the westbound access of Rheem Boulevard at Moraga Road. The speed is limited to 25 mph and the signals at Center Street have been replaced with stop signs. One of the light posts fell into the sinkhole that formed last March after the heavy rains.

Kwan said that this change would be in effect until restoration construction begins. His team is on track preparing the design documents for repair and pre-screening for contractors. He expects that the streamlined process will guarantee the best price, and work completion by the Oct. 15 deadline, which is the beginning of the rainy season.

Kwan added that one of his most important tasks was convincing CalTrans, which will channel state emergency funds, of the seriousness of the Moraga situation and getting the agency to work with the town.

was on the rear seat of a locked jeep Cherokee parked on Donald Drive overnight. Although physical evidence was collected, there was no sign of the missing purse.

Other crimes in Moraga between April 26 and May 3:

Annoying phone calls from suspected ex-boyfriend — St. Mary's Road

Lost property — Sanders Drive

Recovered Mercedes — Sandringham Drive North

Loud party — Ascot Drive

Traffic accident — Moraga Road

Drugs found — Saint Mary's College

False alarms — Corte Pinto,

Fernwood Drive, Tia Place

Attempted burglary — Saint

Mary's College

Student with over-the-counter

flu medication, alcohol and a bit

of pot — location not disclosed

Tools stolen from locked truck

storage bin — Moraga Road



The newly reopened intersection at Rheem Boulevard.

Photo Sophie Braccini

Just Sold in Moraga!



308 Corte Gabriel, Moraga

Sold for \$840,000 | Sold for over asking price with multiple offers!



321 Birchwood Drive, Moraga

Sold for \$1,335,000 | Sold for over asking price with multiple offers!



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