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Public Art is Finally Coming to Moraga this Fall

By Sophie Braccini



Horse heads by Amy Evans McClure Photo provided

helping get the Moraga program off the ground.

At the July 12 meeting the commissioners looked at different pieces.

Town council member and committee chair Teresa Onoda had done the research and talked to the artists. She indicated when the sculptures would be available to be installed in October.

The idea would be to have a number mounted all at once to create a real buzz in town. The commissioners all agreed that the benches by Colin Selig would be very appropriate in the area surrounding the library. "He makes them with recycled propane tank," said Onoda, adding that they were attractive and functional for anyone of any age.

All liked the idea that the tall piece "The Drain" would be perfect in the bioswale in front of the community meeting room. They agreed that David Mudgett's "Radar Man" would be an attractive piece for children at the library. Onoda presented the two horse heads by Amy Evans

McClure, saying they would be very intriguing for children. The commissioners agreed that ultimate placement should be done when pieces are on hand, and that it should fit the locations.

Onoda was the champion of this new public art activity in Moraga. An artist herself - she is a recognized plein air painter - she has invested a lot of energy in this program, meeting artists and Orinda residents such as Ted Urban to get the program going.

Monumental art displayed in public places is definitely coming to Moraga.

Within a few months, sculptures on loan from regional artists will be erected for residents of all ages to share and enjoy. The Art in Public Places Committee has been working for months on behalf of the Moraga residents to select eight pieces; some of them will begin to be installed in October, starting at two first public sites, the library on St. Mary's Road and the town council chambers and community meeting room at 335 Rheem Blvd.

The town council will approve all or some of the eight pieces the committee unanimously recommended at either the Sept. 14 or Sept. 28 meeting.

The committee began meeting and exploring how to bring art in the public space in May. Its mission statement is to recognize artists as important cultural resources and to install artwork throughout the town to create vibrancy to broaden public awareness and encourage dialogue about public art. This definition is very close to the one crafted by Orinda Arts in Public Places. This more senior program is mirrored in Moraga, and Orindans are

The other members of the committee are Karl Davis, a builder and representative of the Design Review Board; Parks and Recreation Commission chair Jeannette Fritzky; Tia Kratter, a former Pixar art director, and teacher in Pixar university; Jamie Patterson, a stage artist who used to work with the California Musical Theater; photographer and teacher Grant Rusk; and Tina Saladino from the Parks and Recreation Foundation.

The town council gave the committee a yearly budget of \$5,000, which should cover marketing and installation cost. The artists enter in a loan agreement with the town for one or two years. Commissioners will discuss fundraising and appealing to local foundations to be able to purchase art when the people will want to keep specific pieces.

Come 2017, the committee will meet quarterly and continue to look for new pieces to be added at different places in Moraga.



David Mudgett's "The Drain" Photo provided

Reach the reporter at: sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

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