



Moraga

Public Meetings

City Council

Wednesday, Aug. 23, 7 p.m.
Wednesday, Sept. 13, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, Sept. 5, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Aug. 28, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

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



Summary covers:

Aug. 2-15

Alarms

11

Accident

8/4 St Mary's Rd/Rheem, two car, non-injury

8/6 Deer Hill/Happy Valley, non-injury

8/7 Location unavailable, vehicle hit pedestrians; minor injuries

Auto Burglary

8/6 Moraga Country Club, purse, credit cards, \$150 cash taken

Domestic Dispute

8/10 Location unavailable, family argument involving alcohol

Fraud

8/8 Reported to police; false

Craigslist ad for home rental

8/8 Reported to police; \$480

taken from So. Cal ATM

Hit & Run

8/9 Parking lot; Jeep damaged

ID theft

8/15 Location unavailable;

attempt to open credit cards

Incident

8/6 Moraga Country Club; a parent reported her 17-year-old daughter was pushed by an adult; subject apologized; no charges filed.

Larceny

8/7 Location unavailable;

\$9,500 in jewelry taken

Medical

8/3 3900 block Campolindo;

elderly female hospital transport

Restraining Order Violation

8/9 Location unavailable

Stolen Vehicle

8/14 Location unavailable; an unlocked 2006 Land Rover with keys in the car was stolen from in front of owner's residence.

Suspicious Circumstances

8/10 Orchard Supply; attempted

theft of 80 cans of spray paint

8/11 Location unavailable;

sounds like a shotgun blast

Theft

8/3 Campo/Natalie Dr;

motorcycle stolen; subject crashed

vehicle while fleeing; no injuries;

he was booked into Martinez jail.

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Moraga's fiscal emergency reasons explained, no solution proposed

By Sophie Braccini

After declaring a fiscal emergency in Moraga last month, and receiving a flood of questions from residents, the town decided to hold a special meeting to address citizen concerns. A large number of Moraga residents crowded the town chambers Aug. 8 to ask questions and hear answers from staff about the declaration, but while Town Manager Bob Priebe and staff responded to many questions, they did not offer solutions. Staff and council believe that remedies can be proposed only after residents are polled on their priorities and a volunteer committee is appointed to study options, steps that should happen in the fall.

Staff received 17 communications from residents making a total of 47 questions that they strived to answer at the meeting, in addition to other concerns brought forth by meeting participants.

Priebe began by reassuring residents that a declaration of fiscal emergency is not a bankruptcy. The town depleted most of its reserves because of two infrastructure failures: the sinkhole at Rheem and the Canyon bridge, but the operational budget was balanced, he said. He

added that the reason for the declaration was to allow the town to place a fiscal measure on the ballot outside of the regular election cycle.

His statement was challenged by residents who claimed that the declaration was hurting property values and was bad public relations, and among council members some said they believed that a fiscal measure would need to be placed on a regular election ballot to ensure wide participation.

Priebe also addressed the fact that employees' salaries were raised just before the declaration. The manager explained that salaries were part of a long bargaining process with the different employee groups and that the unfortunate timing was just a coincidence. He explained that Moraga staff work much harder than other members of surrounding larger public agencies, and with smaller salaries. Priebe went on to explain each staff member's role. Some residents echoed him, recognizing the dedication and hard work of staff. Administrative Director Amy Cunningham indicated that personnel costs represent 63 percent of the

town's expenditures and that pension costs are going down because the employees' contribution rate to the pension plan is increasing.

Some residents expressed their dismay at the town's poor management, while others stigmatized their fellow citizens' lack of understanding of public management and process.

Residents who do not want to see their property tax bills increase proposed scaling down the town's operations, seeking economy of scale by working with neighboring communities, dropping some projects such as the roundabouts on St. Mary's Road, or creating a business improvement district to revitalize the town.

Others wanted to hear more from staff about what is really needed to address the issue of delayed maintenance of the town's infrastructure, and to generate enough revenue to reconstitute a healthy reserve.

Jeanette Fritzky was the only council member who started to question the way things are done in Moraga. She said that she believed Moraga needed to understand the essential services the town cannot

live without, and that an outside auditor would be in a better position to make that diagnostic. Some residents also called for an outside audit of the town's finances.

Council Member Kymberleigh Korpus responded that there was no money to pay for a budget study by an outsider. She added that she had seen staff busy beyond belief, and that she did not need a third party auditor to tell her that "Moraga staff kills it." For her, staff cost is a drop in the bucket; the tens of millions of dollars needed for infrastructure is the most important aspect.

Council Member Dave Trotter said that after the 1 percent sales tax was passed to maintain the roads, a second revenue measure is needed for the storm drains. He added that to do things right a measure should be put on the ballot for a November or June regular election for better participation.

There was no action plan proposed at the end of the meeting. The council members asked residents to stay engaged, as more discussions about solutions will begin soon.

Work begins to simplifying Moraga's commercial approval process

By Sophie Braccini

When Starbucks applied to move its operations into an existing drive-through building nearby, it took 14 months for the town to approve it, recalls Moraga Chamber of Commerce's Vice President Bob Fritzky.

Jay Kerner of Realty Partners who owns that part of the Rheem Valley Shopping Center, expressed frustration that Moraga had so many roadblocks, says Fritzky. Kerner's experience with other shopping centers he owns is that the process should have taken no more than four months.

Taking the bull by the horns, the Moraga Town Council decided to work with Kerner and the Chamber of Commerce, and promised that within three months it would review its code to make it more business friendly. The objective according to the Moraga Chamber is to have new retail able to apply with ease in Moraga and to open their businesses quickly thereafter.

Planning Director Ellen Clark is behind this effort to create a Commercial Planned Development District. The idea is simple: The owner of an already developed

multi-tenant commercial area can ask that this become a new CPD. The town lawyer Karen Murphy explained that a CPD can be extensive and define all aspects ruling the area such as setbacks, parking requirements, signage standards, landscaping, building height, as well as permitted types of uses.

A CPD can also be simpler and limited to defining only exterior modifications without changing the design of the center. Murphy added that the more detailed a CPD is, the easier it will be for future tenants to make changes.

Once the CPD is approved by the town council after review by

the design review board and the planning commission, new and replacement businesses will be approved with a discretionary administrative process not requiring any public meeting.

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