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Moraga proposed firearms regulation attracts attention beyond town's borders

By *Sophie Braccini*

The topic of firearms regulation was on the Nov. 8 town council meeting agenda. At the beginning of the meeting, Moraga Town Manager Bob Priebe asked that the ordinance be put on hold to allow enough time for the town attorney to study new arguments put forth by an attorneys' group representing the National Rifle Association. The postponement led to some verbal disorder before the mayor ordered a meeting recess that allowed parties to leave the premises.

The correspondence was received by staff from Michel & Associates on the day of the meeting, not giving enough time to prepare a substantial reply. The attorney's letter was sent on behalf of the NRA and stated that the proposed ordinance would create an unconstitutional burden to the right of self-defense, and is unenforceable. The text establishes requirements for the safe storage of handguns in residences within the town. Priebe indicated that the town's legal team was aware of these arguments, but that a few new elements were added that required more scrutiny.

Priebe suggested continuing the topic to the Dec. 13 meeting. Mayor Teresa Onoda supported this idea, wanting to finish 2017 with a topic that some residents have been working on for a year. But Council Member Dave Trotter opposed the idea, explaining that the December meeting is a festive occasion, not appropriate for this highly contentious topic. The decision was made to hold the hearing either on Jan. 24 or in February.

In addition to the letter from the Los Angeles law firm, the town has received several pieces of correspondence from residents living outside of Moraga, such as Pleasanton, Rancho Santa Margarita, La Canada Flintridge and Laguna Niguel, and they are all in opposition to the text (some Moraga residents also oppose the text). A resident sent to the town a link to the group Calguns.net that encourages its members to voice their opposition to the Moraga proposal either in person or via a letter.

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