

EXPERIENCE MATTERS

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Summer Camp Job Fair
Sat., March 3, 1:00-4:00 pm
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Residents seek answers about new storm drain fee

By Sophie Braccini



A broken pipe eight feet upstream at Rheem Boulevard and Center Street
Photo provided

The \$120 fee for most residents that the town of Moraga plans to include on a mail-in ballot this spring is triggering questions from residents. Either at public sessions or online, Moragans are asking how the money will be used, why a fee is needed and if there are not better sources of funding, or if schools and churches will be contributing as well.

At the first two community meetings on Feb. 12, between 12 and 25 residents came to the

council chambers to ask questions of town officials, staff and consultants, who are preparing for the March 14 public hearing. Edric Kwan, the public works director, was there to defend a mechanism that will give him the resources to implement the storm drain master plan he developed in 2015. It took the sinkhole on Rheem Boulevard and the scare of having funding withheld by the Federal Emergency Management Agency because of Moraga's lack of maintenance, for the

council to make the political decision to finally address the issue.

Some residents who attended the community meetings asked staff and the elected officials present, such as Mayor Dave Trotter, why the issue had not been addressed any sooner. Jim Holgersson, interim town manager who has managed nine cities in five different states, said that Moraga faces the issue of lack of infrastructure maintenance as many other jurisdictions do and is willing to address it as best it can. He confirmed that Moraga is indeed very thriftilly managed and has been for years, with the lowest per capita expense in the region.

The statement did not stop resident Seth Freeman from noting that the money that the new fee will generate corresponds to about 10 percent of the town's total payroll. He also criticized the fact that councils over the last 12 years never saved money for infrastructure maintenance and capital replacement.

Freeman and other residents asked to see a detailed expenditure plan with what public works would do with the fee if it passes.

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Moraga Center Homes breaks ground

By Sophie Braccini



KB Homes grades the future site for the Moraga Center Homes.

Photo Sophie Braccini

The very contentious Moraga Center Homes project has broken ground in Moraga, as any passersby on Moraga Way may have noticed. Starting to grade in the middle of the rainy season, even if it is quite dry right now, is heavily regulated and some residents have asked why this was permitted without much information given to the public.

The old pear trees that once grew on the site located between Moraga Way and Country Club Drive, next to the fire station at 1280 Moraga Way are gone and the developer of the 36 attached homes that will be built on the site, KB Homes, has started grading the 3.06-acre lot.

A single bulldozer was seen on site, uprooting the trees and moving dirt. It was enough to unsettle longtime resident Richard Olsen. He says that during the 43 years since Moraga's incorporation, he is not aware of any major grading or dirt hauling operations that have occurred within the town's limits during the winter rainy season. "In the case of the two most recent major subdivisions in Moraga – SummerHill Homes on Camino Ricardo (now Harvest Court) and Rancho Laguna II projects – both did not undertake any grading or dirt hauling activities during the winter," Olsen added.

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MCE Contra Costa

In April 2018, residents and businesses in Moraga, along with Concord, Danville, Martinez, Oakley, Pinole, Pittsburg, San Ramon, and unincorporated Contra Costa County, will start their more renewable and locally controlled energy service with MCE at competitive rates compared to PG&E, or they can choose another service option.

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YOUR SERVICE OPTIONS



MCE Light Green | 50% RENEWABLE
Take no action and your electric service will be at least 50% renewable energy starting in April — Light Green is currently 55% renewable.



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Eliminate your electricity-related carbon footprint by opting up to 100% California renewable energy at mceCleanEnergy.org/DG-enroll or 1 (888) 632-3674.*

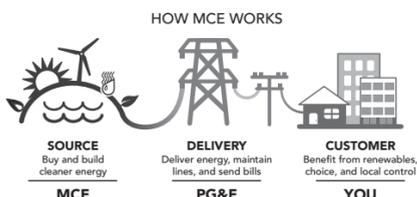


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You can choose to opt out and continue purchasing energy from PG&E at mceCleanEnergy.org/opt-out or 1 (888) 632-3674.*

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How does MCE affect electricity services for Moraga residents and businesses?

Aside from having access to more renewable energy, not much will change. Residents and businesses can choose 50–100% renewable energy from a local public agency. MCE customers continue to enjoy the same reliable electricity service, with PG&E delivering power, maintaining the wires, and providing billing and gas services.



How do MCE rates compare to PG&E's?

Typical customers currently pay slightly less for MCE's 50% renewable electricity compared to PG&E's 33% renewable electricity, with costs nearly identical. Part

of MCE's mission is to provide stable and competitive rates, and has, in fact, reduced rates the past two years in a row (by an average of 9% and 3.7%, respectively). MCE has limited rate changes to once annually and, as a local public agency, all changes are always discussed and reviewed at public meetings by MCE's Board of Directors, made up of locally elected officials representing each of the communities we serve. PG&E will implement new rates beginning March 1. MCE will review promptly and, if needed to continue providing competitive rates, will adjust its own rates. For rates and cost comparisons visit: mceCleanEnergy.org/rates

Do CARE, Medical Baseline, and other low-income assistance programs continue with MCE service?

Yes. Low-income assistance programs like CARE, FERA, and Medical Baseline are unaffected by enrollment; these customers receive the same discount with MCE as they would with PG&E. Customers in these programs do not need to re-enroll nor take any further action.

Will my billing change?

No. PG&E will continue to send one monthly bill. Instead of one fee that combines charges for the delivery and generation of your electricity, the bill will show separate charges — one for electric delivery (PG&E) and one for electric generation (MCE). MCE's generation rates simply replace the generation charges you currently pay to PG&E; they are not an additional charge.

Is MCE's power supply more renewable than PG&E's?

Yes, considerably! MCE's power supply contains a higher portion of renewable resources like solar, wind, bioenergy, and geothermal. According to the

most recent California Energy Commission Power Content Labels, MCE's Light Green service is 55% renewable and PG&E's service is 33% renewable.

Which communities does MCE serve?

MCE has been serving Bay Area electric customers since 2010. Today, about 255,000 customers in Marin and Napa Counties, and the cities of Benicia, El Cerrito, Lafayette, Richmond, San Pablo, and Walnut Creek are buying more renewable energy from MCE. Concord, Danville, Martinez, Moraga, Oakley, Pinole, Pittsburg, San Ramon, and unincorporated Contra Costa County will enroll with MCE in April.

What kind of organization is MCE and who controls it?

MCE is a local, not-for-profit, public agency directly controlled by its member communities — like Moraga. Formed by the public to buy cleaner power and re-invest ratepayer dollars locally, MCE always prioritizes the interests of its customers. MCE's Board of Directors are democratically elected leaders from each community MCE serves and are not paid for their role with MCE. In consultation with MCE's staff, the Board determines MCE's rates, policies and programs in meetings that are open to the public.

How is MCE funded?

Like PG&E, MCE is funded by electricity ratepayers through their monthly energy purchases. MCE is not funded by taxpayers. A cornerstone to MCE's mission is to redirect ratepayer dollars back to local economies, and reinvest in its communities by providing low, stable rates, supporting local workforce development, and partnering with community-based organizations.