

Kwan gets first stab at reduced storm drain master plan

By Sophie Braccini

The defeated Proposition 218 storm drain fee measure sent Public Works Director Edric Kwan and his team back to the drawing board to design a new minimalist approach to storm drain maintenance in order to protect the town as well as possible against further infrastructure decay and catastrophic events.

The director presented to the audit and finance committee his proposition for a reduced storm drain master plan on May 30.

Kwan explained that the storm water fee would have generated \$787,500 of revenue annually for a program that would have covered \$378,100 in high priority capital improvement projects, a \$254,400 operations and maintenance shortfall, and a \$155,000 Cleanwater Program requirement.

The proposed reduced storm water program would instead receive \$254,000 a year from the general fund, and address portions

of the operations and maintenance, and of the Cleanwater Program mandate, but would not fund the high-priority projects.

Kwan explained that the maintenance program includes video inspection, cleaning, and repairs done on a routine basis to address issues before they become significant. He said that it is a critical component of storm water system services because it could extend the life of and stabilize the storm drain system before high-priority incidents occur. The initial budget has been divided in half. The director said it will still include the video inspection of the drains and cleanup, but cannot address the same amount of spot repairs.

The clean water requirements are a national unfunded mandate. There again, Kwan proposed to allocate 50 percent of the budget he was hoping for and only focus on next year's mandated milestones such as the Green Infrastructure

Plan and providing additional technical support to complete implementation of the Trash Capture Project and Cleanwater GIS Project. The proposed budget does not include funding for future Cleanwater infrastructure needs.

Kwan and his team are looking at grant options to address the high-priority projects that will not be addressed under this reduced plan, such as the Laguna Creek restoration project at the Hacienda de las Flores, which would daylight a portion of a culvert that was identified by the 2015 study as a high-priority repair project. The public works department has received a first grant for \$400,000 to restore the creek modestly and is expecting a second grant for \$500,000 to enhance it. The allocation of the second grant will not be decided until 2019.

The town council will review the budget and the storm drain plan in June.

Town staff wants to tighten control over total legal expense

By Sophie Braccini

A surprisingly large amount of legal fees, over \$130,000, was part of the accounts payable to be approved by the town council on May 21. Council Member Kimberleigh Korpus questioned the number, and Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg responded with town attorney Michelle Kenyon, explaining the numbers and laying rules for future expense. According to the new manager, surprises like these should not happen again.

Korpus asked Battenberg to detail all the legal expenses, by date and destination, saying she had been very surprised to find such a large amount in the accounts payable for May. Battenberg reviewed each item line by line. The expense covered legal advice from November to February and comprised a wide array of topics including developer reimbursed advice on Rancho Laguna, Palos Colorados, Hetfield, City Ventures and Bollinger Canyon, and advice on several current topics such as the Rheem Theatre memorandum of understanding, the Hacienda de las Flores rental agreement, the Hillside and Ridgeline rules modification and the Moraga Center Specific Plan zoning.

The town attorney said that the total figure had been a surprise even to her. She explained it by citing two elements. Kenyon noted that the total included 2017 expenses that could have been paid sooner, and second, she said that the last months had been quite unusual and challenging for Moraga, due to its losing some key personnel, and Kenyon was the only one left who had a lot of institutional memory and needed to support staff more than had been the case in the past.

Battenberg explained to the council that in preparation of the 2018-19 budget and being new on the job she had started a conversation with the attorney, evaluating the anticipated legal fees project by project. She said that is the way she and her team will track legal expenses from now on. She added that she would keep the council informed of these expenses and warn them if the limits that were anticipated might be exceeded.

Kenyon, who has been Moraga's attorney for 25 years, said that it was the first time she had such a conversation with a town manager and added that this should guarantee that a surprise such as this large expense would not happen again.

Music comes to Moraga this summer

By Sophie Braccini



The band Pride and Joy will play June 15 at Saint Mary's College Chapel Lawn. Photo provided

Music will definitely be in the air, jumpstarting the summer on the campus of Saint Mary's College with the fourth annual Music on the Lawn concert event in front of the Chapel at 1928 St. Mary's Road. Then the first of nine Thursday night concerts in the Summer Concert Series offered by the Moraga Park Foundation will open on June 21 at the Moraga Commons Park.

The Saint Mary's event was started four years ago and features prominent musicians including some college alumni. The Music on the Lawn event will start at 6 p.m. June 15 with the group 3:30 Friday (this is the band name, not the time of the performance) featuring Courtney Lohmann and Daniel Lewis, both SMC graduates. The headliner is the group Pride and Joy, featuring SMC alumnus Kirby Coleman. Families are invited to come, bring a blanket and be ready for dinner on the lawn. The tickets include access to Damian's famous taco buffet, soft drinks and entertainment. Beer and wine are available for purchase with cash only. Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door, \$10 child ticket, (tickets

at the door will be cash only). For information, visit www.stmarys-ca.edu/4th-annual-music-on-the-lawn.

The traditional Moraga Thursday night summer concerts at the Moraga Commons Park will start on June 21 with the band 3 Day Weekend playing classic rock music. The concerts are free and there again families are invited to bring a picnic blanket or lawn chairs to the grassy hillside in front of the band shell. Moraga Park Foundation volunteers will cook dinner available for purchase at the park. The bar opens at 6 p.m. and the concerts run from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The summer lineup includes: Beatles Flashback (June 28) will play Beatles tunes; David Martin's House Party (July 4th at 7 p.m.) will play dance party and show songs; Spill the Wine (July 12) will play party music for your soul; Foreverland (July 19) will give an electrifying tribute to Michael Jackson; Kings of 88 (July 26) will play classic piano rock hits; Moonalice (Aug. 2) will come back with Bay Area '60s psychedelic rock; Mixed Nuts (Aug. 9) will play hits from the '40s to present; and the

Houserockers (Aug. 16) will close the season with rock and soul music.

More information can be found at <http://www.moragaparks.org/concert.html>.

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