



MORAGA

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COMPASS

Warnings to residents to lock car doors go unheeded



Photo provided

Potential thieves check for unlocked doors, seen here in surveillance photo.

By Vera Kochan

The Moraga Police Department

has warned residents time and again to lock their cars and store all valuables out of sight,

yet the advice continues to go unheeded by many. The most recent string of thefts, taking place over a period of almost two months, has yielded a suspect thanks to clips of video recordings sent to MPD by citizens.

Criminal charges have been filed against Angelina Jaimes, 22, of Concord who according to MPD Chief Jon King is involved in other theft cases in the Lamorinda area.

"Jaimes was arrested on a warrant stemming from Lafayette Police Department charges. We will be seeking charges against her for crimes in Moraga," King stated. "No other arrests have been made." She has been connected to

nearly 20 different thefts in Moraga alone, during one of which a garage door opener was used to gain access into a garage. "Jaimes told officers that she regularly goes out looking for unlocked vehicles from which to steal things," King added.

Crimes of opportunity, such as this, come as a result of negligence and are on the rise in Moraga. MPD is compiling January statistics, and King confirmed, "It appears that property crimes have increased over the same period in 2019." If the town is seen as an easy target by thieves, King says it could invite additional crimes in the form of residential burglaries.

Besides making sure to lock

cars and homes, remember to hide items such as gym bags, purses, wallets, keys, brief cases, phones or laptops in secure places like a trunk. Visible garage door openers can give thieves not only entry into your garage but your home if also unlocked. Pay attention to any strangers in your neighborhood prowling around cars or homes in the middle of the night.

"All of these crimes are easily prevented by residents locking vehicles and ensuring that valuables are not left unattended in vehicles," King concluded.

If anyone has any information or notices any suspicious activity contact MPD at (925) 888-7055.

Moraga awards construction contract for new Canyon Bridge

By Vera Kochan

For nearly three years drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians have become accustomed to the workings of the temporary bridge and the very minor inconvenience of having to wait their turn to cross it. Good things come to those who wait. The Moraga Town Council voted unanimously to award a construction contract for a new Canyon Bridge during its Feb. 26 meeting.

April 2017 saw the old bridge's closure due to landslide damage. The current temporary bridge was installed by November of that year. Additional delays to construction occurred during the East Bay Municipal Utility District's 2019

landslide and subsequent litigation events.

Moraga's Public Works Director/Town Engineer Shawn Knapp additionally requested the town council to authorize funding to "increase the Design Professional Services Agreement for civil engineering services with NV5, Inc. (Walnut Creek) in an amount of \$202,793." This increase is an amendment to the original contract and involves such things as environmental monitoring, design changes during bid process, preparation of documents required by environmental permits and risk management analysis. The town's cost would amount to \$25,795 from Fund 210-Measure J after reimburse-

ments contingent on California Department of Transportation approval.

Because the town has no inspectors on its payroll, Knapp also requested the town council to "increase the construction management services, including construction engineering, inspection and material(s) testing for the construction of the Canyon Road Bridge Replacement Project with Harris and Associates, Inc. (Concord) in an amount of \$22,100 contingent on Caltrans approval." Both resolutions were unanimously approved.

As far as choosing a bridge construction company, staff's most recent engineer's estimate of costs had increased to \$7,332,740 with an overall con-



Photo Vera Kochan

Evening commute on Temporary Canyon Bridge into Moraga

struction budget of \$8,177,673 (including 15% contingency). The increase was a result of inflation and having to relocate the new bridge farther away from existing landslides.

The town extended the bidding period two months to allow for more competitive bidding and any project questions/answers from bidders. Eight contractors submitted bids, half of which hovered close to each other's estimates. Bridgeway Civil Constructors, Inc. (Bridgeway) came in with a bid of \$7,111,020 (lower than the engineer's estimate).

While Bridgeway is a four-year-old company, its staff has many years of experience in the bridge construction industry with projects involving local portions of the 680 freeway. The company's president and key staff members worked for Meyers and Sons - the contractor for the temporary Canyon Bridge.

After assessing what funds are available through Caltrans and the federal Highway Bridge Program, staff will present a cost breakdown of Moraga's share to the town council on a future agenda.

Knapp also discussed a bridge construction timeline during the town council meeting. A pre-construction meeting will take place in mid-March. Later in the month a survey of Temporary Construction Easements and Right of Way is expected along with environmentally sensitive species relocation. April will see the construction of Phase 1 (one lane of the bridge). The removal of the temporary bridge will take place in November followed by a work suspension during the winter months. Construction of Phase 2 (the remaining lane of the bridge) is expected to begin April 2021 and continue to its completion in November.

Hacienda's ADA Restroom Installation Project begins this spring

By Vera Kochan

The Moraga town council has unanimously authorized awarding a contract to Plazo Construction of San Pablo, to complete the installation of an Americans with Disabilities Act restroom at the Hacienda de Las Flores, located at 2100 Donald Dr. The restroom will be located beyond the Fireside Room near the Dance Room.

In October 2018, the town council had authorized the pursuit of Community Development Block Grant funds to complete ADA improvements by allocating \$24,000 in Capital Improvement Project funds.

In December, Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg was given authority by the town council to execute a CDBG

agreement with Contra Costa County that included \$47,000 in CDBG grant funds for the completion of the project.

During the town council's Jan. 22 meeting, the lowest bid in the amount of \$70,801 was awarded to Plazo along with the authorization for Battenberg to execute the construction contract for \$84,961, which includes a 20% contingency. The project's construction cost is included in the Fiscal Year 2019-20 Adopted Capital Improvement Program Budget which includes \$103,000 in total funding for the ADA Restroom Project.

Construction is scheduled to begin this spring. According to the contract, the work is expected to be completed within 45 working days.



Moraga Valley

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Camp Marlin summer camp available for kids ages 5-11 who participate in our swim or tennis programs.



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