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Moraga mayor discusses COVID-19 impact on the town

By Vera Kochan

Like most every city in the United States, Moraga's residents have been sheltering in place for over a month. However, what makes this town unique is its smaller population. That factor helps to reinforce the ideology of a close-knit community. With this in mind, Moraga Mayor Kymberleigh Korpus was asked to give her thoughts and observations on how the town is responding and handling the coronavirus shelter-in-place mandate.

Moraga's government has continued with business-as-usual, albeit remotely. "Thankfully, we live in a time and location where we have so many technological services available to us, that we have been able to switch over fairly seamlessly to using video conferencing technologies to attend and conduct meetings," observed Korpus. "From what I can tell, staff is continuing to be creative and productive in providing needed services to the community."

Korpus hasn't personally received any feedback from local businesses, "but I do know that many of our businesses are still open and working hard to continue being the positive, creative and productive contributors to our community that they are." Korpus stresses the importance of residents continuing to support the town's businesses during these times. She also wants everyone to be aware of the frequent business updates available through the Moraga Chamber of Commerce website: www.moragachamber.org. When asked what feedback she has received from residents, Korpus replied, "Generally speaking, like many other areas in the country, it's a mixed bag. Many residents are frightened by what they are hearing about the coronavirus, afraid to leave their homes, and grateful for any and all efforts to protect the most vulnerable members of our community from exposure."

"On the other hand," she added, "other residents are chaffing at the restrictions, because they believe that we are risking far more harm to residents through economic devastation than we are mitigating with the physical distancing guidelines." Korpus is pleased that residents, despite their opinions, continue to comply with the county and state health orders while continuing to support each other.

With Moraga having very recently begun to see brighter days to its economic outlook, it will once again have to concentrate on replacing revenue losses, from reductions in gas and sales tax, in the days ahead. "The first and most important thing that can be done to address our financial challenges, that will result from the shelter-in-place orders, is for our health and governmental representatives to figure out a way to get our businesses back open, and to get us all back to work," explained Korpus. She admits that until the shut-down has ended, any impact would be difficult to determine. The town's staff is in the process of analyzing the effects of COVID-19 on Moraga's 2020-21 budget and expects to discuss the findings at the May 13 town council meeting.

"I feel very fortunate to be sheltering-in-place here in the midst of my family and friends in such a beautiful and supportive community," said Korpus, "and I want to express my family's encouraging and healing thoughts for everyone affected, as well as our heartfelt condolences for all those lost in the fight."

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