



## MORAGA

See public meetings schedule on this pages and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

### Town of Moraga:

www.moraga.ca.us

Phone: (925) 888-7022

### Chamber of Commerce:

www.moragachamber.org

### Moraga Citizens' Network:

www.moragacitizensnetwork.org



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**Moraga Ridge**  
Detached single level view home  
3bd/2ba, 1,954 sq.ft.  
Offered at \$1,100,000

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**617 Augusta Drive**  
Moraga Country Club  
3bd/3.5ba, 2,206 sq.ft.  
Offered at \$1,079,000



**26 Merrill Circle South**  
Sanders Ranch, Moraga  
4bd/4ba, 3,710 sq.ft.  
Offered at \$1,525,000

COMPASS

# Moraga Chamber's Town Hall meeting addresses COVID-19 related concerns

By Vera Kochan

Coronavirus questions and concerns were addressed by a panel of town experts under one "virtual" roof June 8 as part of a Moraga Chamber of Commerce Zoom conference organized by Executive Director Kathe Nelson.

According to Contra Costa County Supervisor Candace Andersen, new county cases of COVID-19 have been on the rise since the beginning of June. "While we were seeing our positive rates hovered around 2 to 2-1/2 %, we are now closer to 4% positive cases," she said, noting that although restrictions have

been relaxed, everyone must continue to take the recommended precautions.

The county has begun hiring 75 trackers/tracers who will target the cities with the highest positive cases and begin to educate that sector of the population on the importance of COVID-19 safety precautions. The county does not want to reimpose shelter-in-place orders, but may have to slow down the easing of restrictions.

All town staff employees have returned to work in the Moraga town offices as of June 8, according to Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg. "Work spaces have been modified as needed to

insure the safety of our employees," Battenberg said. "We are following COVID-19 workplace protocols to ensure people don't come to work sick and that high-touch surfaces are cleaned regularly." While the front doors still remain closed to the public, staff is available by phone, email or appointment.

Moraga Mayor Kimberleigh Korpus is hopeful that the council meetings will soon open up to the public again. Currently the public comment portion of the town council's Zoom meetings are done by emailing the town clerk in advance, as apposed to being done in "real time," and the com-

ment is read out loud. This process will continue, Korpus said, "for a variety of security related issues, in addition to the fact that we currently have a process that's working."

Moraga Police Chief Jon King thanked the community for their support, noting that all Moraga police officers have remained on regular duty and are healthy. The MPD has only made educational contact with the public regarding COVID-19 referrals to the health department. No enforcement actions were necessary. Crime statistics have been much lower than last year due to SIP, however property crimes have begun to

rise again (auto burglaries and theft).

Parks and Recreation Director Breyana Brandt reported that her department suffered a huge impact from COVID-19 and the resulting cancellation of weddings, special celebrations and town events. "Over the past weeks that we have been SIP, it really showcased the importance of parks and open spaces as being so fundamental to our health and wellness," she stated. "Our parks and trails have seen unprecedented use during these times."

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# Moraga stares down pandemic, presents balanced 2021 operating budget

By Nick Marnell

Though the coronavirus pandemic has thrown many financial forecasts into disarray, the relative stability of Moraga's revenue sources allows the town to forecast a balanced operating budget for 2021. But the town cautions that providing the current level of government services to the community will be a challenge in the years ahead.

Moraga general fund revenue, including transfers from outside funds, comes in at \$9.83 million, only \$10,000 below the 2020 projection. The pandemic has

not caused the property value volatility Moraga experienced during the Great Recession, and so property taxes, the town's No. 1 source of revenue, are forecast to rise \$206,000, 4.7% ahead of last year.

More than \$1 million is forecast in sales tax revenue, a figure nearly equal to last year. Despite the pandemic having wreaked havoc on many public financial statements, the town can thank its lack of major retail for the tax revenue stability. "We don't have huge brick and mortar stores, therefore the impact on us is less," said Norm Veloso, director of adminis-

trative services.

Franchise fees – charges paid by utilities for their ability to provide services to town residents – are the town's third highest revenue source, providing \$800,000 in 2021. Those fees have remained stable over the past five years.

While revenue remains flat, costs continue to escalate, especially pension expense.

The town has presented an improved financial picture since the 2017 declaration of fiscal emergency, but Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg noted that Moraga does not generate enough annual revenue to make

necessary infrastructure improvements, and that its operating budget is strained by an unfunded pension liability and increased pension payments. Projected 2021 expenses of \$9.82 million include significant pension costs.

Moraga recognizes two bargaining units: the Moraga Employees Association and the Moraga Police Officers Association. The town has in place defined benefit retirement plans with the employees of each labor group, and according to the records of the California Public Employees' Retirement System, the town is on the hook for \$7.32 million in

unfunded pension liability.

The 2021 town contribution to reduce its CalPERS liability is forecast at \$461,000, and that figure is projected to rise to \$708,000 in five years.

Acknowledging the future pressure on town finances, Battenberg explained that it will be difficult for the town to provide services to the community at the current level. And while Moraga carries six months of operating expenditures – \$4.87 million – in its general fund reserve, Battenberg stated in her budget message that the town "could be one emergency away from another fiscal challenge."

# Canyon Road Bridge construction moves closer to completion

By Vera Kochan

Much has been accomplished regarding the first phase of construction for the new Canyon Road Bridge. The installation of "planks" spanning across the "dewatered" creek creates the false work used to build a new deck on top of it. The new roadway was moved eastward making the new bridge longer at 165 feet versus the original 100-foot long bridge.

A tall crane lifted large white sacks that created a diversion dam both up and

downstream of the construction site. This maneuver allowed for the installation of a large stormwater pipe between dams to continue the creek flow. Wooden forms were also erected to pour the bridge abutment walls.

Additional good news for commuters is that access through the bridge will now be open most days. According to Public Works Director Shawn Knapp, "There will be intermittent closures on an as-needed basis. Please go to the town's website (www.moraga.ca.us) or sign up on Notify Me to receive updates."



Construction of Stage 1 (the in-bound to Moraga from Canyon section)

Photo provided



### Town Council

Wednesday, June 10, 7 p.m.  
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

**Planning Commission:** Monday, June 15, 7 p.m.

Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

**Park and Recreation Commission:** Tuesday, June 16, 7 p.m.,  
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

### Moraga School District Board Meetings :

Special Board Meeting - Superintendent Evaluation  
Wednesday, June 10, 5 p.m., www.moraga.k12.ca.us.

See also AUHSD meeting page A2