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Moraga hires new senior civil engineer

By Vera Kochan



Moraga Senior Civil Engineer Bret Swain Photo provided

The town has hired Senior Civil Engineer Bret Swain to fill the position previously held by Public Works Director/Town Engineer Shawn Knapp.

Swain began his duties June 15 and has jumped right into Capital Improvement Program projects such as the Hacienda de las Flores ADA restroom and concrete pathways, and the Laguna Creek Restoration Project.

With 22 years of engineering and project management experience along with bachelor degrees in physical and soil science from Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo; a master's in civil engineering from Fresno State University; and an MBA in finance/management from UC Davis, Swain is also registered as a Professional Civil Engineer; a Land Surveyor in Training; and holds a variety of other certificates. "I feel that the better I know my trade, the better and more efficiently I can address the needs of the community I serve, and I strive to keep learning."

Most recently Swain held positions with the cities of Manteca and East Palo Alto. While the distance between those locations and Moraga are poles apart, locale played a big role in his decision to work for the town. "Moraga is much closer to my home in northwest Dublin," explained Swain. His wife was uncomfortable with his long commute times.

When asked what the similarities and differences are between Moraga and his previous work experiences, Swain replied, "While there are some scope and scale differences, there are substantial similarities in the type of work and the issues to be resolved that I did in East Palo Alto. While in Manteca, I worked mainly utilities, primarily for the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The experience garnered overseeing large programmatic master planning, design and construction activities provided some insights that can be applied across many engineering activities."

Some of Swain's prior work history will come in handy for Moraga's purposes. He has prepared CIP projects and budget reviews for stormwater programs; prepared and presented reports to city councils and commissions; managed large construction projects involving planning and financing through CEQA; sought funding for CIP projects; had public interaction regarding engineering projects; prepared construction contracts and managed bidding processes to name a few.

Swain is looking forward to meeting the town's needs and prioritizing them in order "to achieve the greatest 'bang for the buck' as it were." He gives kudos to the town staff and the local tri-city governments. "The Lamorinda teaming efforts really seem to have a very collaborative approach in the way they work together, which can promote greater productivity and efficiencies benefiting their communities." Swain added, "There are numerous opportunities for growth in Moraga. Moraga has some real opportunities to creatively resolve technical issues to the benefit of the community."

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