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Outgoing Moraga mayor gives 2020 Year in Review

By Vera Kochan

Outgoing Mayor Kimberleigh Korpus gave the town council's traditional Year-in-Review presentation during her last meeting Dec. 9. During a globally tumultuous 2020, Moraga managed to accomplish most of its goals set forth less than one year ago.

The driving theme for 2020 was "Building for the Future" with special attention focusing on public safety; strategic use of scarce funds; prioritizing for long-term financial stability and operational efficiency; and enhancing transparency, to name a few.

The need for maintaining and improving public safety was put to the test during COVID-19. The town never missed a beat when it came to its personnel remaining on the job, albeit remotely at first, noted Korpus. The recreation programs needed adjusting and childcare programs were made available to essential workers. CARES Act funding was put to good use while helping the town to realize a \$122,000 surplus at the end of Fiscal Year 2019-20, she said, while Moraga's police department conducted a full review of procedures, replaced body-worn cameras and updated the Emergency Evacuation Plan with the Moraga-Orinda

Fire District. MOFD in turn, mandated fire hazard inspections and new abatement requirements. Municipal Codes were changed or clarified regarding storm drain and landscaping maintenance, and short-term rentals.

In order to maintain and improve fiscal discipline, and noting that there is \$1 million in needs that go unfunded annually, Korpus said the town directed \$300,000 toward the enhanced Storm Drain Operations and Maintenance program and \$376,000 to the Capital Asset Replacement program while continuing to focus on operational efficiencies, and noted that Moraga has solved litigation disputes with positive outcomes and took proactive steps to better manage legal expenses.

The town has implemented a new website that offers technological improvements with user-friendly features for staff and residents, Korpus said, and Moraga continues to evaluate and implement viable strategies with its Climate Action Plan by installing Electric Vehicle charging stations, performing LED lighting upgrades on town owned fixtures, re-applying for Tree City USA status and joining the Sustainable Moraga Challenge.

Korpus mentioned how

the implementation and development of the Storm Drain O & M program and Street Repair programs revolves around preventative and proactive maintenance with the understanding that these measures are effectively cost-cutting in the long run.

The Hacienda de las Flores has experienced much needed upgrades with the renovation of the Casita, ADA restroom, and the replacement of a 1973 breaker panel, boiler, flat roof and sewer system, she said, and the Laguna Creek Restoration project is underway with completion expected in 2022.

Moraga Commons Park will experience a group picnic area redesign, having already seen the bandshell roof replaced and new safety signage installed at the Skate Park, Korpus said, and the library has benefited from a new paint job.

Phase 1 of the new Canyon Road Bridge has recently been completed, with Phase 2 expected to begin April 2021. Thanks to the town staff's diligent pursuit of federal funding Moraga's share of the costs will eventually amount to only \$622,000 of the \$5.77 million project.

Without a doubt, the town's behemoth project of 2020 was to draft and adopt the Moraga Center Specific

Plan zoning codes and design guidelines, said Korpus. The MCSP Implementation Plan involved a 35 member Citizens Advisory Committee, Planning Commission recommendations, public comments during various meetings, a dedicated town staff, not to mention those citizens initially involved in its conception 10 years ago, before the MCSP finally appeared before the town council.

Korpus concluded her presentation by acknowledging, by name, all of the town's staff and adding, "I want to give many, many thanks. We have a lot of people that partner with us as a council to help things be the way they are and

to make this town work and operate. In addition, I really want to express my thanks to the town committee members and commissioners for all their excellent contributions to everything that's happened this year, as well as Moraga residents and all of our community volunteers and partners that help make Moraga be the wonderful place that it is."

While much of the world has walked on eggshells for nearly a year due to COVID-19 mandates and fallouts, Korpus noted how Moraga has stayed the course toward fulfilling its 2020 goals and forged ahead while "Building for the Future."



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