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New council member, Sona Makker, ready to serve the town

By Vera Kochan



New Moraga town council member, Sona Makker
Photo provided

After waiting through three separate town council sessions, Sona Makker was unanimously appointed a member and will assume office on the Moraga Town Council Nov. 10.

Understanding that the small field of contenders was narrowed down to two within minutes, Makker submitted a letter to the council members after the second meeting, reiterating her interest in the position and informing them that she continued to educate herself on the workings of Moraga. "My intent with the letter was to demonstrate that I was listening, and will continue to listen." Waiting for the final decision was stressful, but motivating, she said.

Makker has an easy way for people to remember how to pronounce her name, "it rhymes with slacker." It was part of her tagline when she ran for student office, "Vote for Makker, she's not a slacker."

Born in Tracy, Calif., to immigrant parents, she watched them volunteer in schools and neighborhood groups all while holding down jobs and raising four kids. "I always knew I wanted to do the same and feel so honored to be able to step into local government and represent communities and demographics that have not historically been represented on the council."

Newly married to her husband Matt, the isolation of the pandemic helped them to realize the importance of living in a "close-knit community that would allow our family to flourish and find a peaceful place to call home," stated Makker. Taking regular walks in the Commons and noticing chalk-written messages along the trails about inclusivity made them optimistic. "We feel very lucky to have found that here in Moraga."

A technology policy attorney with a BA in sociology from UC Berkeley and a Juris Doctorate from Santa Clara University School of Law, Makker was heavily involved with the Parks and Rec Department in Tracy. During her tenure, she realized that something as apparently inconsequential as what type of snacks to provide for the kids in their after-school program became an important decision, considering that some students might not be able to afford a healthy choice.

Her experience in Tracy prompted Makker to consider a position on Moraga's Parks and Rec Commission, but her heart was set on becoming a council member. "When I was made aware of the open vacancy in the council I was immediately interested and began investing time and efforts to putting my best foot forward in the application and interview."

During the town council appointment interview process, Makker was often referred as "too new to the town" to be considered for the position, having lived here for only two years. To allay any fears as to her commitment to the job she poured over town agendas, documents and staff reports in addition to taking meetings with towns-people. "There's a learning curve, as with any new position, but I feel confident that I will be able to get up to speed quickly. I am leaning into being new, offering to bring a fresh perspective and coming into discussions with curiosity and inquisitiveness." She appreciates the current council's "objective advice and recommendations."

Planning on having an open-door policy (or "open email inbox"), Makker hopes to engage with other young, working professionals to encourage involvement in local government.

When asked whether Makker is giving any thought to running for election in November 2022, she replied, "Right now I am focused on the work of getting integrated and ramping up to make effective policy decisions as a council member. That's my number one priority. It's a bit early to make a commitment, but I am certainly evaluating what's coming next to continue to be involved in the long-term."

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