

Public Announcement from Town of Moraga

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Sat. Nov. 13, 10 a.m. Community Workshop

Wed. Nov. 17, 6:00 p.m. Town Council Meeting



Concert Pianist Bobby Mitchell to perform at Santa Maria Church Orinda

December 4th Saturday, 7 pm

Bobby Mitchell, Prize Winning International Concert Pianist, returns to the Bay Area Free Concert. Saturday, December 4th 7 pm, Santa Maria Church, Orinda. Recognized and performing on nearly all continents, he is an American pianist, living in Germany, whose interests dazzled audiences in 2019 with his music in the here and now as well as the more standard classical repertory. Sponsored by Vicki Nakamura JHRussell Real Estate Group DRE #00685265. Donations can be sent to: <https://fundraising.fracturedatlas.org/bobby-mitchell-pianist>. Call 925-254-5287 *925-708-1915 for information



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

Town council finally agrees on a new member appointment

By Vera Kochan

After the failure at two town council meetings and several attempts to appoint a replacement to fill former council member David Stromberg's resigned seat, white smoke could figuratively be seen rising from the town offices on Oct. 27.

With a Nov. 8 deadline looming to avoid a costly special election, the four seated council members once again tackled the issue of whether to appoint Sona Makker or Kerry Hillis to its fold.

To start things off, Mayor Mike McCluer offered an "alternative to the gridlock." He began by, once again, stating his feelings on the pros and cons of both candidates. While the pros were extremely flattering to either, the cons were a repetition of Makker's newness to Moraga and her lack of government

experience within the town. With regards to Hillis, McCluer was worried about his flexibility and listening skills on issues.

McCluer offered up an alternative in the form of a direct appointment by suggesting Fred Weil for the open position. Lauding his many accomplishments, McCluer noted Weil's eight-year membership on the Moraga Elementary School Board; 13 years on the Moraga-Orinda Fire District's governing board; 13 years on the Acalanes Unified School District Board; the founding director of the Moraga Educational Foundation; an attorney with land use experience who supports open space; and 2019 Moraga Citizen of the Year. McCluer added, "He's been described as fair-minded; a good listener; ethical; and seeks group decisions."

Council Member Renata

Sos brought up the fact that the town council had received an "avalanche" of comments from the community in support of making an appointment of either Makker or Hillis during the evening's Oct. 27 session. She felt that "the community has spoken loud and clear." Sos also referred to Council Member Steve Woehleke's comments from a prior meeting regarding the importance of the council working together, and in doing so, which of the two applicants would make a better fit with the current council. "We need to make a decision based on the cards that were dealt to us," Sos stated, while agreeing that if there were not two viable candidates to choose from, putting Weil into the mix would be a possibility.

Council Member Teresa Onoda was in agreement with Sos and added that "the people have spoken."

McCluer made a motion to schedule a special meeting for the following week to interview Weil as a potential direct appointment.

Woehleke agreed to second it on the basis of a significant effort to set the wheels in motion, "although, I know where it's going" as far as the final vote stands.

A split second before the vote, Sos made a substitute motion to appoint Makker to the town council with Onoda seconding.

McCluer asked that the Weil motion be voted on "out of respect" and requested Sos to withdraw her motion in order to get a vote on it.

Sos responded, "Respectfully decline."

With the motion on the table to appoint Makker as the new Moraga Town Council member until the November 2022 election, the vote was unanimously in favor.

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

By Vera Kochan

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



Photo provided

New Moraga town council member, Sona Makker

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 to as "too new to the town" to be considered for the position, having lived here for only two years.

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Town Council
 Wednesday, Nov. 10, 7 p.m.
 Wednesday, Nov. 24, 7 p.m.

Planning Commission:
 Tuesday, Nov. 16, 7 p.m.,
Park and Recreation Commission:
 Monday, Nov. 15, 7 p.m.,
Moraga School District Board Meetings:
 Board Meeting
 Tuesday, Dec. 14, 6 p.m.
www.moraga.k12.ca.us