

Published April 12th, 2023

Interim Town Manager's temporary gig was an eventful one

By Vera Kochan



Moraga's Interim Town Manager Brian Dolan
Photo Vera Kochan

It was trial by fire, or in this case rain, for Interim Town Manager Brian Dolan when he began his first day on the job, Jan. 3. Even before he became a town employee, Dolan knew what he was about to face when a massive storm struck the Bay Area and unleashed its fury on Moraga during New Year's Eve. Flooding, landslides, downed trees and power outages wreaked enough havoc for Dolan to proclaim a local emergency his second day on the job.

Coming out of an eight-month retirement after working over 35 years for local government as a public employee and consultant, Dolan's most recent position as assistant city manager of Pleasanton saw its share of weather-related issues. "We've had some significant weather events in Pleasanton such as downed trees and flooding. It wasn't that different," he said. "Moraga was challenging, because it happened so soon after I started. The town staff was amazing. Kyle's crew [Public Works/Parks Maintenance Manager Kyle Salvin], with so

few people, worked long hours and came in when they weren't even scheduled."

As far as tackling any of the town's issues of the day, Dolan appreciated how the department heads got him up to speed. Having participated in Housing Elements with other municipalities he wasn't involved with the brunt of Moraga's by the time he started. "I was here for the adoption - the formality. Most of the major decisions had already been made."

Dolan said he really does mean to retire once he's done serving as interim town manager (April 6). "I have no plans to go back to work." His first day will be spent going to a San Francisco Giants baseball game against the Kansas City Royals. Other plans are to visit his daughter who's working in Mexico; and attend a family reunion in Minnesota. "My wife is still working so we can't go too crazy.

"It sounds like a cliché, but I've enjoyed working with the staff and the town council," Dolan said. "I've enjoyed Renata [Sos] as mayor. It's been fun for me to really get to know the people in the community that are most active in Moraga, as well as the full breadth of the issues that the town faces."

Dolan's last town council meeting was March 22, and the three council members in attendance that evening acknowledged his short but memorable contribution to the town. "We were lucky to have Brian, a Moraga resident and an expert in city government, who is calm and even-tempered, take the helm," stated Vice Mayor and recently discovered to be Dolan's second cousin, Teresa Onoda. "Nature has thrown landslides, Comcast failures, street flooding, staff changes, the Housing Element - and that's just the obvious. Brian is treasured by the staff and council. He has been a champion that Moraga needed."

"What impresses me is that stepping into the seat of the town manager for a short period of time," Council Member Steve Woehleke said to Dolan, "the position of town manager is really broad, and it's deep, and you inherit a lot of these challenges, and it's amazing how calm and deliberate you are in addressing and running the town."

Mayor Renata Sos added, "Brian, you were just the right guy for the moment. You brought a calm and steady hand to a period of transition and uncertainty. You are a terrific collaborator. What I most appreciate is that you had retired for a whole five minutes before you took this job, and you did it out of love for this community, and you served this community extremely well."

Reach the reporter at: vera@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA