



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:
Wednesday, April 12, 6:30 p.m.
Planning Commission:
Tuesday, April 18, 6:30 p.m.
Park and Recreation Commission:
Monday, April 24, 7:00 p.m.,
Moraga School District Board Meetings:
Tuesday, April 18, 6 p.m.
www.moraga.k12.ca.us.

Interim Town Manager's temporary gig was an eventful one

By Vera Kochan



Photo Vera Kochan

Moraga's Interim Town Manager Brian Dolan

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."

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Town Council establishes Design Standards for Rheem Park Area



Aerial view of Rheem Valley Shopping Center

Photo provided

By Vera Kochan

Moraga is inching forward toward the development of the Rheem Park Area with regards to reinvigorating the appearance of an outdated shopping center, and its immediate surroundings, that was first built in 1955.

With substantial input from prior meetings of both the Planning Commission and the Town Council, staff was able to incorporate the suggestions into a presentation given to council members during the March 22 meeting, at which time the council voted 3-0 (Council Members Kerry Hillis and David Shapiro were out of the country) to waive the first reading of the Rheem Park Objective Design Standards Ordinance.

The March 22 staff report was compiled by Moraga Planning Director Afshan Hamid, Senior Planner Brian Horn, Planning Consultant Aaron Welch, and Planning Consultant Barry Miller. Their presentation noted the Town Council's feedback from its Feb. 15 meeting with items such as: the need for a cohesive and integrated design; ad-

ressing of any noise issues; why the ordinance doesn't require public space; water-efficient landscaping requirements; long-term bike parking requirements; bicycle storage requirements; residential amenities as opposed to community benefits; pedestrian safety; and architectural style.

Also discussed was a summary of revisions from the Feb. 23 Planning Commission meeting which clarified that Center Street alignment is flexible; reduced the number of required residential amenities from 4 to 3, with added flexibility for types of amenities that could be provided; clarified that multiple types of glass can be used but will not be counted towards one of the three required exterior materials; limited bright/vibrant color schemes to trim and accent elements; added language that major changes shall utilize a vernacular design and complementary architecture; reduced required long-term bicycle parking from 1 to 0.5 spaces per unit, and clarified that private garage storage qualifies as long-term storage; added requirements for accessible public space for major projects on Park Street or Center Street, or projects with at least 50 units or 50,000 sq. ft.; clarified that landscaping must be water-efficient and fire resistant; and referenced parklets to encourage outdoor dining.

Property owners and developers also had the opportunity to weigh in with regards to any requested revisions which included revising standards for grocery, pharmacy

and retail uses exceeding 30,000 sq. ft. in size or larger, and allow for more flexibility in window glazing; reducing the required depth of ground floor nonresidential tenant spaces from 60 feet to 45 feet and the minimum width of this space from half to 20 feet in width or 35% of the width of the tenant space (whichever is greater); allowing more flexibility for the location of surface and ground floor parking adding additional location and screening options; and allowing more flexibility consistent with current truck loading operations within the Rheem Valley Shopping Center.

Some additional revisions that the Planning Commission requested for the Town Council to consider during its March 22 meeting concerned applicability; site circulation and access; building orientation; massing and articulation; building facades; building space requirements; materials and colors; and public space.

With regards to the architectural style, while Spanish Colonial was discussed as a possibility during several meetings, it was not pinpointed as a required style of design.

Staff recommended that noise be addressed through several means, such as, a City-wide Noise Ordinance update (which is a 2023 Town Council Goal); project-level noise impacts addressed through required CEQA review; and Title 24 of the California Building Code which already requires design for interior space not to exceed 45 decibels.

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