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Town authorizes Safe Streets for All funding agreement

By Vera Kochan

The portion of Moraga Road and Canyon Road between St. Mary's Road and Sanders Drive has been identified as having safety issues noted in the 2016 Moraga Walk and Bike Plan, the 2022 Moraga Local Roadway Safety Plan, and draft 2023 Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) Lamorinda Action Plan.

"In the summer of 2022, CCTA prepared an application in response to the US Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Discretionary Grant Program," stated Public Works Director/Town Engineer Shawn Knapp in his Sept. 13 staff report. "CCTA selected five safety improvement projects distributed throughout the county to be included in the SS4A Grant Application. The five safety improvement projects were identified through CCTA's comprehensive safety planning efforts based on their anticipated impacts on: 1) safety; 2) equity engagement and collaboration; 3) effective practice and technology; and 4) climate change adaptation and sustainability with emphasis on areas with a high rate of crashes and located within Equity Priority Community; historically disadvantaged communities; and Priority Development Areas." In addition to Moraga, the grant applica-

tion included East Bay Regional Park District, and the cities of El Cerrito and Antioch.

In February 2023, USDOT awarded \$28.9 million to CCTA for distribution towards the various municipalities' proposed projects. Of that amount, Moraga's grants will come to approximately \$3 million and will fund the Smart Signals projects for upgraded traffic signals, CCTV cameras, video detection, battery backup systems and more.

In June, a \$3.975 million CIP project budget was approved by the town council. This comprised \$2.984 million in SS4A and a matching of funds from Moraga for \$991,000.

Originally, the SS4A grant application cost estimate was based on the town staff's managing of the project as non-reimbursable, but USDOT requires that CCTA act as the lead sponsoring agency for such projects with Caltrans providing regulatory reviews. As such, the town council approved the execution of a Project Cooperative Agreement and an increase of \$62,000 for the Moraga Road and Canyon Road Complete Streets Project (CIP No. 23-411) during its Sept. 13 meeting, to cover the administrative costs of the additional participation of the two agencies.

Rancho Laguna Park to receive fitness equipment donation

By Vera Kochan



Photo provided

Bobbie Preston (second from right) and friends enjoy fitness equipment.

Best known as a dog park that happens to also have a children's playground and a monarch butterfly habitat/garden, Rancho Laguna Park will soon add another feature to its premises. In memory of her husband Tom, who recently passed away, Moraga resident Bobbie Preston is working on raising funds to donate fitness equipment to the park.

Parks and Recreation Director Mackenzie Brady's Sept. 13 staff report stated, "Bobbie reached out to staff in July inquiring to the possibility of donating fitness equipment to Rancho Laguna Park in Tom's name. Staff worked with Bobbie on an appropriate location that would allow the monarch butterflies to retain their quiet, allow dogs to not have access, allow parents to use the equipment while children may be playing, provide shade, and add value to currently unused space."

Tom Preston was a resident that kept himself involved in the community with projects such as Cycle Recycle, the Pear Festival, the Rancho Laguna Monarch Butterfly Garden, Moraga Community Fair, and pruning the pear trees on the Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School property. He was a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) provider, and more.

According to Preston, her husband was a "lifelong exer-

cise fanatic and worked out every morning and walked at Rancho Laguna Park almost every day. He was attending a three-week fitness camp in Utah when he passed away at 80 in May."

Greenfields Outdoor Fitness will install eight of their state-of-the-art machines, two of which are ADA-compliant and can all-together accommodate 22 people at the same time. The equipment is designed for use by ages 14 and older and will be enclosed by a fence to keep dogs from entering the area. Also included on the premises will be an automated external defibrillator (AED) device, a bench and possibly a water fountain. The project is expected to cost approximately \$99,000 with funding through private donations. The only cost to the town will be staff's installation of the equipment. Bobbie Preston is hoping that the "Fitness Zone" will be ready for use by the end of October.

One of her husband's favorite mantras was "Motion is the lotion," said Preston. "Exercising was a way of life for Tom and very important to him."

Anyone wishing to participate in the tribute and gift to the town of Moraga can send a tax-deductible check (annotated: "Preston Memorial") to: Lamorinda Lions, 17 El Camino Flores, Moraga, CA 94556.

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