



Moraga

Public Meetings

City Council

Wednesday, April 26, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Planning Commission

Joint meeting with DRB:
Monday, April 24, 6 p.m.
Monday, May 1, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, April 24, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Moraga School District
Thursday, May 9, 7 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Library
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga
www.moraga.k12.ca.us
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

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

Moraga Police Report



March 22 to April 11

Alarms
March 23 location n/a
March 24 100 block Shuey Dr.
March 24 100 block Walford Dr
March 25 location n/a
March 27 300 block Birchwood Dr.
April 4 10s block Laird Dr.
April 6 location n/a
April 7 200 block Scofield Dr.
April 10 1900 block Ascot Dr.
April 10 400 block Woodminster Dr.
April 11 400 block Fernwood Dr.
April 11 400 block
Calle La Montana

March 23 Miscellaneous

A jarring discovery: the contents of which appeared to be prescription medication was discovered outside the police department. Police took control of the item until it could be properly disposed of.

March 24 Miscellaneous

Forty subjects doth a party make on Miramonte Drive. The resident was found in violation; subjects were instructed to party less heartily.

March 25 Simple assault

A party went from bad to worse when officers responded to reports of unwanted guests at a residence. Revelers asked to leave turned violent, lobbing bottles and attacking party-goers. They fled but were identified and detained by a neighboring police force. The Fight Club mentality persisted though, as another fight broke out. No one was seriously injured, all declined medical assistance and strangely, no one wanted to be prosecuted for battery or vandalism.

March 25 Lost property

A Dollar Tree trip cost one resident a lost wallet containing Saint Mary's College ID card, bank card and petty cash.

March 27 Suspicious Circumstances

Someone who accessed a man's email address list sent unwanted emails to family.

March 28 Threats

Anonymous internet threats were reported to police.

March 28 Auto collision

When an on-duty emergency vehicle collides with another vehicle does a second emergency vehicle respond? Probably not, if the damage was minor and both involved vehicles were driveable.

April 4 Vehicular Vandalism/Larceny

- A Beemer owner's black car extensively vandalized parked curbside on Tharp Drive.
- A black Mercedes Benz had tires slashed and door and bumper scratched.

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Town of Moraga mulls tax for storm drain repair

By Sophie Braccini

Moraga has started preliminary work to propose a new tax of some form to fund its storm drain network repair and maintenance.

The gaping hole in the middle of town is the perfect catalyst for staff and council to garner sufficient public support. One set of figures says it all according to Public Works Director Edric Kwan: Fixing the sinkhole before it failed would have cost \$1.7 million to the town, repairing it will total \$3.4 million. This time federal money will bail Moraga out of the hole, but the funding was first denied in the face of the town's lack of maintenance, and would not probably be extended again if the town does not take the bull by the horns and fix its drains.

Storm drains have been extensively studied by the public works department and in the report that was presented in 2015. The total

cost for repairing the high priority spots totals over \$9 million; the medium priority is \$11 million, and the low priority is over \$6 million for a total close to \$27 million to fully fix storm drains.

To these infrastructure expenditures Moraga needs to add a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit to control the water quality that will ultimately be discharged in its water drinking system. Staff estimates that another \$155,000 per year is required to be compliant with its NPDES permit.

Addressing the audit and finance committee on April 10, Kwan explained that there would be different options to ask residents to fund part or all of the needed work.

Proposition 218, The Right to Vote on Taxes Act, allows cities to charge property owners a fee to finance property-related services, such as storm drains, subject to voter approval. The fee isn't the

same for each property. For example a small lot with few nonpermeable surfaces would be charged less than a large property with a lot of concrete, because it would impact the storm drain system differently. Very large owners such as the school district would have more than one vote on the tax, while renters do not vote. This process requires a 50 percent majority to be approved.

Other options, including a special tax and a general obligation bond, require a two-thirds majority of voters for approval. In Moraga where the percentage of homeowner occupied houses is over 80 percent, the two groups voting on the tax, residents and homeowners, are not very different.

Staff, commissions and committees have a long road in front of them, probably a year or more of study and public outreach to inform and convince the residents that this new tax is a necessity. The town

will also have to gauge public support and decide the level of taxing that will be asked.

Funding all the needs would require an annual fee of about \$312 per parcel. SCI Consulting Group that is consulting with Moraga on this topic warns that a \$312 levy would be high. Vice mayor Roger Wykle, who sits on the audit and finance committee, said that if \$312 was what is needed to do things right, then it should be the amount asked to property owners.

SCI ultimately weighed in favor of the vice mayor adding, that recent trends show that when residents are presented with real facts and precise action plans, rather than vague marketing phrases, they respond positively to taxing.

The town council will discuss this topic shortly and an information campaign will start in the wake of the council's approval of the process. A measure is envisioned to be on the ballot in mid-2018.

Full-day kindergarten to start in Moraga

By Sophie Braccini

Beginning next fall, Moraga School District will implement a full-day kindergarten, probably with the present first-grade schedule.

Carolyn Parker, MSD's director of curriculum and instruction, stressed that the additional minutes will allow for a more balanced day, with more instructional time, but also more social and emotional time.

"It's about creating the best teaching environment for the students," said kindergarten teacher Amanda Lorie.

Parker presented to the MSD board on April 13 the results of months of studies, other districts visits, parents' surveys and teachers' discussions. She said that so many reports, including large-scale national ones, say longer kindergarten days have shown gains in math and literacy, as well as better first-grade readiness and less need for intervention, which she equated to a cost savings for the district in the long run.

The director added that studies and visits made to the Palo Alto School District, which implement-

ed the full-day kindergarten last year, showed that students adjust well to the full-day program, and often flourish academically as well as emotionally and socially.

Lorie said that this was exactly the benefits teachers were looking for when they asked the MSD to look into the longer day. She said that she and her colleagues were looking for the best learning environment for their classrooms, where conversation and engagement can take place, where students are able to let down their guard and take risks. She said that the extended day was a gift of time.

"We are working so hard to create this optimal environment, and for doing so we have to cut things, cut lessons or strategy short, so we can go through the whole curriculum, and we also have to cut on their playtime and socialization time," she said.

The teacher stressed that the purpose was not to teach more but to give time for students to try new skill sets, and still have time to be five-or six-year-olds.

The program is not that avant-garde; in 2012 76 percent of kin-

dergartens in the U.S. were full-day programs, 46 percent in California. In the neighboring districts of Orinda and Lafayette, the students can stay for lunch, but no additional instructional time is provided.

Parker said she looked at studies about possible downsides. One argument that came out through the parents' survey that was done prior to the decision was fatigue, that the day would be too long for the children. The director explained that according to her research, as long as the day is balanced and includes enough playtime that would not be the case.

The increased day will add 55 of instructional minutes and 40 minutes for lunch and recess.

The transitional kindergarten program is not included in the extended day and will remain morning only. The new kindergarten day will start next fall at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year. The next steps this year will be giving time to kindergarten teachers for collaboration and discussion of best practices, finalizing the new schedule and communicating with parents.

Group holds anti-war protest at Moraga Commons



Members of Indivisible Moraga braved a chilly north wind at the Moraga Commons April 13 and held a protest in tandem with nationwide vigils called by the organizers of the Women's March for the people of Syria. "We stand with their suffering," said protester Dolores Stratford.

President Donald Trump announced April 6 a cruise missile strike against a Syrian air base in retaliation for the regime's alleged use of chemical weapons against its people. "We are vehemently anti-war," said Megan Kinney, founder of Indivisible Moraga. "Doing nothing was being complicit with the Trump administration." Kinney's group favors diplomacy and the use of international criminal courts over military force.

Indivisible Moraga is part of the larger Indivisible movement, of which there are more than 6,000 groups fighting the Trump agenda. — Nick Marnell