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## Cynthia Battenberg is ready to take on Moraga

By *Sophie Braccini*

She may be small in stature, but new Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg is tough and she comes to her position with determination and a large ambition. She will meet residents, like the folks of Viva Moraga, who want increased economic vitality and plans to confront the roadblocks her predecessors faced: a limited budget, unyielding groups for and against development, historical complex processes, and residents that seem to relish a good controversy now and then.

Battenberg worked for the city of San Leandro where she progressed up the ladder over the last 16 years. A large part of her experience, including her latest responsibility as Community Development Director, pertained to economic development and planning.

As the development director, Battenberg worked on very large and significant projects for the city, such as the Shoreline development: 75 acres being developed with private partnerships to build a 220-room hotel and restaurants, apartments, single family homes and condominiums, a golf course, a boat-launch, plazas and pedestrian and bike paths, and 15 acres of park land. She explains that the process took years of collaboration with multiple stakeholders. She also worked with industrial operators such as Torani, the syrup company that is transforming a part of the industrial community and creating jobs.

Battenberg has also worked on city finances, including revenue measures passed in San Leandro. She worked to set up assessment districts. Prior to her career in San Leandro she was an avid environmentalist. She started solid waste diversion programs, including one with the city of Beverly Hills. She considers herself a businessperson, something she discovered when she was working on her bachelor's degree at UC Berkeley and decided to continue with an MBA at UCLA focusing on finance.

An energetic and optimistic woman, Battenberg believes that even if the situation has been somewhat stale in Moraga, previous efforts have set the stage for change and that new blood and new energy can be the catalysts for transformation. She believes that the town's job is to establish a vision for what the community wants and get buy-in. She believes that the Moraga Center Specific Plan is a fantastic opportunity to generate excitement, and she believes that people want a more vibrant retail scene, some choices for restaurants and more places to hang out.

Battenberg says that Moraga has been on her radar for some time for her professional progression. The town has what she wants: a smaller size where she could get to know most people and become a part of it all, close to home in Oakland's Crocker Highlands with her two teenage children, and a town full of charm and potential. Battenberg does not think that she will get bored in Moraga. The new town manager spends some of her high energy on hikes, on her bike or doing yoga.

Battenberg starts officially in Moraga on March 12, but has started to participate in the recruitment of new department directors for the vacant positions: planning, administrative services and parks and recreation. Her priority when she puts her bags down at 329 Rheem will be to work on the passage of the storm drain fee.

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