LAMORINDA WEEKLY

925-377-0977



Moraga **Public Meetings**

City Council

Wednesday, June 27, 7 p.m. Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, June 18, 7 p.m. Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

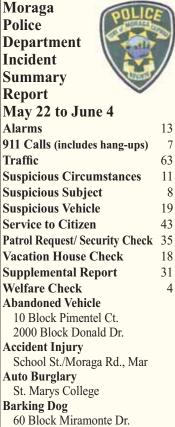
Design Review

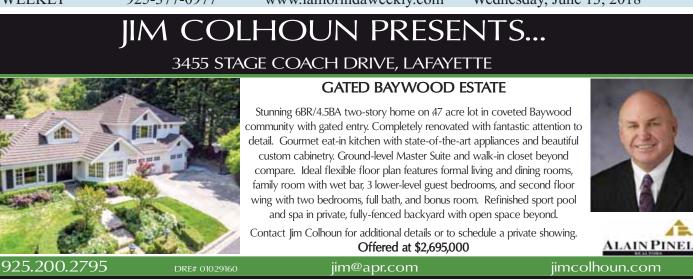
Monday, June 25, 7 p.m. Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

School Board Meetings Moraga School District TBA

Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Auditorium 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





EXPERT KNOWLEDGE ... EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE ... JIM COLHOUN

Budget provisions for 2018-19 forecast replenishment of the town's reserve

By Sophie Braccini

Joe Tanner expects that by June 2019 the town will have restored close to a 50 percent reserve, thanks to an increase in property tax revenue and federal reimbursement. Meanwhile the town continues to suffer from a lack of asset replacement and capital improvement funds.

Tanner presented a draft balanced 2018-19 budget to the town's audit and finance committee on May 30. He forecasted that the town would get most of the reimbursement for the sinkhole expense before the end of the fiscal year, and in parallel the director said that the town is holding the line on department expenses, curtailing anything that is not an investment in terms of staff efficiency tools.

The healthy budget projection anticipates a continued growth of the housing market, yielding a 10 percent increase in property tax revenue, the biggest source of in-

Tew administrative director come for the town of Moraga. The the public works department had sits on the committee, indicated director did not anticipate any increase in the sales tax revenue for his projection, and he included a continuous increase in the healthcare and pension costs for the town, although an incremental CalPers employee contribution was negotiated last year.

A portion of the projected growth in property tax revenue will be allocated to the storm drain program (see article "Kwan gets first stab at new storm drain master plan" on page A5).

Public Works Director Edric Kwan presented other proposed capital investment for the coming budget. Aside from the storm drain plan, the first is the replacement of the temporary Canyon Bridge with a permanent two-lane bridge. Prior to the incident that rendered the bridge unusable, the town had secured funding for a new bridge. The collapse of the hill has rendered the initial approved plans obsolete and

to devise a new alternative shifted slightly downstream.

Kwan explained that his department received approval of \$6.3 million for the construction of the modified bridge, but that there are financial risks associated with likely delays in the reimbursement of that money: The town may have to wait years to see the money returned. Kwan's plan is to spread the expense over two construction seasons, the first starting in April of 2019, which would see the building of one lane while the temporary bridge is still in place, and during the second season in 2020 when the temporary bridge would be removed while the second lane of the new bridge is built.

The members of the committee asked Kwan if he expected some reimbursement money from the 2017 bridge incident to become available in time to start funding the new bridge. Mayor Dave Trotter, who

that the town is working with U.S. Rep. Mark DeSaulnier to make sure that Moraga receives money when Congress appropriates funds for 2017 California emergencies.

Other CIP projects for the coming budget year include the zoning completion of the Moraga Center Specific Plan; Canyon and Camino Pablo crossing improvement with resurfacing and upgrading of bicycle and pedestrian safety with the construction of a mid-section refuge and flashing beacons; and improvement of the sidewalk on Moraga Way to link to what Orinda provides.

Kwan noted that some maintenance and asset replacement continue to be delayed such as IT equipment or maintenance and police vehicle replacements.

The town council will review and approve the budget in June.

Proposed conversion of an office building into condominiums on School Street

By Sophie Braccini



ing the lack of storage space in the units and the parking in the form of carports that for him would call for an apartment rental-style housing rather than owner occupied condominiums. He asked that the architect look at ways to add storage in the back of the carports.

One question that needs to be answered with this application is the zoning. The project is part of

Civil

600 Block Moraga Rd. 1400 Block Camino Pablo **Disturbance Domestic** 60 Block Miramonte Dr. **Disturbing the Peace** 2000 Block Ascot Dr. **Drunk in Public** 2000 Block Donald Dr. 2000 Block Ascot Dr. **DUI Misd** 1500 Block Moraga Way St. Marys Library

Excessive Speed St. Andrews Dr./Country Club St. Marys/Fernwood Moraga Rd./Cortez Ascot Dr./Moraga Rd. Lendell Moraga Rd./Alta Mesa Dr. Fire/EMS Response Info 100 Block Calle La Mesa 900 Block Country Club Dr. Forgery Wells Fargo Found Property 10 Block Duarte Ct. Fraud Credit Card 900 Block Country Club Dr. **Grand Theft** 400 Block Center St. Rheem Theatre 1500 Block Canyon Rd. H&S Violation 4000 Block Paseo Grande Loud Music 200 Block Paseo Bernal 2100 Block Ascot Dr. Ascot Dr./Ascot Ct. Loud Party 1000 Block Larch Ave. 4000 Block Paseo Grande 10 Block Miramonte Dr. Medical Hospital 700 Block Augusta Dr. Medical Police Needed 300 Block Rheem Blvd.

20 Block Broadmoor Missing Adult 300 Block Rheem Blvd. Neighbor Dispute Police Department

Simulation of the transformation from office building to condominiums.

Other Non Criminal 800 Block Camino Ricardo

Petty Theft Campolindo High School Joaquin Moraga Int School **Prom Shoot**

Joaquin Moraga Int School 2000 Block Donald Dr.

Public Assembly Check Rheem Valley Shopping Center (3) CVS (2) Safeway **Reckless Driving** Canyon Rd./Moraga Rd. Moraga Rd./Rheem Blvd. (2) Police Department Moraga Rd./Campolindo Dr. Cypress/St. Andrews Moraga Way/Moraga Rd. 4000 Block Paseo Grande Moraga Way/St Andrews Dr. **Revocation of Probation** Starbucks Shoplift Safeway **Terrorist Threats** 30 Block Juniper Way

Trespass Campolindo High School Moraga Commons Park Via Joaquin/Alta Mesa Dr. **Unwanted Guest** Safeway 1600 Block Camino Pablo Vandalism Canyon Bridge Vehicle Theft 10 Block Madsen Ct. Verbal Dispute Homegoods **Violation Restraining Order** Police Department Walk Through TJ Maxx

he planning commission recently looked at a unique concept for Moraga: transforming an existing stand-alone office building into an eight-unit residential condominium. The construction of the units located at the western corner of School Street and Country Club Drive would not require a modification of the current building footprint.

The May 21 discussion was a study session led by the planning commission, a way for the project applicant to get a feel about the advisory body's reaction to the project as well as public input. The initial response of the planning commissioners was unanimously positive; they liked the idea of transforming an office building that is not fully occupied with compact housing located close to shops, without changing the footprint of the building or elevating its height.

Many questions remain to be answered before the project materializes, including the number and type of parking spaces and where to locate the recycling bins. And since the building is located in a development that comprises three additional similar office buildings, the new owner will need to get approval from a majority of the other owners in order to proceed.

The building, located at 1600 School Street, according to applicant Nikhil Gera, has a 70 percent occupation rate at this time, with most of the space used by the perImages provided

son who is selling him the building. The project would create an 8-unit residential condominium development with units ranging in size from 1,099 square feet to 1,147 square feet. Dan Hale, the architect for the project, proposes creating a second story by adding articulations through the roof. He says that the project would respect what is there, including the healthy mature trees, and would provide smaller housing units with small gardens that do not exist in Moraga at this time but could be ideal for some part of the population.

Planning commission chair Suzanne D'Arcy agreed that these types of units would be great for downsizing seniors. Commissioner Mike McCluer noted that he had been hesitant about the mixed-use aspect of the project at first, but that other Moraga sites such as Via Moraga across from the Rheem Center showed him that it could work well for residents.

Commissioner David Stromberg had some questions regard-

the Moraga Center Specific Plan that was adopted over eight years ago and still does not have proper zoning. The project as proposed fits the criteria set for this space in terms of usage, density and height, but it would need to obtain a planned development agreement, like what was done by Moraga Center Homes along Moraga Way, in order to proceed. The alternative, as explained by Planning Director Derek Farmer would be to wait to have the council finally approve a zoning plan. Farmer seemed confident that it could happen this winter, but he added that what is on the drawing board for this part of town was not yet finalized.

Last but not least of the hurdles for this project is its necessity to garner the support of a majority of the other property owners. There are four buildings in this development, one is owned by the same owner as the building proposed for remodel, but the two other property owners have not signed off. In fact, a lawyer for one of the other owners came to express that person's surprise at seeing this project being considered when there is a pending lawsuit active at this time between property owners over parking spaces and dumpsters.



Existing office building.