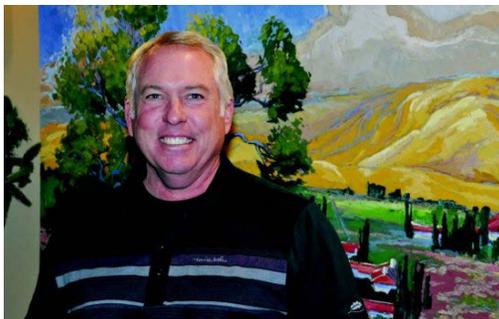


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Moraga Mayor Roger Wykle looks ahead to 2019

By Vera Kochan



Mayor Roger Wykle Photo Andy Scheck

Appointed as Moraga's mayor for a second term, Roger Wykle has high hopes for the town's future.

Wykle's first contribution to Moraga was serving on the Planning Commission between 2009 and 2012. He successfully ran for town council in 2012 where he eventually was appointed to his first term as mayor in 2015. Running for town council once again in 2016 brought him another eventual appointment as Moraga's new mayor for 2019.

When Wykle ran for town council in 2012, his personal primary goal was "to first and foremost always act respectfully to the citizens of Moraga, our dedicated staff, and to my other colleagues on the council." He added, "I also sought to actively listen to our constituents and then make informed decisions while keeping what is best for Moraga in the forefront."

He initially had many goals in mind for Moraga itself, most importantly to protect the remaining hillsides, ridgelines and open spaces. Examining the town's infrastructure and finances, including an unfunded pension liability, was key along with revitalizing downtown. "While mayor in 2015," he said, "I supported creation of a town subcommittee which continues to review the Moraga Center Specific Plan. Through this process we must strengthen the MCSP to ensure that future infill development blends with our surroundings and preserves our semirural atmosphere."

Looking back, Wykle is proud of the recently adopted policies to protect the hillsides, ridgelines and open spaces for future generations. He stated, "We also established a citizen lead team to look at our infrastructure needs and develop an annual budget requirement for maintenance of town-owned assets. Similarly, we commissioned a Storm Drain Master Plan that also identified funding requirements to address our aging system." In the upcoming year, he hopes the MCSP subcommittee ensures that future projects meet Moraga's needs while remaining viable for developers.

Having served on the town council for so long has made the job itself a little easier over the years, but the recent Rheem sinkhole and Canyon Bridge emergencies, which tapped Moraga's financial coffers, was quite challenging. And, the challenge continues as future funding for the aging systems must be addressed.

Luckily for Wykle, he has a supportive family who understands the demands of a mayor's presence. "While I still hear the question, 'Where are you going now?' they have come to accept my volunteer activities as a way of life."

Wykle's hopes for Moraga's future are to see a revitalized downtown area, especially near Moraga Ranch, while working with the property owners to make short-term and long-term improvements. Additionally, he'd like to improve communication with the citizens in regards to the town's financial situation by informing them whenever the council, staff, audit and finance committee members have gone the extra mile to save money on projects. "For instance," explains Wykle, "we recently completed a joint paving project with Orinda that saved both municipalities thousands of dollars. We also are extremely fortunate to have a volunteer reserve police officer who constantly looks for free government equipment that the town can use, once again saving the town thousands of dollars."

Another one of his goals for Moraga in 2019 is to review the town's budget to ensure that expenses are being kept to a minimum. While the budget is technically balanced annually, maintenance costs and a growing pension liability bring added pressure.

Wykle stresses the need for citizen involvement in Moraga and asks residents to consider volunteering for the many positions available within the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Design Review Board, the Planning Commission, and even the Town Council.

"I would just like to thank the citizens of Moraga for re-electing me in 2016 and my colleagues on the council for their confidence in me to be mayor in 2019."

Reach the reporter at: vera@lamorindaweekly.com

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