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Haffner Talks Turkey

By Sophie Braccini

Moraga's large, feathered denizens may not know it yet, but a powerful adversary has just taken aim at them. During the March 23rd Town Council meeting John Haffner, Pear Prince and 2009 Moraga Citizen of the Year, complained that recurrent large flocks of *Meleagris gallopavo*, or wild turkeys, infest his neighborhood; leaving behind depredation and waste. Vice-Mayor Mike Metcalf asked that the issue, and possible solutions, be studied by staff and returned to the Council for consideration.

"It is a very difficult question with animal rights issues, required Fish & Game permits, and other concerns," indicated Town Manager Jill Keimach, who said she asked Chief of Police Bob Priebe to look into the matter. The standard procedure is to lodge a complaint with the Department of Fish and Game. If the problem is confirmed, the department can issue an order to kill a set number of turkeys. A similar issue recently set Danville's Canyon Country Club in an uproar - the homeowner's association received a permit to have 75 birds killed, but other residents called the procedure inhumane. The Rossmoor community was also an early adopter of this method of controlling the turkey population. Six years ago the State of California added turkeys to the list of creatures that can be killed with a permit in cases of property damage and public health problems.

"We have received complaints about turkey issues on and off for the past few years," said Priebe, "I will find out what our options are and let the Council decide how it wants to proceed."

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