

**Independent, locally owned and operated!**

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published June 20th, 2012

## Moraga Updates Fees to Recoup Costs

*By Sophie Braccini*

Moraga Administrative Services Director Stephanie Hom presented to the Town Council June 13 a proposal to update the fees that the Town collects from residents and developers for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. These modifications, mostly increases-some of them sharp- were presented as an ongoing effort by Town staff to recoup its own costs. An average increase of three percent will be applied to many services, such as the rental of Town facilities, to reflect an increase in the cost of living; all the hourly rates have been modified to reflect salary changes; and many planning service fees have been increased to reflect the exact number of hours staff spends. "We have observed the number of hours staff spends on these tasks over the last seven to eight months, and these new figures reflect the reality of the work," said Hom.

The town is expected to derive about \$1 million in revenue next year from the fees; about as much as the sales tax revenue.

With the new fee schedule, a resident who wants to appeal a planning decision will now have to pay a fee of \$1,000 and a developer will pay \$3,000. Previously, the cost was 50 percent of the initial deposit with a maximum of \$500. Hom's justification for these costs includes staff time spent preparing the appeal and attending the meeting.

Hom also proposed that a \$3,000 deposit be asked of residents needing a Design Review or Planning Commission session for their project. "We used to charge a flat fee of \$500," said Hom. "Instead we are proposing this deposit. Staff will draw from it at the hourly rate listed, and will eventually return the remainder to the owner."

Council Member Dave Trotter said he thought that this was too much to ask from residents doing a limited remodel and asked that the flat fee be maintained for small projects. Mayor Mike Metcalf recused himself from the discussion since he has (or soon will have) a project that will need planning review. The Council wrestled for some time with the notion of 'small project' and rallied with Hom's suggestion to ask a \$1,500 deposit for remodels and \$3,000 for new construction.

The rest of the fees were unanimously approved by Council. The only fee reduction was the removal of a 3.5 percent convenience fee that the Town used to add to credit card purchases. In lieu, a \$3.00 flat administrative fee will be added across the board to all recreation classes, instead of the former \$2.00 fee.

The Council also approved waiving the fees for the Moraga Park Foundation and Hacienda Foundation. Specifically, facility fees will be waived for Board of Director meetings and community events hosted at the Hacienda facility or Moraga Commons Park.

Reach the reporter at: [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA