

Published September 12th, 2012

Meet the Moraga Council Candidates: Phillip Arth

By Sophie Braccini

Phillip Arth

Phillip Arth is a first-time Council candidate. He is a long-time Moraga resident and business owner. Until two years ago he ran a tax consulting firm, with his wife Gretchen, from his home. He raised three children in Moraga and has had the pleasure to see some of his eight grandchildren grow up in town as well. Arth wants now to give back to his community. "I want to bring my financial expertise to the Town," he said. He is past president of Moraga Movers and a past Big SIR of Sons In Retirement. He was recently appointed to the Town's Audit and Finance Committee.

"The town is well managed and there is not much room for additional savings," said Arth, "but I think that it would be a good idea to have a CPA on the Council." He believes that his accountant approach and critical thinking will be beneficial. He supports Measure K, the Town's one percent sales tax residents will vote on in November. "The sales tax will give us enough to maintain our roads, but we need more to compensate for the delayed maintenance," said Arth. His primary mission, if elected, will be to start to work on a parcel tax for the roads, starting with understanding which residents do not support the idea and reaching out to them.

Land use is Arth's other motivation. "I was a MOSO supporter," he said, "but I'm not an isolationist who would want to stop anyone from coming to Moraga. We need to have some wiggle room in our code." Arth admitted that he

has not studied all the issues in detail yet, but he thinks that the decision on the Hetfield property to allow six new homes to be built was a good one.

Another land use issue that Arth wants to have an impact on is winemaking. "We need regulation for that activity," he said. "This is great as a hobby, for personal consumption, but not for commercial use." Arth thinks that the size of the vineyards should be limited, that the creation of an AVA (American Viticultural Area) for Lamorinda is not a good idea, and that the Pear Festival should not have added "Wine" to its name. "People with large vineyards spray their grapes, they wear suits to do so, and it is a nuisance to their neighbors," he added.

Arth has followed Moraga's political stories quite closely, he even went to Rancho Laguna Park to meet the dog owners and forge his own opinion. "I was impressed, they are a very conscientious group," he said, "but I need to research more." Arth says that he would never bring his grandchildren to a park if dog waste was present and he favors the idea of a fenced park, possibly including a specific area for small dogs.

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