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Meet the Moraga Council Candidates: Roger Wykle

By Sophie Braccini

Roger Wykle

Roger Wykle has served on the Planning Commission for the last two years. Wykle joined the Coast Guard Academy when he was 18 years old. After graduating, he served as an officer in Louisiana, Hawaii, California, and abroad for 21 years. While in service he earned a masters degree in civil engineering. He and his wife chose to move to Moraga in 2008 to raise their children.

After he retired from the Coast Guard in 2009, Wykle went to work for a general contractor before starting his own general contracting company, Sustainable Group. He specializes in green construction and other federal projects.

Community service has been in Wykle's life since he served as a volunteer fireman at 16; he said he always volunteers where he lives. His first big case on the Planning Commission was the Dollar Tree. Wykle tried to find arguments in the code to stop the store. "Some good still came from that decision," he said. "Kimco listened to the community; we now have a nice produce market, Tangelo's, and an Indian restaurant. Moraga deserves better than to be the discount shopping center of the East Bay."

Wykle says he is now running for the Council because of the decision that was made regarding the Hetfield estate (the building of 6 new homes). "The General Plan directs to preserve open space to the maximum extent possible," said Wykle. "Hetfield was in MOSO space, in a high risk area prone to landslides. The implementation of the guidance says that if high risk is mitigated, development can occur,

but there is no parameter to define the extent of what that mitigation can be." He added that for Hetfield, the mitigation will require the moving the equivalent of 50,000 truckloads of dirt. Wykle would like to participate in the amendment of the General Plan so that open space will, in his view, be really protected.

As a civil engineer, Wykle does not like deferred maintenance that increases costs exponentially. "Nobody wants to pay more tax," said Wykle, "but I am supportive of the 1 percent sales tax, this is a step in the right direction." Wykle thinks that so far the Town has done well to balance its operational budget. He added that, as a rule, he does not like debt and prefers to control expenses.

As far as Rancho Laguna Park and off-leash activities are concerned, Wykle believes that the park was working fine for years. "What was broken there that we needed to fix?" he asked. He said he is in favors of administrative control, such as tightening up the times and news signs, rather than engineering control, such as a fenced dog park.

"I truly respect public input and comments. We need to meaningfully value and treat the people with a high degree of respect," he concluded, "I also learned to be diplomatic and built consensus during my years in the Coast Guard. I will bring those skills to the Council."

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