



# Moraga Civic News

## Public Meetings

**Town Council**  
Wednesday, June 12, 7 p.m.  
Wednesday, June 26, 7 p.m.  
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,  
1010 Camino Pablo

**Planning Commission**  
Monday, June 17, 7 p.m.  
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd.

**Design Review**  
Monday, June 10, 7 p.m.  
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd.

**School Board Meeting**  
**Moraga School District**  
Tuesday, June 11, 7:30 p.m.  
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate  
School Auditorium  
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga  
www.moraga.k12.ca.us  
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements  
**Town of Moraga:** www.moraga.ca.us  
Phone: (925) 888-7022  
**Chamber of Commerce:** www.moragachamber.org  
**Moraga Citizens' Network:** www.moragacitizensnetwork.org



## Police Report

**Car through fence, 5/27/13** A distracted driver was on Bollinger Canyon Road when he or she changed a music CD and subsequently crashed through a fence. No injuries, but there was approximately \$500 damage to the fence and \$100 to the car. The homeowner and the driver exchanged information and the police left it at that.

**Lost purse, 5/26/13** It was mid-morning when a woman finished shopping at Safeway; while she may have remembered the milk, eggs and peanut butter, she forget that she left her purse in the grocery cart. After driving away, she realized her missing item and drove back to the store. Store staff was unable to locate the handbag. The shopper was advised to cancel her credit cards.

**House party, 5/25/13** It wasn't even 11 p.m. when cops responded to a party at the corner of Birchwood Drive and Fernwood. The person calling police reported juveniles who were leaving the party driving on the wrong side of the street. Police found approximately 15 teenagers inside the home, two of whom were unable to care for themselves due to intoxication. Parents were called and an investigation is ongoing.

**Skateboarding, 5/25/13** Police responded to a call about juveniles riding skateboards on Lucas Drive at Moraga Road. A second report was made about this same dangerous behavior. Cops found the kids and advised them of the town ordinance against skateboarding on public streets. No one was ticketed jailed.

**Stolen mail, 5/24/13** Several mailboxes at a Moraga Road condominium complex were pried open and mail was removed. The incident is under investigation by the U.S. Postal Service.

**Fore! Late night golfing, 5/24/13** Unknown suspects were hitting golf balls into the rear parking lot of the Rheem Valley Shopping Center at 10:30 p.m. Cops found the balls, but not the suspected golfers. No damage was found and mystery golfers vanished into the night.



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## Council Considers its Spirit Van Subsidy *Chew Tells Seniors to Take a Taxi*

**By Sophie Braccini**

"I don't want to appear insensitive, but (giving an additional \$6,000) to the Spirit Van would not be a wise budgetary decision," Mayor Dave Trotter told program coordinator Mary Bruns, who came to the Moraga Town Council's May 22 meeting to ask the council to increase its contribution to the only senior transportation service in town. The town currently contributes \$9,000 per year to the program.

Every year Bruns builds a compelling case for the council to support the Spirit Van, a service that shuttles seniors who can no longer drive themselves to appointments, recreation events and shopping, allowing them to maintain a social life in a suburb that offers very little in terms of public transportation. The cost to sen-

iors and handicapped patrons is \$10 for a round trip; Moraga contributes, according to Bruns' calculation, \$14 per ride.

Bruns enlisted help to support the project. Julie Fisher, who has lost a large part of her vision to macular degeneration, depends on her husband to go places but in his absence appreciates the Spirit Van. George Fisher cited the study completed at the beginning of the year by Lamorinda Village that indicates the number one need for residents 65 and older is transportation. "This segment of the population is growing," he said. "We have to prepare for the future." At this time, residents 65 and older represent close to 20 percent of Moraga's population.

The only council member con-

vinced was Mike Metcalf who recalled a presentation made by Cliff Dochterman when the town appointed him to the Contra Costa Senior Council. "He said that we can't turn our back on our seniors, who have given all their lives, and that the way a community treats its seniors says a lot about who we are," said Metcalf. "I can find an additional \$6,000 in our budget, and we should do it." The \$6,000 represents 0.09 percent of the town's total expenditures.

Council member Phil Arth said the town could not spend money it does not have and that the current surplus is not comfortable enough to allow this extra expense. The estimated surplus for the 2012-13 budget year is \$98,000; but the projection for

2013-14 is only \$8,600.

Vice mayor Ken Chew went a step further, saying that if someone was not able to afford the cost of a round-trip taxi ride they should seek other solutions, noting that there are alternatives for people who are not able to continue to live independently in their homes.

Trotter proposed to help raise private funds to make up the difference the town would not contribute and to talk to the mayor of Orinda, because Orinda's contribution is much lower than those of Lafayette and Moraga. Ultimately, the council agreed to keep its contribution at \$9,000 and asked the administrative services director, Stephanie Hom, to see if she could find extra savings to potentially increase the town's contribution.

## Historical Preservation Not a Sure Thing in Moraga

**By Sophie Braccini**

The Moraga Town Council engaged in preliminary discussions May 22 about what a Historical Landmark ordinance might look like. The four members present could not reach a consensus. They split on deciding whether or not the owner of a building could veto having his property declared a historical site. The trigger for the discussion is the preservation of the Rheem Theatre, a structure that has been dwindling on the verge of bankruptcy for years despite great community support.

"We looked at what nearby communities have done and there are different approaches," explained Planning Director Shawna Brekke-Read in her presentation. "In cities like Lafayette and Orinda, a structure can be declared historical without the support of the property owner; in Danville, the owner's approval is required."

In attendance were two groups of property owners, the Bruzzone family, who owns many sites in Moraga including the Moraga Ranch area that could be considered a historical site; and theater owner Mike Puri. Both parties expressed their strong opposition to the more directive approach that they equated to an appropriation of private property.

Brekke-Read explained that there were some advantages for a property owner to have his property declared a historical site; the Mills Act Agreements that can provide property tax relief (40 to 60 percent of the tax for recently improved properties according to the California Office of Historic Preservation); and lesser constraints for ADA compliance, though not an exemption, for historical buildings.

It is that aspect that spurred the support of council member Mike Metcalf who was thinking about the Hacienda de las Flores and how a historical designation could help render the second floor of the building ADA compliant at a lower cost.

Mayor Dave Trotter said that without the possibility of a community to declare a building historic, the text would have no teeth. Both

he and Metcalf stressed the urgency of the issue, since the current lease for the theater will expire in one year; and they suggested that if it were not for Orinda's regulation, the Joaquin Moraga Adobe would be long gone.

Vice mayor Ken Chew and council member Phil Arth supported the rights of property owners. Chew even opposed having a historical preservation ordinance of any type, because, according to him, it would just add work for staff. Arth said that the rights of the property owners need to be protected, and that he could support the idea as long as it mirrored Danville's policy.

Puri's attorney said that a his-

torical designation can be nice, but it would not solve the economic problems facing the theater. Chew stated that there are thousands of such struggling theaters in the nation, and that maybe it would be better to let it go.

Unable to decide what philosophy to support, the council asked staff to prepare a text with alternatives and to involve the community in the process, including property owners and the Moraga Historical Society.

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