



Moraga

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, Feb. 11, 7 p.m.
Wednesday, Feb. 25, 7 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Feb. 17, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Rd.

Design Review

Monday, Feb. 23, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Rd.

School Board Meeting

Moraga School District
Tuesday, March 10, 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



Moraga Police Department

Pair of rings lost, 1/29/15 A kitchen worker at Saint Mary's College left her rings in the pocket of her jacket; she presumes the rings fell out of the pocket as she carried her jacket to the manager's office. The reporting person checked the area and couldn't find them.

Fake tax return, 2/01/15 A Sullivan Drive resident reported to police that she received a letter from the IRS on Jan. 31 stating a possibly fraudulent tax return was sent to them. The reporting person contacted the IRS, but they were closed for the weekend. She just wanted documentation.

Possession of pot, 1/30/15 It was 4:15 in the afternoon when Moraga cops pulled over an Acura MDX after observing the car almost get into a collision. The 16-year-old driver and his 17-year-old male passenger were cited for narcotic possession and suspected marijuana was found in the vehicles. Both teens were later released to a parent.

Mom vs. kid fight, 1/29/15 Officers responded to an Ascot Drive apartment where the reporting person said she had been kicked by her mother who also lived in the apartment. Paramedics arrived and cleared the reporting person at the scene. Kicker performed a Citizen's Arrest on her mom. Cops released the mother at the scene and the reporting person left the apartment for the evening. The report was forwarded to the Office of the District Attorney.

Egging, 2/21/15 A Camino Pablo resident said her house had been egged on two occasions by kids. Apparently several raw eggs had been smashed on the house on both occasions, with an estimated damage of approximately \$2,800. Although the reporting person had specific suspect information, she simply wished to have the incident documented for her insurance.

Other crimes in Moraga that happened between Jan. 27 and Feb. 3:

Battery – Larch Avenue

False Alarm – Brookfield Drive, Ascot Drive, Blain Court, Corte Royal

Damaged Parked Car – Ascot Court

Danger to Self – Ascot Drive

DUI – St. Mary's Road

Auto Accident – St. Mary's Road and Moraga Road

Susp. Circumstances – Crossbrook Drive

Petty Theft – Camino Pablo

Loud Party – Ascot Drive

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Back to the Drawing Board for Moraga Center Homes Project

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Town Council neither upheld nor denied the appeal of the Planning Commission's approval of the City Ventures project on Moraga Way next to fire station 41 at its recent meeting on Jan. 28. Most council members agreed with the appellants that the conceptual plan had flaws, but rather than supporting the appeal, council asked staff to work with the developer to remedy the identified issues. The final decision was postponed to an uncertain future date.

Residents who came to hear the council's ruling filled the Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School auditorium. Over the past months, after story poles were erected on the development site, the community had expressed concerns about the 36-unit development project. During the public comment portion of the meeting, Moraga-Orinda Fire District Chief Stephen Healy said he was directed by the district's board to notify the council that the proposed residential development project is not compatible with the MOFD's training facility at fire station 41.

Healy stated, "Regardless of measures put in place with City Ventures, the board believes it is inevitable there will be complaints from residents living in those homes and there will be pressure to curtail training activities – an unacceptable con-

sequence to the district." He referred the town to a 2008 letter sent from the MOFD expressing concerns regarding the zoning of the site, and mentioned many discussions he and an ad-hoc committee created by the MOFD board had with the developer and town staff to try to mitigate the district's concerns. Station 41 houses the only training center for the MOFD. Kathleen Famulener, who sits on the MOFD board, added there were potential risks of fatal accidents by having a fire training facility next to a development with a pocket park or children's playground (included in the project).

Appellant Dick Olsen and co-appellant Steve Bowey argued that the project's massing along a scenic corridor, the three-story height as well as the increased traffic on Country Club Drive all pointed to a flawed project, potentially destructive to the character of the town, and in violation of the town's General Plan and the Moraga Center Specific Plan.

Fifteen residents expressed similar concerns against the project.

Lucy Dendinger and Dan Alipaz, on the other hand, argued that Moraga had been a no-growth town since the 1990s, that retail had suffered from it, that the town needed an influx of young families, and that the tax base needed to grow. For these reasons

they supported a project they thought was well designed. Councilmember Phil Arth said he supported the project, based on the recommendation of staff and advisory bodies.

City Ventures CEO Phil Kerr reminded the council that the Planning Commission had found the project consistent with the Moraga Center Specific Plan, which is in accordance with the General Plan. But Councilmember Teresa Onoda said that she researched the MCSP and found the project to be non-compliant because when traveling along Moraga Way, a person's view of Indian Ridge would be blocked by the proposed development. She also added that the project was not compatible with its surroundings, since it includes a very different setback than its respective neighbors and contended that the massing was not compatible with town regulations.

Councilmember Dave Trotter said that height, view shed protection and setbacks should be reviewed. He also questioned whether the traffic study's projected 210 trips per day for the project was accurate.

Mayor Roger Wykle agreed with his colleagues and wondered if, with a combination of setback and building height modifications, the view shed could be protected. He also agreed that it was likely that the traffic impact had been underestimated. The coun-

cil directed staff to work with City Ventures to mitigate these issues.

After the meeting, Charity Nelson, City Ventures project manager, said, "I am confident that we will find a solution that will satisfy the council's concerns." She indicated that no additional traffic study needed to be done since their project was below the envelope allowed by the MCSP. She anticipated the project to come back to the council in March.

Town Planning Director Ellen Clark also said she was optimistic regarding a successful outcome. "We (should) be able to come back with project revisions that address the council's concerns regarding consistency with the Specific Plan, and that meet the developer's objectives for a viable project," she said.

The question regarding the position of the MOFD remains. During the meeting Chief Healy noted that it was not the intention of the district to interfere with the development of the town. However, the statement of incompatibility raises new questions and both Nelson and Clark stated they would reach out to MOFD and try to work out a solution. MOFD board members did not respond to this reporter's question regarding the possibility that the district could exert its eminent domain power and purchase the land.

2015 Goal Setting

Mayor Wykle wants to leave his mark

By Sophie Braccini

Last month the Moraga Town Council and staff met to set the town's goals for the year. This is a traditional opportunity for a new mayor to outline goals he or she wants to achieve during the one-year tenure.

Town Manager Jill Keimach presented the staff's continuing goals for the year. In 2015 the town aims to become paperless and finalize the 331 Rheem Blvd. renovation, establish a storm drain system master plan and implement body-worn cameras for the police force. Another objective is the possible annexation within the town limits of a portion of the Carr Ranch. That property located along Camino Pablo between Sanders Ranch and Rancho Laguna Park is not part of

the town of Moraga, simply within its sphere of influence. An application for a residential project is in the making for a 24-acre portion of the ranch along Camino Pablo. Staff is encouraging the applicant to seek the incorporation of that property within the town.

Mayor Roger Wykle then introduced his goals, presented as a group effort that included staff and other councilmember input. Besides the obvious objectives of fiscal stability and the pavement improvement project, Wykle wants to continue democratic transparency by broadcasting meetings over the Internet, streamline the planning process, implement the Moraga Center Specific Plan (MCSP), minimizing the impact of new develop-

ments on existing neighborhoods, improve the viability of the Rheem Theatre, explore the possibility to create a 'park bank' – where portions of funds collected from developers of the MCSP would be used by the town to purchase new park land – and work with the community to amend the ridgeline and hillside development code.

Wykle hopes to get more community input about how to prioritize the use of future funds. Should the millions that the town will get from Palos Colorado developers be spent on previously delayed maintenance, on new sports facilities, or on acquiring open space? The mayor would like what he calls a "statistically valid survey" to be conducted.

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