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## David Trotter is Moraga's new mayor

By *Sophie Braccini*



Dave Trotter Photo Andy Scheck

Becoming the new mayor is neither a surprise nor a first for Moraga Council Member Dave Trotter; not counting his 7-minute mayorship last year - which abruptly ended when Trotter was incapacitated for weeks after a fall in the town office's stairwell - this is the third time the Moraga lawyer will become the top official in town. He sounded genuinely excited about the year to come, however, and has started to brand his tenure with one word: "reimbursement."

The election of Trotter as mayor proceeded smoothly, as expected, despite some online opposition. No one at the council or in the public on Dec. 13 contested Trotter's right to the center chair, once nominated. Teresa Onoda was elected vice mayor. Trotter graciously accepted the honor and briefly highlighted his priorities.

With his first priority being reimbursement, Trotter explained a few days after the meeting that he expects over a million dollars from the sinkhole repairs to come back to the town's reserves soon. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has approved all of the bridge and most of the sinkhole repairs for reimbursement, but Moraga is just one of many agencies that are seeking funds. Building on the principle that the squeaky wheel gets the grease, Trotter promises a team effort, with elected officials supporting staff, to get the money back sooner, rather than later.

Trotter also in his brief inaugural speech referenced a recent article published in Lamorinda Weekly. The article documented the growth of property tax revenue that the town has received in recent years, beyond its expectation, but had not used the funds to reduce its storm drain or infrastructure maintenance deficits. The new mayor indicated that he would agendize discussing having some portion of the increased property tax revenue put aside to attack the capital replacement and infrastructure maintenance needs, and not allocate all of the surplus to salaries and benefits.

He later elaborated that since the town is about to ask residents to pay a new fee for storm drains, the town should do its part to support the needed investment in the infrastructure. The new mayor said that he had faith in his fellow citizens and that he expected that the storm drain fee should be approved before mid-year (see related article below).

Trotter has been involved in crafting the amendments of the town's hillside and ridgeline regulations from the start. He was on the subcommittee that developed the text with staff, and each of his campaigns focused on open space protection. He says he is looking forward to having these new rules approved during his mayorship.

The new mayor has also been a supporter of Moraga joining Marin Community Energy and he has been the town's representative on the Community Choice Aggregation's 24-member board since September; he sits on the rate setting and the executive committees. He believes that giving people a choice is a good thing and that MCE is a very sophisticated entity, the first CCA in California. He likes that MCE is a public entity that is motivated by providing the best service possible, not maximizing shareholders profits, and he is impressed with the large solar facility that MCE is building in Richmond.

During this year, the new mayor and his fellow council members will hopefully approve a plan to make the Hacienda de las Flores a well-used and well-maintained public facility. As a member of the Hacienda subcommittee, Trotter has participated in efforts to create a public-private partnership for the Hacienda and open a top-notch restaurant there. The mayor has no doubt that the uniqueness of the property will attract an operator and that clients will come. Trotter notes that recreation facilities such as the parks and the Hacienda are services provided to the residents and that it is normal to have a cost associated with them. Plans for the Hacienda and attempts to lower the town's annual upkeep costs for the building have come and gone over the past 10 years.

One other task that the mayor has given himself is to have the East Bay Municipal Utility District acknowledge its share of responsibility in the hillside failure that caused the damage of the Canyon bridge. He indicated that the town filed an administrative claim against the agency two months ago, and that if EBMUD denies the claim, the town will seek its lawyer's advice regarding a lawsuit. If such a recommendation were given, the final decision would be made during a public session of the council.

The town council and staff will convene at the beginning of the year to define the detailed roadmap for 2018, during the traditional goal-setting meeting. No date has yet been announced.

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