



Moraga

Public Meetings

City Council

Wednesday, Jan. 10, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Jan. 16, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Jan. 22, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Moraga School District
Thursday, Jan. 9, 7 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 Report



Summary covers Dec. 12 to Dec. 17

Alarms	8
Traffic	41
Noise Calls	1
Suspicious Circumstances	6
Suspicious Subject	4
Suspicious Vehicle	4
Service To Citizen	18
Patrol Request	6
Abandoned Vehicle	
200 Block Scofield Dr.	
2000 Block Donald Dr.	
Scofield Dr/Harold Dr.	
Accident Property	
100 Block Corliss Dr.	
Barking Dog	
200 Block Scofield Dr.	
Beat Info	
10 Block Juniper	
Civil	
Twenty Four Hour Fitness	
Disturbance-Domestic	
Not Available	
Excessive Speed	
Joaquin Moraga Int School	
Medical Hospital	
300 Block Rheem Blvd.	
Petty Theft	
10 Block Haven Ct.	
1000 Block Country Club Dr.	
Public Assembly Check	
St. Marys College	
Reckless Driving	
Camino Pablo/Canyon Rd.	
Rheem Valley Shopping Center	
Supplemental Report	
1000 Block Country Club Dr.	
Moraga Rd./Lucas Dr.	
No House Number	
No House Number	
Safeway	
Traffic - Major Injuries	
Moraga Rd./Lucas Dr.	
Traffic Hazard	
Corliss Dr./Moraga Rd.	
Corliss Dr./Moraga Rd.	
Verbal Dispute	
Not Available	
Welfare Check	
300 Block Rheem Blvd.	
400 Block Tharp Dr.	

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 may-

or 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.

How much will Moragans pay for storm drain repair?

By Sophie Braccini

Two and a half years ago Moraga adopted an unfunded storm drain master plan to keep up its infrastructure. After the Rheem sinkhole, and the resulting increase in the public's awareness of the risks associated with disrepair, the maintenance plan is now finally on the verge of being funded. But how much will it cost per household? What will it cost to commercial and institutional property owners? Will members of homeowners associations get a big discount? Some responses were given at the Dec. 13 Moraga Town Council meeting, but faced with HOA backlash the council decided to give it one more month of massaging. If a decision on fees is made in January, property owners should receive mail-in ballots in March for a result in May.

The Dec. 13 meeting started on a positive note. The cost to fix high-priority storm drain problems should be lower than originally anticipated. Consultant Jerry Bradshaw worked with Public Works Director Edric Kwan on the estimate that was done two and a half years ago. New factors, such as consideration of how developers fees will be directed to storm drain maintenance, led to a reduction of the total estimated cost for high-priority problem spots from \$8.9 million to \$7.3 million.

The consultant explained that the fee would be different for small, medium and large property owners to tie it to the impact each property has on the storm drain system as a whole. Properties under 10,000 square feet and condominiums would be charged an \$81.34 fee; medium-sized properties, 10,000 to 22,000 square feet – the major-

ity of Moraga properties – would be charged \$119.23; large property owners would see a \$144.09 cost for drains. Institutional, commercial, parks and multifamily residential properties would be charged a per acre fee, variable depending on the average amount of impervious surface they tally. Commercial zones would get the highest rate with \$931.89 per acre, while schools and churches' fees would be \$405.40 per acre and \$29.62 for parks and golf courses.

The fees presented by the consultant were calculated to cover the cost of all the high-priority projects, clean water obligations and general maintenance, not to be acceptable for voters, as some commentators who came to the meeting suggested.

All the council members seemed to be in favor of moving

forward and starting a campaign to put the new fee on a mailing ballot at the beginning of the year, but representatives of the two largest HOAs in town, Moraga Country Club and Sanders Ranch, raised some concerns. Two of the council members live in Sanders Ranch, however since granting special discounts to HOA members is part of the law that pertains to these types of fees, there is no conflict of interest for the two members.

Anne Willcoxon, board president of Moraga Country Club's homeowners association, shared her concern about a high-priority storm drain project located under Saint Andrews Drive, the only in-and-out way for the thousands of residents living at MCC. She noted that if work would start there, staff would have to make sure that in-

gress and egress would not be impacted. Willcoxon did not mention any concern about what would happen if that culvert under Saint Andrews Drive should fail, or about the storm drain fee proposed in the plan. MCC represents close to 20 percent of the homes in Moraga.

The discount for HOA members is about 10 percent of the total homeowners fee. Bradshaw explained that the fee includes three different elements: water quality investments that are required by law, operation and maintenance of the total system, and finally the capital improvement cost for the high-priority projects. Based on 30-year financing, the CIP load represents about half of the annual storm drain fees; it is that CIP cost that is discounted by 20 percent for HOA members.

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