



ABOUT TOWN - FEBRUARY 12, 2010

BI-WEEKLY UPDATE FROM MORAGA TOWN STAFF



TOWN COUNCIL GOAL SETTING SESSION

On Saturday, February 20, from 8:00 a.m. to noon, the Town Council will hold its annual goal setting session in the La Sala room at the Hacienda. Interested residents are invited to attend the meeting to hear the discussion and share ideas about goals for the Town. If you cannot attend you may submit ideas for topics to any member of Town Council or to the Town Clerk (mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us). The Town Council will formally adopt the goals that are identified in this meeting at a future Town Council regular meeting.



MORAGA ORINDA FIRE DISTRICT TRI-AGENCY MEETING

The Moraga Town Council will participate in a joint meeting with the Moraga Orinda Fire District, (MOFD) and the City of Orinda on Wednesday, March 3, to discuss a proposal from a citizens group called FAIR. The FAIR group is recommending that the three agencies consider dissolving the MOFD and contracting with CONFIRE to provide fire service and a private provider for ambulance service. They believe that this approach will save money that could be used to repair infrastructure. Anyone interested in this matter should plan to attend. The meeting will be at 7:00 p.m. at the Orinda Library Garden Room, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda.



TOWN COUNCIL DISCUSSES RANCHO LAGUNA PARK

Last July, Town Council directed the Park and Recreation Commission to study spatial separation at the park to provide separation between dogs and other park users. The Rancho Laguna Park Program Planning Subcommittee and Park and Recreation Commission studied this issue for four months, seeking public input and considering a variety of options. The Park and Recreation Commission recommended two spatially separated options to Town Council. One option fenced the north side of the park while the other fenced the north and south sides. Town Council decided not to act on either option and directed staff to study other potential sites for a dedicated dog park. Two suggested locations were the Commons Park "Back 40" and the Town-owned land adjacent to the East Bay Regional Park District trail on St. Mary's Road, across the street from the St. Mary's College rugby field. Staff will report to Town Council after studying the feasibility of various Town-owned sites.



MORAGA ELIGIBLE FOR TLC GRANT

With the approval of the Moraga Center Specific Plan, the Town of Moraga is well poised to compete with other jurisdictions in the region for Transportation for Livable Communities Grants. This funding source is designed in part to help Priority Development Areas implement their plans. Approval of the Specific Plan helps the Town of Moraga to be more competitive in pursuing these funds. Typical projects that can be funded from this source include streetscape projects such as sidewalk improvements, bicycle facilities and bus shelters. Grant applications are due on April 22nd and funds from this source will be available for the next two fiscal years. A total of \$40,000,000 is available region-wide with a minimum grant award of \$500,000.



MEDICAL MARIJUANA DISPENSARY URGENCY ORDINANCE PASSED

At the February 10, 2010 Town Council meeting, an urgency ordinance was passed that puts a 45-day moratorium on the establishment and operation of medical marijuana dispensaries within the Town. The Town has received inquiries about opening medical marijuana dispensaries and current zoning laws do not specifically address the issue. The moratorium can be extended for a period of up to two years and is intended to provide Town staff with sufficient time to study the many evolving legal issues and develop recommendations for Town Council consideration.



TOWN WELL POISED FOR ANOTHER ROUND OF STIMULUS MONEY

At Wednesday's Council Meeting, the Town Council approved allocation of available transportation funds for the design of Pavement Rehabilitation on Rheem Boulevard between St. Mary's Road and the end of the homes before the slide area, then again from the top of the hill (Fay Hill Reservoir access Road) to Moraga Road. Another round of economic stimulus money may be coming down the pipeline through the Jobs for Main Street Act of 2010, and the Town wants to be ready to implement as soon as the money is available. One of the caveats of the funding is that it needs to go into projects that are "shovel ready," which means the project has completed design and any permitting necessary to start – it is ready to go out to bid right then! The Town realizes that although the entire stretch of Rheem Boulevard requires repairs, the area impacted by the landslide has significant environmental reviews to go through and permits to receive before anything can be done there. However, that is no reason to delay repair of the non-slide areas, especially if for an initial investment of \$75,000, the Town receives more than \$500,000! The project that has been proposed includes a full overlay (similar to what was done on Moraga Road from Sky-Hy to Buckingham) including digging out and repairing failed roadway areas, and retrofitting any existing ADA ramps to the latest standards.



ST. MARY'S ROAD / RHEEM BOULEVARD / BOLLINGER CANYON ROAD

The Town Council also heard the recommendation of the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) (*which is still soliciting for new members, with a new application deadline of noon on Wednesday, February 24!!*) regarding the initial traffic studies done regarding possible improvements in this area. A number of alternative solutions were presented to TSAC by the Town's traffic engineering consultant – including additional stop signs, signaling the Rheem/St. Mary's intersection, dedicated turn lanes, realigning Bollinger Canyon Road, and/or a small roundabout. TSAC recommended the left turn lane into Bollinger Canyon Road and the small roundabout, but recognized that this would require significant Town financial resources. The Town Council deferred further action on the recommendation until a funding source is identified and recommended that this be presented in the next year's budget to consider funding of the public involvement phase of the work to determine the community interest in such a project, and how it relates to other needs throughout town.



RADAR DISPLAY GOES SOLAR

You may have noticed the radar speed display box on Rheem Boulevard has been converted to solar power. The conversion has provided a more consistent pattern of operation and should reduce future costs associated with maintenance and battery replacement. The cost of conversion to solar power was under \$1,000.



NEW OFFICER FOR MORAGA PD

The Moraga Police Department is proud to announce Michael Millstead has been hired and will begin his field training on February 14, 2010. Officer Millstead graduated from the Napa Valley College police academy in 2009 and lives in the Vacaville area. The addition of Officer Millstead brings the staffing level up to 11 of the 12 authorized sworn positions.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY GRANTS

A portion of the initial American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds (ARRA) were provided to the California Energy Commission to support grants and low interest loans for energy efficiency improvements. The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program (EECBG) allocated potential funds to smaller communities and counties and Moraga is eligible for approximately \$93,000. Staff has prepared a proposed energy efficiency upgrade project for the Town's major buildings that would reduce energy use and utility costs through a combination of measures, including:

- Improved insulation,
- Upgrade of parking lot lighting using new technologies,
- Installation of occupancy sensors in enclosed rooms,
- Upgrade of the HVAC systems at the library and the Hacienda, and
- Installation of a photovoltaic (PV) system at 329 Rheem.

These projects will be funded in part by the EECBG grant and in part by a low-interest, energy efficiency improvement loan from the California Energy Commission that will be repaid through the energy savings over a 10 year time frame. Staff submitted the applications in December and January and expects the award of funds in the next several weeks.