



ABOUT TOWN ▪ JULY 16, 2010

BI-WEEKLY UPDATE FROM MORAGA TOWN STAFF



ELECTION INFORMATION

On Tuesday November 2, 2010 the Town of Moraga will hold a General Election to elect two Councilmembers for 4-year terms. Candidates are required to file a Nomination Petition during the nomination period from July 12 through August 6, 2010. Persons interested in running for Town Council should contact the Town Clerk at 925.888.7022 and request an appointment to pull nomination papers and receive other necessary forms and information. Nomination papers are due back to the Town Clerk by 5 p.m. on Friday, August 6, 2010. In the event an incumbent does not file, the nomination period is extended to Wednesday, August 11 at 5 p.m. Candidates must be at least 18 years old, a U.S. citizen, a Town of Moraga resident and a registered voter.



THE UNSUSTAINABLE COST OF POLICE TURNOVER

When an officer leaves the Town, several costs are immediately incurred. The most obvious is the cost of overtime to replace the officer's assigned shifts. Officers currently work 80 hours bi-weekly. At the current salary scale, the average cost of staffing the lost officer is about \$4,200 (not including incentive pay) for each two week period. A very fast hiring cycle for a new officer is about 11 weeks, and then the new officer must successfully complete a 14 week field-training program, during which the shift vacancy continues. At the average overtime rate, the Town must expend a minimum of \$17,000 to cover overtime for vacant shifts before a new replacement officer can begin to provide police services to the Town. Additionally, it costs the Town about \$3,500 for costs associated with mandated background testing requirements, county certifications, field trainer costs, and about \$27,000 for the new officer's salary and benefits during the 14 week training period. The average cost from recruitment to actual replacement of patrol duties totals **\$47,500**.

The dollar cost is significant, but it must also be noted that when an officer leaves the Town to work for another agency, the Town loses a valuable asset. An officer continues to receive training and experience throughout their career and becomes knowledgeable about local problems, criminal suspects, and community concerns. The Moraga Police Department prides itself on its interaction with the community and the personal relationships developed. All of these things are valuable traits, and are highly marketable to other police agencies. Sadly, the Moraga Police Department has a long history of training excellent police officers only to lose them to other agencies.

This turnover is something we cannot afford to continue, and the Town is working very hard to create a salary and benefit package that encourages longevity. A major consideration in preparing the current budget was to free up funds to provide the sworn police officers a salary and benefit package that would encourage them to continue their service with the Town. Chief Priebe's experience with the department has convinced him that police turnover is an issue that must be addressed. Since 1999, the department has experienced a 183% turnover rate, losing 22 officers during that period. To address this trend, the chief proposed a plan of personnel cuts and reorganization to create an environment for existing personnel that will promote longevity.



COMMUNITY SURVEY

Town Council will hear the results of the online community survey at the July 28 meeting, along with the results of the focus group discussions that were conducted in May. The results will be considered by Town Council as it decides how to better inform residents about Town issues and financial needs. Thanks to all of you who participated in the survey.



INDEPENDENT AUDIT OF TOWN'S FINANCIAL RECORDS

Mann, Urrutia, Nelson, CPA's, the Town's independent auditing firm, completed the interim portion of their annual audit at the Town's offices on June 24 and 25, 2010. This is a routine part of the annual audit process. MUN has provided the Town Council with a letter indicating, "we found no significant or control deficiencies during this phase of the audit." MUN is scheduled to return to the Town's offices on October 19, 2010, when they will conduct their field work, which is expected to take four days.



APPLICATIONS FOR HOME REMODELING SURGE

While the first six months of the year saw a very slow start to the home remodeling season, the last month has seen a surge in activity. In just the last 30 days, the Town has received nearly the same number of applications that it received in the first half of the year. The level of activity is now comparable to prior years and indicates a strengthening in the construction industry.



TOWN CONTINUES TO WORK WITH PG&E REGARDING TREE REMOVAL

Town staff is continuing to work with PG&E regarding the removal of trees in the vicinity of high voltage lines. The Town has received a letter from PG&E regarding the utility's legal responsibility for vegetation management. The letter is currently being reviewed by the Town Attorney.



TOWN OF MORAGA RECEIVES TREE CITY USA DESIGNATION

Moraga was recognized by the nonprofit Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree City USA community for our commitment to urban forestry. This is the second year we have earned this national designation. "We commend Moraga's elected officials, volunteers and its citizens for providing vital care for its urban forest," said John Rosenow, chief executive and founder of the Arbor Day Foundation. The Town proudly displays our Tree City USA flag at the Commons Park.



TOWN COUNCIL SCHEDULE FOR AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

In the past, the Town Council has routinely cancelled its two regular meetings in August in order to provide a summer break. This year, the Town Council decided instead to cancel the first meeting in both August and September (August 11 and September 8) and still hold the second meeting each month (August 25 and September 22) in order to better balance the agenda and allow them to take action on any time-sensitive issues.



THANK YOU 4TH OF JULY FIREWORKS SUPPORTERS! \$23,000 GOAL REACHED

Thank you to everyone who supported the July 4th fireworks by *Buying a Rocket* or two, or three or more! The generous contributions from Lamorinda residents, businesses and service organizations made the evening's show possible and as always a wonderful conclusion to the day's activities.