



## ABOUT TOWN ▪ DECEMBER 2, 2011

### BI-WEEKLY UPDATE FROM MORAGA TOWN STAFF

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#### MORAGA HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

Join Santa and his Moraga Youth Involvement Committee helpers on Saturday, December 3 for cookies and hot cocoa in the Commons Park for the Holiday Tree Lighting. Refreshments and entertainment from the Jingle Belles & Beaus and Supertonics begins at 6:30 pm with the tree lighting at 7:00 pm. You can help light the tree by donating to the Buy-a-Bulb Fundraiser - send checks payable to the Town of Moraga to: Town of Moraga, Attn: Buy-a-Bulb, 2100 Donald Drive, Moraga, CA 94556. Thank you everyone who helped SELL OUT the Breakfast with Santa and Santa Visits, be sure to sign up early for these wonderful events in fall 2012.



#### TOWN OFFICE HOLIDAY CLOSURE

The Town offices will be closed Monday, December 26, through Monday, January 2, for the winter holidays. We will reopen Tuesday, January 3, 2012. Limited staff will be available by appointment. In case of emergency, please call Moraga Police dispatch at 925-284-5010. We wish you and yours a happy holiday season!



#### MORE ON WHY MORAGA RECEIVES SO LITTLE FROM PROPERTY TAX

In previous publications, we've discussed the fact that Moraga receives much lower property tax compared to other communities in the area – Moraga gets 5.27% while Orinda gets 7.4%, Lafayette gets 6.3%, Concord 10.4%, Pittsburg 15.8%, and El Cerrito 18.8%, in addition to redevelopment dollars which Moraga and Orinda do not have. The reason for the difference in property tax rates between cities stems back to Proposition 13. While most homeowners know that Proposition 13 fixed the property tax rate at 1% of the assessed value of a home, plus any assessment bond approved by popular vote, many don't know that it also froze how the property tax dollars are distributed.

Moraga residents pay about 1.08% of the assessed value of a home in property tax, as a result of various East Bay Regional Park District and school bonds. The 1.08% property tax of a \$500,000 home is distributed across many entities, including Town government, Moraga-Orinda Fire District, schools, Central Contra Costa County Solid Waste Authority, East Bay Municipal Utility District, East Bay Regional Park District, BART and Contra Costa County. The Town of Moraga's share of the 1.08% is pretty small – set at 5.27%. The distribution of property tax dollars was set under Prop 13 based on what existed in 1976. At that time, Moraga was a young "minimal government", which meant that the Town government was not spending, or receiving, a lot of tax dollars and so the Town's proportion of the property tax, set at 5.27%, was held constant to this day.

Unfortunately, this is not something we can readily change. Many groups have tried to alter Prop 13 distributions, but politically, one or more of the organizations would have to agree to lower their rates in order for Moraga to raise the percentage we receive.



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Check the Winter/Spring 2012 Activity Guide/Town Crier for opportunities to serve on one of the Town volunteer boards, committees or commissions. There will be vacancies for the Planning Commission, Park and Recreation Commission, Design Review Board, Traffic Safety Advisory Committee, ADA Advisory Committee and the Audit and Finance Committee. For more information, visit the Town's website at [www.moraga.ca.us](http://www.moraga.ca.us).



## YEAR-END DONATION OPPORTUNITIES

If you are looking for a year-end donation opportunity, the Town of Moraga is accepting Buy-A-Bulb donations to light the Holiday Tree and donations for the Rancho Laguna Park playground replacement. The Town has a goal to reach \$6,000 in donations for the Buy-a-Bulb and \$100,000 for the Rancho Laguna Park playground replacement. Send donations to: Buy-a-Bulb donations - Town of Moraga, 2100 Donald Drive, Moraga, CA 94556 – Attn: Buy-a-Bulb or for the Rancho Laguna Park Playground - Moraga Park Foundation, P.O. Box 302, Moraga, CA 94556 – Attn: RL Park Playground. Any amount is greatly appreciated!



## EDAC RHEEM PLANNING AREA UPDATE

Renee Zeimer, Hollie Lucas-Alcalay and Allen Sayles presented the Economic Development Action Committee's findings and recommendations to the Planning Commission and Town Council Wednesday night. With an audience of families, business owners, other EDAC members, property owners, and developers, Renee, Hollie and Allen outlined EDAC's actions over the past year, including how it considered changes to the zoning ordinance, marketing Moraga, and soliciting community input through two visioning workshops. EDAC focused its efforts on the Rheem commercial area of Moraga. EDAC's recommendations included pursuing short-term beautification programs at the shopping center, middle-term improvements for bicycles and pedestrians along Moraga Road and Rheem Boulevard and allowing a mixture of land uses in the area, and long-term physical development of the area. The Planning Commission and Town Council accepted EDAC's recommendations and, by consensus, agreed that a General Plan Amendment could accomplish some of EDAC's objectives. The amendment would include soliciting additional community and property owner input, analyzing and considering improvements along Moraga Road and Rheem Boulevard, allowing a mixture of land uses, including a variety of retail and non-commercial uses, and considering design guidelines for the area.



## PLANNING AND LAND USE NEWS

The Planning Commission and Town Council also considered other issues related to land use regulations in Moraga at Wednesday's joint meeting. The Commission and Council endorsed a work plan for the Planning Department that includes annual reviews and incremental updates of the zoning ordinance. The Commission and Council also, by consensus, agreed that the Town of Moraga should submit an application to designate the Rheem Planning Area a Priority Development Area to help the Town become eligible for future grant funding. The Commission and Council also agreed that planning staff should work with the Lamorinda Winegrowers Association in 2012 to develop a process that allows for winegrowing and, potentially, to help locate a community winery facility. Other work program items include addressing the Town's hillside policies and regulations, clarifying land uses that are permitted in commercial zoning districts. All work plan items will be coming back to the Planning Commission and Town Council for consideration in the future.



## POLICE DEPARTMENT NEEDS YOUR STUFFED ANIMALS

The Moraga Police Officers Association along with S.A.F.E. (Stuffed Animals For Emergencies) is collecting new or gently used stuffed animals to help children through traumatic experiences. The stuffed animals are given to local police and fire departments to distribute to children they encounter affected by traumatic events. This year's annual holiday collection drive will continue until December 27. Stuffed animals can be dropped off in the collection bin located in the lobby of the Moraga Police Department, 329 Rheem Boulevard, Moraga. Thank you for your support!



## CLIMATE ACTION PLAN TASK FORCE CHARTER ADOPTED BY COUNCIL

On November 30, the Town Council continued its previous discussion from November 9 on how to best form a Climate Action Task Force. Although all members of the Town Council agreed for different reasons that the Town should form a Task Force to begin what is expected to be an 18 month process to prepare a Climate Action Plan for the Town as mandated by state law, the differences in opinion were over whether there should be two Council representatives on the Task Force and how the remaining members should be chosen, by staff or Council. The Council voted 4-1 to have staff return in January with a staff recommended list of 13 Task Force members for Council endorsement and that the Council would not have Task Force representation, but would be updated and give direction quarterly.



## STATE OF THE TOWN AND VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION NIGHT

On Wednesday, November 16, the Town hosted its first joint Moraga State of the Town and Volunteer Recognition Night, at the Saint Mary's College Soda Activity Center. The evening provided an opportunity for everyone to mingle and appreciate the contributions of Moraga residents and committee and Board volunteers whose terms have ended over the past couple of years were more formally recognized. Mayor Mendonca shared her perspective of Town activities and accomplishments from the past year and finished by asking those to stand for various volunteer efforts. In the end, every attendee was standing to visually show how Moraga is able to accomplish so much with such limited resources. Special thanks were extended to Saint Mary's College for its partnership with the Town as expressed through the Town's use of the Soda Center, the exceptional appetizers during the evening, and for having many students and top administrators in attendance. Thank you, Saint Mary's College, you help make Moraga special.



## MORAGA COMMONS OFF-STREET PARKING DESIGN

The Town of Moraga and cities of Lafayette and Orinda have agreed to jointly fund construction for a parking lot on the eastern side of Moraga Road, adjacent to the Lamorinda Skate Park. Design drawings will be developed with construction scheduled for summer 2012. MacKay and Soms, a civil engineering firm from Pleasanton, was awarded the design contract at the November 30 Town Council meeting.



## TRAFFIC CALMING GUIDE UPDATES

The Traffic Safety Advisory Committee will continue its review of the Traffic Calming Guide at its December 7 meeting with a discussion regarding the determination of the area impacted by a proposed traffic calming project, approval percentages, and how to handle abstentions within the petition process. Please join us at the Hacienda Mosaic Room at 6:00 pm if you are interested in participating in this discussion. The Traffic Calming Guide is available on the Town's website for review at <http://www.moraga.ca.us/committees/tsac/about>