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## Public Forum

### On the Selection of Moraga's New Town Manager

I write to you today both as a resident of Moraga and as President of the Moraga Citizens Network, a group that has worked for four years towards transparency in our town government. On Wednesday, February 25, 2009 our Town Council unanimously voted to hire Michael Segrest as Moraga Town Manager. The Council initiated a thorough nine-month process to find a manager that would work well with the Council, Staff and residents, as well as a person who would enable Moraga to work through the financial challenges it faces.

I feel it is important for Moraga residents to know what the process was that resulted in the hiring of Mr. Segrest, and how open and available it was to all residents.

The five men and women elected to represent Moraga citizens started the process by choosing Jay Tashiro in June, 2008, to be the Interim Town Manager. He was chosen, in part, because he had experience in assisting the Corte Madera Town Council in recruiting his successor as a Town Manager prior to his retirement. On July 9th, at an open regular meeting of the Town Council, the Council directed Mr. Tashiro to prepare a Request for Proposal (RFP), a 25 page document used to secure an Executive Recruitment Firm. The council chose to employ a professional search agency, rather than handle the search on its own. On the agendas of the next four Council meetings was something related to the Executive Recruitment Firms, providing interested citizens with opportunities for participation.

During the second half of September, Ms. Peckham of Peckham & McKinney, the selected firm, interviewed a cross section of the town in order to develop a Town Manager profile and prepare a recruitment brochure. All Council Members were interviewed individually, as were all department heads, the fire chief, President of the Chamber of Commerce, General Manager of the Country Club, and a representative from St. Mary's College. All of these individuals represent sizeable numbers of Moraga residents, so through them, the Moraga community had a part in developing that profile.

In late October, the recruitment brochure for the Town Manager position was completed, and posted on both the Town website and the Moraga Citizens Network website. This document was available for viewing on the Town website until early December, when the application process was closed. It is still posted on the MCN website. Eighty-seven applications were received; Ms. Peckham reduced that to 15, by using the profile developed.

In January, three Special Council meetings were held to: 1) review the 12 top candidates' qualifications, 2) to interview and then prioritize the top seven candidates, and 3) to interview the top 3 candidates and prioritize those. These meetings were not open to the public, though the council did discuss holding a public meeting. On January 28, Mr. Segrest emerged as the top candidate, so Ms. Peckham initiated a reference check that included criminal, credit, and employment history. At a Special Meeting on Feb. 3, the Council reviewed the reference report presented verbatim and the tentative offer of the Town Manager position, which included the Council-established parameters for the sub-committee comprised of Mayor Trotter and Vice Mayor Chew. The Council Sub-committee and the Town Attorney met with Mr. Segrest to negotiate an employment agreement, which was completed on Feb. 19. The process came to a conclusion on Feb. 25, when, after hearing comments from the public and answering questions, the Council voted

unanimously to hire Mr. Michael Segrest.

Regarding a benefit package, this too has been public, listed in the recruitment brochure mentioned above, and in more than one Council meeting. The Council decided that it was worth offering a good salary to a highly qualified Town Manager, because his judgment, knowledge and experience could save the town hundreds of thousands of dollars. Additionally, experience has shown that equity in pay is important in securing a qualified person. The Moraga Town Manager's base salary will be \$180,000, in the same range as the town managers of Orinda, \$172,000, Martinez \$194,000 and Lafayette \$209,000. Vacation and sick pay, along with retirement and other benefits, are comparable to the city managers mentioned above.

Educated and informed citizens create a vital healthy community. Moraga Citizens Network commends the Council and Jay Tashiro for their thorough transparent process.

Ellen Beans, Moraga

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