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Dave Trotter mingles with the community after his presentation Photo Andy?Scheck

On December 7th, Dave Trotter presented the State of the Town address to a crowd of about 80 residents who gathered in the community room of the Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Church. Moraga's State of the Town presentation is traditionally offered in December, at the end of each Mayor's tenure, giving outgoing mayors the opportunity to highlight accomplishments for which they would like to be remembered.

The Mayor's chair seemed to suit Dave Trotter; he was able to provide leadership and the ability to move discussions forward while avoiding conflicts. In his address, the outgoing Mayor portrayed a year that has been both challenging and rewarding, with a balanced budget in spite of the tough economy, and with significant progress made on some of the town's largest development projects. His conclusion indicated that the challenges in the coming years will be to find new sources of revenue, if the town's residents want to maintain the quality of service to which they are accustom.

Trotter presented the year's results according to the seven objectives he set last December when his fellow council members elected him mayor. The first one was to select a new town manager. This was achieved by the hiring of Michael Segrest last April. Trotter's second objective was to get the Moraga Center Specific Plan approved. The plan is now in its final phase, and should not be

delayed beyond the first semester of 2010. With the Specific Plan Trotter's objective #3 should also be adopted; the housing element, a plan that will define higher density housing in the down town, and will permit the town to satisfy its State obligation to plan for different types of housing needs.

Other development projects moved forward in 2009. Of particular importance is the final approval of the Palos Colorados project, which will build 123 homes, after 20 years in the planning phase. \$17 millions in impact fees for the town are associated with this project.

Goal #4 had to do with a balanced budget and Trotter congratulated staff on being able to curtail spending and to have released a surplus for the 2008/2009 budget period, as well as approving a balanced budget for 2009/2010 with a \$450,000 projected excess.

However, the funding of the infrastructure maintenance stays below the needed levels and to remedy this situation Trotter was pleased to recall that goal #5 had been achieved, the establishment of a Revenue Enhancement Committee that worked over six months in 2009 and presented its report to Council at the end of November. "Implementing the recommendations of the Committee will be one of the major tasks of the coming year," added Trotter. Among the proposals made by that committee, suggestions pertained to the business community and what needs to be done to revive Moraga's business life. It was Trotter's 6th objective to enhance the commercial centers; his success in this area is more arguable, although he highlighted the passage of a measure waiving certain fees for businesses in transition.

There's no argument as far as objective #7 is concerned. It had been Trotter's intention to restore civility on the Council. Those who went to the meetings throughout the year witnessed very courteous and cooperative deliberations.

2009 brought a few unanticipated elements to the forefront. Among them was the move of Town staff to the Hacienda de las Flores, which was very badly received by the community. Trotter was congratulated by resident Ellen Beans on the Council's quick action in bringing this topic to the agenda. The result was a change in the initial decision and instructions given to staff to vacate the Hacienda as quickly as possible.

Trotter concluded his presentation by saying that he enjoyed his year as a mayor and will continue to serve as a Council member in 2010. In Moraga, the Mayor has the same voting power as the other members of the Council, so Trotter shared the credits of the year's successes with his fellow council members and staff. Trotter would not confirm if he will run for an additional 4 years when his current term ends.

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