

# Measure V in Moraga Slated for Safety and Technology at Schools

By Sophie Braccini

Moraga voters will decide on the November ballot for or against giving about \$30 per \$100,000 of their home's assessed value to the Moraga School District (MSD).

The school board decided to put to the vote the \$35 million package known as Measure V after the school completed a facilities master plan listing the needed improvements to the learning environment. The plan includes such things as seismic upgrade for some classrooms, storm drains replacement, double pane windows installation, and also upgrade of telecommunication networks and purchase of mobile furniture, what Superintendent Bruce Burns calls a safe environment for 21st-century learning.

MSD is financed mostly by state money allocated per the number of students.

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# Bob Priebe Appointed Town Manager

By Sophie Braccini



Bob Priebe

LW archive

Moraga's former chief of police who has been serving as interim town manager since Feb. 1 is now the official town manager.

On Sept. 21 when the resolution to appoint him was passed, Bob Priebe expressed his gratitude to his family for their support, to his predecessor and mentor Jill Keimach, to the town council and to the town staff, saying, "Staff is the greatest asset this town has, everyone goes way and beyond what is required of them. They are caring, smart people that make good decisions."

Mayor Mike Metcalf explained after the meeting that the reasons to appoint Priebe were multiple. "He's been in this town for 33 years, people trust him, he knows how the town operates," he said. Metcalf added that the former chief is very bright and picks up things very fast, that his peers and his staff respect him.

Priebe announced that Jon King, who was serving as interim chief for police, would become the department head on Oct. 1.

# Town Allocates \$45K for All-access Playground

By Sophie Braccini

In keeping with its August 24 decision to fund site preparation costs for an all-access playground otherwise funded by Moraga Rotary, the Moraga town council agreed to immediately allocate \$45,000 for preliminary engineering and environmental work on the project.

Council members Teresa Onoda and Phil Arth voted against the funding, because the overall cost to the town has increased according to the latest estimate, and because there are talks of Lafayette envisioning the building of an even larger all-access playground in the Deer Hill housing development.

It is primarily budgetary considerations that weakened Onoda's and Arth's initial enthusiastic support of the proposed Rotary-town partnership. Both reaffirmed their complete support of the project, but added that the over \$200,000 that the town will now have to spend to prepare the site, instead of the \$145,000 originally approved, was too much.

"We are agreeing to spend \$45,000 (for preliminary engineer-

ing work) and if Lafayette does (an all access park), we've spent \$45,000 for nothing?" asked Onoda as she stated her opposition at the Sept. 28 council meeting.

Mayor Mike Metcalf, vice mayor Trotter and councilmember Roger Wykle supported the project saying that the town's contribution will come from development impact fees that can only be used for recreation projects, and that a \$200,000 town investment will result in a \$460,000 asset for the town, thanks to a pledged \$260,000 donation from the Moraga Rotary.

## Kick-off to All-access Playground

Moraga Rotary invites the community to the official start to the fundraising campaign for the All-access Playground, at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 6 at the Moraga Commons. A few people will speak at the event, and wine and cheese will be served.

# MSD Candidates

He is the co-chair of the Measure V committee.

Severy is an attorney who worked in Washington D.C. for a Supreme Court Justice before moving to California and working in the telecommunication industry, specifically in in policy-making where he built consensus with different stakeholders.

He says he's always had an interest in local education, following his two children as they went through all the local schools. Severy says that his experience with public policy making has allowed him to jump in quickly in the thick of things with the district. Besides Measure V, he represents Moraga on the Contra Costa County School Board Association, he is on the legislative committee, meeting federal representatives and advocating policies that would benefit Moraga. He also participated in the California Schools Association leadership conference for Moraga.

He says he enjoys working with Superintendent Bruce Burns and his staff and is immersing himself in different aspects of the life of the MSD.

"Being retired, I have had the time to do it, as well as the passion and the interest," he says. He highlights that the results of this year's test scores show the excellence of the Moraga schools, scoring twice the state average. He believes that the challenge is to maintain that excellence for everyone, in an environment where accountability metrics are changing for schools, and curriculum is changing as well, "which means for example that teachers need to be re-trained in an effective and cost effective manners," he says.

Finance is another priority for him. He says that the budget is balanced for now, but is dependent on state allocations, a source

... continued from page A4 of funding that cannot be guaranteed moving forward, while salaries and benefits increasing as prescribed by state regulations. Severy thinks that the MSD can look creatively at different sources of funding, like going after federal funds for special education that would free some district money for other general education purposes.

His goal is to support developing an environment where students can develop creative and critical thinking skills, maybe with smaller classrooms, and professional development so teachers are made aware of new teaching practices such as flexible classrooms where students work in groups.

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