



# Moraga

## Public Meetings

### City Council

Wednesday, Dec. 13, 7 p.m.  
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

### Planning Commission

Monday, Dec. 18, 7 p.m.  
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

### Design Review

Monday, Dec. 26, 7 p.m.  
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

### School Board Meetings

**Moraga School District**  
Thursday, Jan. 9, 7 p.m.  
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Auditorium  
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga  
www.moraga.k12.ca.us  
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

### Town of Moraga:

www.moraga.ca.us  
Phone: (925) 888-7022

### Chamber of Commerce:

www.moragachamber.org

### Moraga Citizens' Network:

www.moragacitizensnetwork.org

## Moraga Police Report

Summary covers  
Nov 21 to Dec. 3

<b>Alarms</b>	14
<b>Traffic</b>	41
<b>911 Calls (incl. hang-ups)</b>	4
<b>Noise Calls</b>	4
<b>Suspicious Circumstances</b>	6
<b>Suspicious Subject</b>	6
<b>Suspicious Vehicle</b>	1
<b>Burglary, Auto</b>	
St. Mary's Rd./Moraga Rd.	
<b>Death, non-criminal</b>	
location n/a	
<b>Domestic Disturbance</b>	
50 block Ashbrook Pl.	
200 block Scofield Dr.	
<b>Fish &amp; Game</b>	
Larch Ave/Sparrow Ct.	
<b>ID Theft</b>	
300 block Constance Pl.	
20 block Laird Dr.	
<b>Hit and Run</b>	
Moraga Rd/Rheem Blvd.	
<b>Medical Hospital</b>	
100 block Miramonte Dr.	
<b>Mentally Ill Commit</b>	
Saint Mary's College	
<b>Theft, Petty</b>	
Safeway	
<b>Unknown Problem</b>	
400 block Birchwood Dr.	
<b>Vandalism</b>	
500 block Center St.	
Rheem Valley Shopping Center	
<b>Warrant Service</b>	
10 block Francisca Dr.	
<b>Warrant Arrest</b>	
10 block Francisca Dr.	



# Bob Priebe: 38 years serving Moraga

By Sophie Braccini



Bob Priebe LW archive

When Bob Priebe leaves his town manager office in a few days, he will leave behind 38 years of work history, a lifetime. Most of the manager's career developed in law enforcement until he was appointed town manager almost two years ago. While Priebe has ample right to claim retirement, his departure was still a surprise.

When he started out as a young police officer, Moraga was not his dream job. Even today, Priebe says that he was born to be a Berkeley cop. A friend who was part of that police force showed Priebe during a night ride-along how the adrenaline rush one gets on the job can make life exciting. Making people safe and arresting bad guys was the most important part of Priebe's motivation. But destiny did not have Berkeley in its long-term plans for Priebe.

Priebe was sworn in on Aug. 28, 1978 and worked in Berkeley for 18 months, and in his own words

it was the most fun he ever had on the job. But one of his former police academy instructors, Tom Simms, had his eyes set on the young officer to start a brand new police department in Moraga from the ground up, and took him on a tour of the place. Priebe remembers that the town felt more alive in the early '80s, with more retail and the fresh look of a place recently built. Simms also told Priebe that this department would one day become a Lamorinda operation.

The young man was still not interested, but Simms called Priebe's wife, Tracy, then a young mother of an 11-month-old baby. She was not as excited as her husband was about the Berkeley job; in fact, every time the phone rang, she was uneasy. The Priebes, now married for 40 years, discussed the opportunity ... and the rest is history.

When Priebe started in Moraga, 10 officers were in charge, with one part-time chief, Larry Olson, who was also working for the East Bay Regional Park District. The men had the same uniform as their EBRPD counterparts, the cars also came from that agency with patches on the doors saying Moraga, and the office was located in a trailer behind the fire station. At first, the men were independent contractors, then they created a bargaining unit, and it was not until 2006 that the department became a part of the California Public Employees Retirement System.

Priebe tested the waters for other opportunities and almost left a couple of times, but Moraga had its own interesting challenges, and the officer was regularly promoted until he became chief in 2009.

There are so many interesting stories from Priebe's Moraga life, including the time a woman came to the police department with a WWII Japanese hand grenade she wanted to get rid of that turned out to still be very much operational; Priebe keeps a piece of the grenade on his desk as a reminder of how quickly things can go wrong.

Priebe believes that his years in the police department were well spent, with a lot of good and a little bad, including a lot of educational activities and building trust with the residents. He is convinced that Moraga's independent police department costs residents much less than the officers contracted by Orinda and Lafayette through the county sheriff's office. He believes that an independent Lamorinda police force would make sense and be a good financial solution for the three cities.

When Town Manager Jill Keimach left Moraga in 2016, Priebe became interim town manager. A few days later, the culvert under Rheem Boulevard collapsed and a sinkhole formed. In September of the same year he was offered and accepted the permanent position. He says that until then, he thought that the police department was getting all the complaints in town; he got a shift in per-

spective as town manager.

In Moraga, residents have direct access to the manager. Priebe said he was surprised by the number of emails and phone calls he received daily from residents – some friendly, but most expressions of displeasure. He said he made a point to respond to everyone, but got frustrated at the amount of what he perceives as disinformation circulating on social media. He believes that this made his job, and his department heads' jobs harder.

Priebe explains that while the town was incorporated in 1974 with a promise for minimal government, people nonetheless demand maximum service. He thinks that residents have to realize that they own the town's infrastructure and assets and that it requires funds to be maintained. He also believes that the level of staff today is at a minimum, as compared to surrounding communities.

Among Priebe's last public appearances were the reopening of the Rheem Boulevard and of the Canyon Bridge, where he praised his team for a work well done in spite of administrative hurdles.

He made a lot of friends in Moraga over the years. He really loved being a part of Moraga Valley Kiwanis where he discovered the pleasure of giving back. But he has no regrets about retiring. He might seek new adventures in the future, but he will certainly take a few months to enjoy life and his family.

## Transitions in Moraga – interim town manager to be hired on Dec. 13

By Sophie Braccini

When one asks Planning Director Ellen Clark or Administrative Services Director Amy Cunningham why they are leaving their management positions in Moraga, they give a similar response: a small staff does not provide upward opportunities for managers; the only possibility to get a more important job is to change the city. But why is mid-level staff also leaving Moraga?

The exodus of Moraga staff is severe. The planning department is depleted with only two planners left, now that Associate Planner Coleman Frick announced he is leaving Moraga, and the administrative department is now reduced to only one person with the concomitant resignation of Administrative Services Technician Tina Davis. Transition will take time since the interim town manager may not be tasked with replacing the missing department heads, which will be the choice of the future permanent town manager. Aside from the police force personnel, approximately one third of Moraga town staff has left the town over the past six-months.

Cunningham said that no one on her staff was qualified to become the interim administrative director; when she spoke last week, she said that everything would be organized before her departure to

make sure that there is no interruption in services, but she was not sure who would replace her. Yuliya Elbo, the town's accountant, is the only person left.

The planning department will be headed by Senior Planner Derek Farmer, with the support of Brian Horn, associate planner, and Kelly Clancy, senior administrative assistant. Clark said that it is likely that the town will call in consultants on an ad hoc basis to complete on-going projects.

The town will approve at its Dec. 13 meeting the hiring of James Holgersson as interim town manager. The staff report prepared for the Dec. 13 meeting indicates that Holgersson has over 40 years of experience in government management in California and beyond. "He has served as the City Manager and Interim City Manager for the City of Modesto; Deputy City Manager Neighborhoods for the City of San Jose; City Manager for the City of

Arlington, Texas; City Manager for the City of Waco, Texas; City Manager for the City of Kalamazoo, Michigan; City Administrator for the City of Germantown, Tennessee; and Senior Assistant to the City Administrator of the City of Davenport, Iowa," states the report.

Council Member Dave Trotter noted that each of the department heads that resigned had their own reasons for seeking promotions and higher paying positions in other cities and that the town of Moraga has historically been an incubator for people working in municipal government positions. "They come here to become first-time department heads in a smaller community, provide excellent service here, get noticed by our neighboring cities, and depart for greener pastures," he said. "The town will get through this, as we have in the past."

Other examples of this phenomenon from the recent past include former town manager Jill

Keimach who was hired as the Alameda City Manager after five years in Moraga, or former administrative services director Stephanie Hom who returned to a senior post in Oakland when Libby Schaaf was elected mayor.

Yet, having about a third of staff, police department aside, resigning within a few months of the declaration of fiscal emergency is concerning and raises questions regarding the continuity of operations. Some of the big projects that will need to be continued at the beginning of 2018 include whether or not the town will seek more revenue for storm drains, the completion of the ridgeline and hillside development rules, and the start of MCE as a new energy provider. The only department heads still in place with historical knowledge of the town are city clerk Marty McInturf, Public Works Director Edric Kwan, and Chief of Police Jon B. King.

### Just Sold with Multiple Offers!



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- \* Kitchen with Adjoining Breakfast Nook
- \* Hardwood Floors
- \* Fresh Interior Paint
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- \* Secluded Backyard with Patio Surrounded by Mature Trees
- \* 2-Car Garage with Additional Storage
- \* Access to Top Rated Moraga Schools



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