

Civic News




Moraga

Public Meetings	
Town Council	Wednesday, November 10, 7:30 pm Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, 1010 Camino Pablo
Planning Commission	Monday, November 1, 7:30 pm Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd
Design Review	Tuesday, November 8, 7:00 pm Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd
Liaison	Friday, November 12, 8:00 am Fire Station, 1280 Moraga Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements
 Town of Moraga online: www.moraga.ca.us
 Chamber of Commerce: www.moragachamber.org
 Moraga Citizens' Network: www.moragacitizensnetwork.org

• Police Report •



Driving with Coors, 10/16/10 Cops pulled over a VW Jetta on Rheem Boulevard for speeding. The 19-year-old driver had an open bottle of Coors beer in the cup holder in the center console. Six additional passengers were crammed into the car, along with three more Coors: two students on the front seat and a young lady lying across the laps of three gentlemen in the backseat. The driver was issued citations for open container of alcohol, allowing passengers to ride without seat belts, minor in possession of alcohol, and driving while slightly impaired – she had a blood alcohol level of .068.

Ripping off Grandma, 10/15/10 An 83-year-old Paseo Grande woman was the victim of a phone scam. She received a call from a person purporting to be her grandson saying he was in jail in Canada and needed her to send \$995 via Western Union to get him out of jail. The elderly woman sent the money but realized the next day that her actual grandson was at home with his parents and was never in Canada. Sender beware.

Burglary, 10/17/10 A Claudia Court resident left home at 8:45 in the morning and returned at 12:15. He noticed upon his return that the garage door and interior door to the house was open. An unknown suspect took several pieces of jewelry and other items from the home. A cautionary tale for those who think burglars only strike at night.

Wallet found, 10/19/10 A Moraga citizen turned in a wallet found on the street at approximately 6:00 p.m. It contained a non-local California driver's license and money. Because the owner couldn't be immediately found it was booked into the property room and a letter was sent to the owner.



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PIES, TRUFFLES, HOLIDAY BAKING & HORS D'OEUVRES

- Pies 11/8
- Truffles 12/6
- Holiday Hors D'Oeuvres 11/18
- Holiday Baking 12/12

New session of youth ballet starts this week!

Paid Political Advertisement

Re-Elect DAVE TROTTER for MORAGA TOWN COUNCIL



Dear Moraga Voters:

As the November 2nd election draws near, the candidates for the Moraga Town Council have had the opportunity to present their views, qualifications, and visions for the Town. Thank you for your interest in this important election.

It's been a privilege to serve you on the Moraga Town Council these past four years, and as your mayor in 2009. Thank you for the trust you've placed in me.

If I am re-elected, I will continue to make sensible, mainstream decisions in the public interest. I will work closely and cooperatively with my fellow Council members to capitalize on the opportunities and meet the challenges that confront Moraga today and in the next four years. And in doing so, I will respect and promote the right of the public, and all Moragans, to speak and be heard on the issues.

To my supporters, thank you. To those who have not yet decided whom to vote for, please consider the information available at www.davetrotter.com or e-mail me at dave@davetrotter.com. To all, I would be honored to receive your vote on November 2nd.

Respectfully yours,

Dave Trotter
 Moraga Town Councilmember

Re-Elect **DAVE TROTTER ON NOVEMBER 2** see more at: www.davetrotter.com

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New Development Director(s) for Moraga

By Sophie Braccini



Moraga's newest team attended the Chamber of Commerce Business Forum at SMC. From left: Chamber president Edy Schwartz, Mary Coe, Richard Larsen and Renée Zeimer. Photo Sophie Braccini

The Town of Moraga has a new Economic Development Director...or make that three. Town Manager Mike Segrest introduced the trio of volunteers at a business forum at Saint Mary's College, which was organized by the Moraga Chamber of Commerce and Mechanics Bank. Mary Coe, Richard Larsen and Renée Zeimer are the bold souls who have volunteered to tackle a Herculean challenge: promoting shopping in Moraga. A combination of diverse experiences increases their odds of success.

"We have very complimentary backgrounds that will work well toward our purpose," commented Zeimer, "it is critical that we are visible and engaged, be-

cause the team who will make this economic change happen is really going to be the Town of Moraga. Our job will be to mobilize all the stake holders, and build buy-in."

Mary Coe is a Business Statistics Instructor at the School of Economics and Business at Saint Mary's College; prior to that she was co-instructor, with Tom Terrill, for the Jan Term course Urban Renewal and Design. Material covered in this class included urban infill planning, community marketing, city planning, smart growth and urban limit lines strategies. She has sponsored many students in internships out in the community. Coe holds an MBA with an emphasis in Quantitative Business Analysis from Arizona State University.

Richard Larsen is a commercial real estate broker, with extensive experience in appraisal, development and marketing strategy. Larsen is semi-retired, but still active in a large development in Walnut Creek. His marketing experience includes the promotion of industrial parks and commercial buildings. He is also experienced in property management. Larsen holds an MBA from UCLA.

Renée Zeimer was, until recently, the assistant to the city manager in Walnut Creek. Prior to holding that position she was a project manager in the Art, Recreation and Community Department for that city. She has extensive knowledge of citywide project development and financing, including the

new downtown library in Walnut Creek. She holds a Master Degree in Public Administration from the University of Oregon.

"I believe it is a very important step for Moraga's economic future to have three professional people that will work together as Moraga's Economic Development Team," said Chamber president Edy Schwartz, "I had a chance to be involved in the interview process, and I am excited about the diverse talent, experience and knowledge each one of these individuals brings to this position. From the Chamber, the community, the Revenue Enhancement Committee and the Town government I have heard the need for a clear economic vision for our Town. We now have the possibility to move toward this goal. We also have the possibility to take the initiative to reach out to businesses that would meet the community's needs and thrive as successful entities in Moraga. This team can bring this knowledge to the property owners of our shopping centers. I urge the community to get to know these individuals who have volunteered their time to improve our Moraga economy and let us all work together to help Moraga thrive."

The team will be introduced to the Town Council on October 27. Their office will be located at 329 Rheem Blvd.

No Dollar Tree Decision Before the Election

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Town Council recently considered appeals of the Planning Commission's decision to allow a Dollar Tree Store to take up residence in the

Rheem Center, provided certain conditions were met. After a question from Council Member Howard Harpham led a citizens' group to request more time to prepare its appeal, the Council continued the issue to November 10th; which is the Council's first scheduled meeting following the general election. Harpham stressed to the citizens' group "We (the Council) will want to hear a very good legal argument."

Dollar Tree Stores, Inc. appealed the decision of the Planning Commission to approve their application because they objected to some of the conditions, especially restrictions on aisle height. A group of residents also appealed the decision. In an apparent miscommunication with Town staff, that group (resident appellants), said it had first been told that since an appeal had already been filed, they didn't need to file an additional appeal; but they were later informed that they could appeal, and get more time to present their arguments during the public process.

There is clearly a disconnect between residents, who want the Council to enact the public's voice even if it means stretching the boundaries of the law, and the Council and staff who do not want to make a decision that could create a legal liability for the Town.

The resident appellants challenged the application on the grounds that the Dollar Tree does not measure up to the standards set forth by the Town's General Plan, which is the overarching rule of the land: "The General Plan is the most significant policy document in the Town of Moraga, often referred to by Planning Commissioners, Council members, staff members, as the Bible," said the group's spokesperson, Holly Erikson-King.

However, in her staff report, Planning Director Lori Salamack indicated, "It is noted that a finding of consistency with the General Plan is not required for a Permitted Use application. Such a finding is required, for a Conditional Use Permit application which this application is not. In establishing the Permitted Uses subject to findings process in the Municipal Code, the Town of Moraga has pre-determined that such uses are consistent with the General Plan."

Many more arguments were made by residents opposed to the project, from the uselessness of the store, to its potential detrimental economic impact on the town.

"Can Dollar Tree really be made compatible with neighboring stores?" asked Lynn Davis, who

also stated that current Rheem tenants are highly rated as retailers while Dollar Tree is regularly listed among the 10 least desirable stores to have in a shopping center.

Tom Wellbrook, who tried unsuccessfully to open a satellite health care clinic at Rheem because of high rental rates, said, "The thought that we are going to change the character and the quality of (Moraga's environment) over a few tax neutral revenue streams is really unfortunate and I hope that someone on this town council can go through the General Plan and find a loophole."

"How can we protect ourselves against this declining spiral of retail?" asked Douglas Jones.

"The Town Council is elected to do what the people want," wrote Laura Beckner behind her speaker card. "Now you have before you citizens who have not been given a voice; that is not democratic," added resident Ann Obsitnik.

During rebuttal time, Council member Howard Harpham asked the resident appellants if the fact that they were told at a later date that they could file an appeal had been detrimental to their preparation and wondered if they needed more time. After a few seconds of pondering the appellants agreed and requested more time.



Many residents came to the Council meeting to discuss the Dollar Tree. Photo Doug Kohen