



Moraga Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, January 25, 7:00pm
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Tuesday, February 6, 7:00 pm
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

Design Review

Monday, January 23, 7:00 pm
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

School Board Meeting

Moraga School District

Tuesday, February 14, 7:30 pm
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

Chamber of Commerce:

www.moragachamber.org

Moraga Citizens' Network:

www.moragacitizensnetwork.org



Police Report

Domestic dispute, 1/8/12 A call came in to police reporting a Moraga Road couple yelling at each other. A second call came in as a 911 hang up; a man could be heard yelling "no, no, no," in what sounded like a scuffle. Cops went to check it out and determined that the "lady of the house" was the primary aggressor in a physical altercation with her fiancé. She was arrested for domestic violence. Doesn't sound like a match made in heaven.

Not so much love in the air, 1/9/12 A Hardie Drive husband and wife were verbally fighting over financial concerns and long standing family issues. The husband voluntarily packed up a few things and left the home, agreeing to attempt to resolve the dispute at a later time.

D.U.I. 1/9/12 A minor traffic incident happened at the Moraga Country Club; Club security personnel helped the two parties exchange information. One car simply backed into another, the unnamed person who reported the fender bender said that the driver "really seemed out of it" and was possibly intoxicated. The 49-year old woman took a breathalyzer test and scored more than three times the legal limit.

Loud noise, 1/8/12 A complaint came in after midnight about loud noise coming from a Camino Peral apartment. Tenants were cooperative and told their roughly twenty-five guests that the party's over. Cops told hosts about possible repercussions if it happens again.

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...thanks!

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Jill Mercurio Leaves Moraga – El Cerrito Comes to the Rescue

By Sophie Braccini

Town Manager Jill Keimach announced on January 11 that Public Works Director and Town Engineer Jill Mercurio accepted a position with the City of Vallejo and will leave Moraga on January 19.

Mercurio was hired five years ago to do work that had previously been done by contractors. It was believed at the time that a full time Public Works director would be

able to pursue grant opportunities. Her experience in that area allowed the completion of numerous projects. "We will be hiring someone to replace her since her position is critical to ensure we continue to bring in grant funds and watch expenditures for maintaining the Town's infrastructure," confirmed Keimach.

In the short term, Mercurio will leave a very important vacant

seat on the Revenue Enhancement Community Outreach to Neighborhoods committee. That group is finalizing a study of the local infrastructure and establishing a plan to improve its overall performance. The proposed measures and the subsequent funding needs were supposed to be ready in the spring. In order not to delay this project, Keimach found a temporary solution.

"EL Cerrito made a similar effort on roadway planning, they are sort of the poster child for doing it right, and they have completed their plan under budget. We asked to partner with their city engineer to act as a consultant for our project," said Keimach, "he will be meeting with Jill (Mercurio) next week and will assist any way he can."

Concern over Fire Safety in the Bluffs

By Sophie Braccini

In the aftermath of a late-December house fire on Joseph Drive, some residents of the relatively remote Bluffs neighborhood questioned the adequacy of the water supply in the steep hills and the tools provisioned to the firefighters of the Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD), and expressed concerns for their safety.

MOFD Division Chief Darrell Lee was the Incident Commander the night of the fire. "We were informed of a chimney fire on December 27 at 11:26pm," he says. "We had a fire engine patrolling the Bluffs at that time and they immediately responded to the call." Five other engines, one truck and one Medic were dispatched as well to contain and extinguish the fire that started in the master bedroom where a chimney was located.

"I went over when the fire started," says neighboring property owner Sal Captain, "water was leaking from the hoses that were connected to a hydrant positioned lower and away from the house." Captain felt that he was walking in a situation where firefighters were struggling to get enough pressure for their hose, while the property owner was fighting the fire with a garden hose.

Lee explains that the closest fire

hydrant was located in a nearby cul-de-sac, 700 feet away and 80 feet lower than the house. "The pressure of that hydrant should have been between 50 and 120 pounds per square inch (psi)," he says. "We measured it at 50psi that night. The fact that it was 700 feet away and 80 feet lower reduces the effective pressure at the head of the hose. In cases like that, we put one of our engines at the fire hydrant and boost the pressure by relay pumping. This is a technique that we use routinely in Orinda where homes can be located at the end of long driveways, far from the hydrants."

The home's original developer had built a redwood water tank above the house to be used in case of fire. The Town had the property owner dismantle it later because it was visible from the scenic corridor. According to Bluffs resident Frank Compelli, the Planning Department had the owners install a standpipe adjacent to the house. "When we arrived the owner informed us of the presence of the standpipe, but we measured only 10psi pressure there," remembers Lee. "There are rural areas where water tanks are beneficial, but we prefer to rely on our own water first."

It turned out that night that using the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) hydrant was not necessary. "We had enough water in the engines that came to Joseph to put out the fire," says Lee. "But we had nonetheless laid out and filled 700 feet of hoses, to be ready if things had gotten worse. 700 feet of hoses filled with water can weigh a ton and the pressure can make it difficult to unscrew from the hydrant, so the firefighters cut the hose to relieve the pressure. This gave birth to the rumor of fire hoses bursting." According to Lee the fire was put out in 20 minutes.

Lee believes that the Bluffs have a sufficient municipal water supply system. The locations that concern him are rural areas and steep terrain with limited access to fire apparatus. "There are sufficient EBMUD fire hydrants in the bluffs," he says, "long driveways create a challenge, but nothing we can't overcome. We have some lower pressure hydrants in the Fire District, but none where water does not come out of when opened."

Captain says that he wants to find out more about the adequacy of the fire prevention and firefighting equipment. "We live very

close to open space," said the property owner, "some large expanses of land are left unkempt. It would be a nightmare if a fire were to start up there."

Compelli also wants 100% certainty regarding the efficiency of the firefighting infrastructure, "particularly in light of the presently ongoing evaluation of a development plan for 100+ homes in Bollinger Canyon in very similar terrain," he notes.

Coincidentally, a second fire ignited in the Bluffs two weeks later, on January 11th. A garage and the cars in it were destroyed in the flames. The MOFD's report indicates that it took 18 minutes to circumvent the combustion. "These incidents are getting the neighbors talking together and this is good," says Lee. "We are going to conduct FireWise meetings in that neighborhood and educate residents about creating a sensible defensible space around their homes."

FireWise is a free home assessment audit offered by MOFD to all interested residents. For more information, go to www.mofd.org and www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0513/Firestorm-Prepare-Your-Home-FireWise-home-assessments-offered-by-MOFD.html

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May the new year bring you good health, happiness and prosperity.



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