



Moraga

Public Meetings

City Council

Wednesday, Dec. 14, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, Dec. 19, 7 p.m., cancelled
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Design Review

Tuesday, Dec. 27, 7 p.m., cancelled
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Moraga School District

Thursday, Jan. 10, 7 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Library
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



Nov. 1 to Nov. 15

11/15 Civil Dispute

Children, children—who's got the children? A concerned citizen on La Salle Drive reported two small children missed a child exchange. The separated adults haven't obtained child custody orders, but police found the children well cared for.

11/15 Speeding/false license

Police found the driver of a speeding Jeep Patriot (57 mph in a 35 zone) doubly patriotic when they discovered he held a second, illegal driver's license. He was arrested and released at the scene.

11/16 Burglary

A neighbor notified police about an open door/window at a vacant house on Cedarwood Drive. It was ransacked and burgled.

11/17 Letter

A resident of Hardie Place received a letter regarding the outcome of a recent election and wanted it documented. She's unsure who sent it. Considering the recent elections, that's not unusual...

11/18 Warrant arrest

Some days it just doesn't pay to go to work. Subject shows up, triggers the alarm, police arrive – and find said subject was the subject herself of a \$6,000 outstanding Santa Clara County warrant. Subject transported to Martinez Detention Facility. Sorry boss – the police ate (up) my work day!

11/22 Unresponsive victim

Police and paramedics responded to a Birchwood Drive residence where an unresponsive subject was found inside. The subject was pronounced deceased at the scene.

11/24 Assault

An apparently slow-to-anger man transporting his father to Canyon suffered verbal abuse which escalated to pushing and punching from a male none too happy about the first man's car door allegedly bumping his truck. The victim declined to press battery charges even after the truck driver followed the subject home.

11/26 Recovered Vehicle

An ex-boyfriend said to have stolen a vehicle must have had a change of heart; police found the vehicle parked near the owner's house less than 24 hours after it was taken. Wonder if the carjacker topped off the tank first.

11/27 Robbery

Police suspect the person reporting a carjacking incident was actually

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Gary Bernie & Ken Ryerson

Landslide Pushes Rheem Closure into Late January

By Sophie Braccini

As Moraga Public Works Director Edric Kwan puts it, Moraga and Orinda are known in the region for their active earth movements that can become quite disruptive to construction projects.

That is what happened in the Bellavista development (formerly known as Rancho Laguna II), the site that borders Rheem Boulevard between St. Mary's Road and Moraga Road: a landslide was activated close enough to a home site that repairs on the boulevard had to be interrupted to free resources to mediate the slide. As a result, that portion of the roadway that was supposed to reopen at the beginning of December will stay closed until January, if the weather cooperates.

Kwan says that the Bellavista site contains a significant number of old landslides, most of them in open spaces that will not be built on by developer SummerHill Homes. The project proposes 27 homes, 10 along Rheem Boulevard and the 17 others up the hill. The slide that got activated recently was located behind lot 11, which is located along Rheem Boulevard. Kwan said that when the project was adopted, the city and developer were aware of the existence of the dormant landslide that was recently activated behind lot 11.

"It would have been a burden on the Bellavista Home Owner Association if the landslide had activated after the homes were built and



A landslide is slowing work at Bellavista.

Photo Andy Schreck

sold," Kwan said, who adds that in that regard, he is very satisfied that it happened now and is being fixed by the developer. He confirms that the other slides on the 179-acre property are located in open space, away from the new proposed homes.

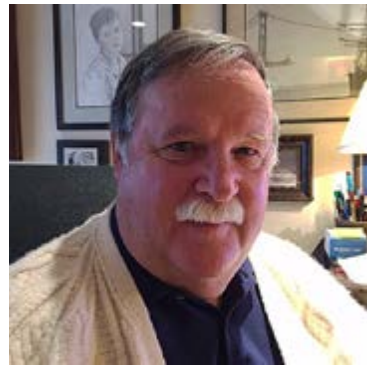
Since it was part of SummerHill conditions of approval to repair Rheem Boulevard, it was that company's resources that were on-site and were shifted from the road repair to address the slide. The town staff added in a written communication that "the ground, as

would be expected, is now quite wet, and the contractor's efforts to keep the roadway area dry by covering the entire roadway with plastic sheeting was of limited success. The project requires a forecast for dry weather for at least five consecutive days in order for state and federal environmental regulatory agencies to allow the developer to work on the project."

The date to reopen the boulevard on Jan. 20 includes 15 days of delay, but will be pushed further into January if continuous rain delays the repairs further.

Moraga's Departing Mayor Has Some Regrets

By Sophie Braccini



Mike Metcalf Photo Sophie Braccini

This year is the last of Mike Metcalf's service to the town of Moraga as an elected official.

For 12 years he has volunteered as a council member, including three terms as mayor. He had served an additional six years on the planning commission prior to the council. Eighteen years in the life of the retired Chevron engineer have been dedicated to

driving a stolen vehicle. The case remains under investigation.

11/28 Vehicle Tampering

You're a mean one, Mr. Grinch, for messing with my car. You entered during darkness and you tampered with my (ignition) switch; still I won't have to hitch... Max to my car (it still works).

Alarms:

11/16 300 block Rheem Blvd.
11/16 1600 block School Street
11/18 400 block Donald Drive
11/23 100 block Hardie Drive
11/25 600 block Augusta Drive
11/25 100 block Fairfield Place
11/26 100 blockj San Pablo Court

Burglaries:

11/24 100 block Miramonte Drive (auto and storage unit)
11/26 1900 block Ascot Drive; car window smashed
11/28 400 block Center Street; car window smashed
11/28 recovered vehicle missing camper shell and stereo
11/29 car keyed at Safeway lot

11/16 ID theft:

Fraudulent charges of \$2,500 were reversed.

11/29 Phone fraud:

Several thousand dollars lost when "family member" claimed arrest.

making Moraga a better place to live. He leaves with several gratifications: the approval of Measure K — the 1-percent add-on sales tax for the roads; and a shift to the perception that Moraga does not have a spending problem, but a revenue problem. Yet there were too many regrets and disappointments to compel him to continue in office. It was time to retire. He feels now free to speak about it.

"Twelve years has been quite long," says the retiring mayor. "There have been too many disappointments, and the same issues keep coming back." Looking at the last 18 years, he notes how little has been accomplished over so long a period, and how resistant to change and close-minded some people can be. He envisages Moraga remaining a small town with great potential for enhanced charm, yet entangled in old issues that no one seems able to unravel.

He vividly remembers one of the first very first meetings he attended as planning commissioner 18 years ago. The topic was the approval of the vesting map for the country club extension, some 50 homes, which to this day remain unbuilt. He remembers a visibly unhappy man sitting in the front row of the auditorium, who stood up after the staff report and made it clear to the commission that the hearing was a waste of time, since the project was a done deal. This was Metcalf's first encounter with Russell Bruzzone, the property owner. Apparently Bruzzone resented the town having any say over what he was planning to do with his property, Metcalf says.

Bruzzone passed away in June of 2001. Since then, the resentment of the Bruzzone family toward the town has been hard to mistake, Metcalf believes. Bitterness and distrust have continued between the town and this major property owner, resulting in stagnation in the town center, Metcalf says.

The Moraga Center Specific

Plan area is owned almost entirely by this family. Metcalf recalls that it took eight years to develop the Specific Plan, "easily two years of that was senseless argument, sometimes the fault the town," recalls Metcalf. He regrets that the Bruzzone family refused to negotiate a development agreement with the town. "What we were trying to do was to put an apparatus in place to develop the public infrastructure that goes with the plan (such as the extension of School Street), but for them it seemed more about control," he says. To him, it remains very sad.

His fellow residents in some instances have also disappointed Metcalf.

In his view the attempt to get a referendum against the City Ventures project was disingenuous and cynical. "It was not at all legal, and the petitioners probably knew it, evidently trying to make the approval process so difficult that the developer would simply walk away," he says. He personally believes that this development along Moraga Way, next to the fire station, will turn out just fine once the construction is complete and the landscaping fills in. "It will be so much better than the vacant lot it is now," he says.

Another of Metcalf's major regrets has to do with the Hacienda de las Flores. His wife, Sharon, is an architect by training, who was a volunteer for the Hacienda Foundation for years with her friend Judy Dinkle and several other volunteers. Metcalf truly supported and liked the work that was done by the architect firm Gould Evans, and the concept of a public/private partnership to develop the property. This work represented a great beginning to establishing a business plan for what he calls a public treasure, providing some much-needed amenities for the town. The mayor was disheartened when the project was abruptly derailed and died. "It was like watching a train wreck in slow motion," he

remembers.

Metcalf can take credit for the process that led to the adoption of Measure K. It started with getting the town's finances on the right track, hiring quality auditors, forming an audit and finance committee, and hiring real professionals to manage the town finances. He is proud that town staff continues to receive peer awards for superlative financial reporting, and that the town enjoys a high credit rating. He supported the 2009 study by the revenue enhancement committee that showed that the city was not overspending and needed new sources of revenue to take care of its infrastructure. He involved himself in the outreach that followed and led to passage of Measure K — remarkably, by over 70 percent voter approval. He believes that this instructive approach is necessary to build residents' trust and support for any project. He hopes that such a process will be used for funding the needed storm drain repair.

Over the years Metcalf has formed several meaningful friendships, including with the long-standing town staff. He remembers fondly John Carey on the planning commission: "the brightest and most enjoyable man I worked with." He also very much appreciated Howard Harpham, who was council member for four years, for his intelligence, wit and integrity. For many years he has worked alongside Dave Trotter. "We are very different people, but we understand each other pretty well, and get things done," he says.

Metcalf is not concerned at all about having nothing to do as he steps down. He says that from his now long life, much remains yet to be done. He has a lot of things going on and a long bucket list he wants to get to. It is likely that he will continue to contribute to the town of Moraga, if only as a part of the Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley, in which he has been involved with for about 12 years.