

Design Board Reviews Content-Neutral Sign Ordinance

By Steve Angelides

The Moraga Design Review Board spent its June 25 meeting reviewing the first draft of a proposed content-neutral sign ordinance prepared by Planning Director Lori Salamack.

Salamack prepared the draft following a study session at the Board's previous meeting during which the Board heard a taped presentation by a law professor who said sign ordinances should be content-neutral to be enforceable.

The Town's current sign ordinance is not content-neutral. It has special provisions for reader boards and marquees, memorial markers, flags, barber poles, political signs, real estate signs, service clubs, service stations, special events, and time and temperature signs, among others.

Salamack's draft proposes to regulate signs depending on the use of the property where the sign is posted instead of the content of the sign. "Let's just say that will be easier to enforce," Salamack explained to the Board. Asked how broken the Town's current ordinance is, Salamack would say only, "it's broken."

At the meeting the Board members and the three Town residents who attended and spoke suggested several significant changes to Salamack's draft.

The draft allows a permanent 6 square foot illuminated sign on residential property. It was suggested that only externally illuminated signs be permitted on residential property, and that 6 square feet was too large.

Acknowledging the wishes of the merchants who spoke at the study session for a neon "open" sign, the draft would allow a one square foot neon sign. It was suggested that "open" signs that small might not

be readily available.

The draft limits temporary signs on non-residential property to 10% of the window area. It was suggested that Walnut Creek's limit of 15% might be more appropriate.

Acknowledging the merchants' wishes, the draft permits temporary "A frame" signs on non-residential property. It was suggested there be a limit on how far from the store front such signs could be placed, a limit on what percentage of the merchants in each shopping center could have such temporary signs at one time, and a limit on how close such signs could be to a scenic corridor.

In an effort to accommodate open house signs, the draft permits temporary self-supporting signs on Town sidewalks from noon to 5 p.m. on Sundays. However, after it was pointed out that most of Moraga lacks sidewalks, Salamack said that issue needs to be rethought.

Salamack said she will prepare a second draft incorporating the suggestions made at the meeting, and present it to the Board in August at the earliest.

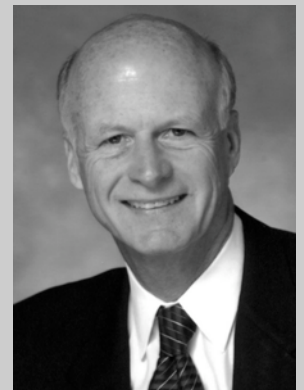


The Right Lender to Know™

"My clients keep coming back because they know I'll find them the best loan program, at the best rate, every time."

Gordon Steele

Mortgage Consultant
Office: 925.627.7109
gsteele@rpm-mortgage.com
www.rpm-mortgage.com/gsteele



925-627-7109

1777 Botelho Drive • Walnut Creek, CA 94596

serving Lamorinda since 1986

CA Dept. of Real Estate - real estate broker license # 01201643

Hallmark
KEEPSAKE

Join us for
Keepsake Ornament Premiere
July 14, 2007

Free Gift with \$100 Ornament purchase

H & A Hallmark Shop • 1460-H Moraga Road • Moraga • 925-376-7580

across the way...
a unique lifestyle store

BarlowTyrie

Fine Garden Furniture



Collection designed by Vladamir Kagen

Discover an extensive collection of exquisite outdoor furniture and accessories, featuring fine English teak by BarlowTyrie.

across the way

(925) 376-3600 ext. 3 • 1480 G Moraga Road

Moraga Shopping Center
(across from Moraga Hardware & Lumber)

Shop Moraga First • Support your locally owned & operated businesses