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Bluffs Residents Get An Education

By *Sophie Braccini*

Last Thursday evening, Bluffs Neighborhood Association President Frank Comprelli invited his neighbors to the library to meet with the proponents of Measures J, K and the "No on Both" campaign. (The Bluffs is the Moraga neighborhood located to the north of Bollinger Canyon Rd, around Joseph Drive.)

Comprelli's objective was for the residents to be educated on the issues so that they could make an informed decision. 40 to 50 residents came, heard the presentations, and asked questions of the three groups. This precursor to the Moraga Citizen's Network forum that will be held on October 13th for all the residents saw the emergence of serious points of contention that are likely to be debated again.

Bob Jungbluth, a planning commissioner in Orinda, presented for Measure J until he was replaced by Dave Bruzzone during the debate. He stressed that Measure J would preserve the Town's General Plan, add more than 500 acres of open space and leave options in the hands of the Town to negotiate the development agreement that's included in the Measure. He argued that Measure K would force the town to develop multi-family housing in the town center, because the measure would protect ridge lines, creeks, riparian corridors and prohibit development on slopes of more than 20% and thus would prohibit development almost anywhere in town but the center.

The extent to which measure K would apply to the entire town was at the center of the debate that night.

Renata Sos, who spoke for Measure K, said that Jungbluth's interpretation is incorrect. Sos stated that Measure K would apply only to the land that is designated in the measure as MOSO 2008 land: Bollinger Canyon, Indian Valley, Rheem ridge, Campo Ridge, Mulholand Ridge, Sanders and Larch ridges. She explained that Measure K was necessary to provide tools to stop development in areas that are not regulated by MOSO 1986 (Bollinger Canyon) or insufficiently protected. She added that the idea that Measure K would generate lawsuits was already used against the previous MOSO, and that many more such lawsuits over open space have been won by towns since.

Steve Woehceke, a former Moraga planning commissioner who was there to represent the "No on Both" movement, took the stand and used the debate between K and J proponents to build his arguments. "The measures are complex and invite conflict," he said, "we could get into multiple law suits." He explained that the present process works well and has effectively protected the town against excessive development. "Neither initiative is needed," said a very animated Woehceke, "the average number of homes that have been built every year in the town is 19." He explained the audience that rather than voting non-negotiable ordinances, his group favors a planning process that can be long, but invite discussion with public input.

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