

# LAMORINDA WEEKLY

[Home](#) | [Read Online](#) | [Archive](#) | [Links](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Contact](#)

[printer friendly](#)

[download pdf](#)

Published April 1st, 2009

## Palos Colorados Precise Development Plan Approved, But...

By *Sophie Braccini*

The joint meeting between the Planning Commission and the Design Review Board on March 16 made definite progress in getting the Palos Colorados development project where it wants to go, meaning, off the ground of the property located east of Moraga Road and south of Sky Hy Drive. The Precise Development Plan (PDP) was approved by the Planning Commission after a long discussion where all participants made a conscious effort to find common ground. The plan approves plans for semi-custom homes and design guidelines for the property owners who may want to build totally custom homes. However, on March 25, the Planning Commission's decision was appealed by a Council Member and the Town Council will review the issue at its April 8 meeting.

The main issues that had stopped the Commission and the Design Review Board from adopting the plan during previous sessions were the lack of written commitment from the developer to apply green guidelines to the project and the size of some semi-custom homes that exceeded 6000 sq ft, not including the garage, that were found excessive for lots that often barely exceed 1/2 acre.

During the March 16 meeting, it was clear that both staff and developer were eager to reach a solution. At a previous Town Council meeting, Moraga Mayor Dave Trotter had clearly formulated his desire to see the matter resolved, so the Planning Commission could concentrate on other issues, such as the Specific Plan.

Lori Salamack, Moraga Planning Director, relayed that request when the Commissioners expressed their desire to add more time for the developer and themselves to consider different options. From that point on, the Commission made a conscious effort to reach a solution that night.

As far as a green building commitment was concerned, the Commission was satisfied with the offer of the developer's statement to make his best effort to reach 90 points on the Green Building Point System Table.

The other controversial aspect of the size of the homes was solved with the adoption of a chart proposed by Planning Commission Chair Bruce Whitley to restrict the size of the homes according to the size of the lot. Previously, there was no such ratio applicable for houses located on lot larger than 20,000 sq ft (1/2 acre). Whitley's chart in fact prohibits any custom home to reach 5000 sq ft on the lots as they have been approved for this development.

The developer accepted Whitley's chart, restricting the size of custom homes. The PDP also includes many different plans of semi-custom homes, which new owners could build without the need to go through Design Review Board. Among them were two plans of more than 5000 sq ft (not including the garage) and one of more than 6000 sq ft. That later was rejected by the two town advisory bodies, while the 2 plans above 5000 sq ft were approved.

At the end of the meeting, Lori Salamack reminded the audience that there was a 10 day period during which the decision could be appealed to the Town Council. Council Member Ken Chew promptly appealed the decision, saying, "Some new information surfaced and it appears that the PDP presents some inconsistency with the Town Guidelines." The Council will hear the appeal on April 8 during its regular meeting.

Reach the reporter at: [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com)

[Home](#) | [Read Online](#) | [Archive](#) | [Links](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Contact](#)

[back to top](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA