

Moraga

Lamorinda Community

Calendar	
Town Council	7:30pm
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School 1010 Camino Pablo	
Wednesday, September 9	
Planning Comm.	7:30pm
Moraga Library 1500 Saint Marys Rd	
Monday, September 21 (Tuesday September 8 cancelled)	
Design Review	7:30pm
Moraga Library 1500 Saint Marys Rd	
Monday, September 14	
Liaison	8:00am
Fire Station 1280 Moraga Way	
Friday, September 11	
Town of Moraga online: http://www.ci.moraga.ca.us	
Chamber of Commerce: http://www.moragachamber.org	



Rolling stop, 8/24/09 A green Volvo was stopped at Camino Pablo at Canyon Road for failing to stop at a stop sign. The juvenile driver, not immature but under eighteen, was offered a diversion program to learn the error of his ways. The parents agreed, perhaps keeping the youthful driver's record clean for insurance purposes.

Dog bite, 8/23/09 There was a report of a dog bite in front of 24 Hour Fitness. A four year old girl was bitten on the left arm and was checked and released at the scene by the Moraga-Orinda Fire Department. Her father was there and took her to the hospital. This reporter has seen a few large dogs in front of the facility, no word if they were the culprits. They seem very well-mannered.

Ammo turn-in, 8/23/09 A Laird Place resident contacted police to turn in ammunition for destruction. Police took custody of several boxes of ammunition. Yes, all the area police departments are happy to take ammunition and even firearms and dispose of them properly. Not a great idea to just throw that kind of thing in a garbage can.

Loud party, 8/22/09 Around midnight officers responded to a loud party on Ascot Drive. Police contacted the three, count 'em, residents and informed them of the complaint. Presumed roommates were given a copy of the Town of Moraga loud party ordinance, a copy was also mailed to the property owner. A neighbor reports that he often discovers empty beer cans and cigarette butts on his patio after parties. Not the first time this has happened on that street.

Rancho Laguna Project Moved Forward by Commission but Appealed by Residents

By Sophie Braccini
On August 17 a unanimous Planning Commission approved the Conceptual Development Plan (CDP) and Conditional Use Permit (CUP) of the Rancho Laguna II project, 6 years after the process began. Residents questioning the impact of the plan both visually and environmentally have filed an appeal of the decision. The Town Council will have to make the decision to either approve the CDP and CUP, or send the project back for more study.

The plans call for 27 homes located on 169 acres of empty land along Rheem Boulevard, north of Saint Mary's Road. Six of the homes would be built along the boulevard and 21 on a southern plateau.

Planning Commission Chair Margaret Goglia was the last of the Planning Commissioners to voice her opinion at the meeting and she concurred with her colleagues in approving the project, adding "(Rancho Laguna) would be an asset to the community."

Speaking earlier, Planning Commissioner Bruce Whitley recalled the past 6 years during which he watched the project evolve. "It's my opinion that it is essentially a good project," he said "we've come a long way in the six years and I will approve the project."

He nonetheless highlighted the fact that the project is highly controversial, and that whether the impact was 'below significant' was a tough judgment call.

Two of Whitley's main concerns had been voiced in the years before and were presented again by Moraga residents during the hearing. One issue is whether or not the development is located on a ridge line. The elevation of the southern plateau could be high enough to be considered a minor ridgeline.

The homes proposed for the southern plateau would not be seen from Rheem Boulevard, but Birchwood Drive residents would overlook it, and they could also be seen from part of the Bluffs and some Lafayette residences. Birchwood resident Suzanne Bare expressed her concern with the value of the home her family recently purchased. "This project would have a new adverse visual impact for current residents," she said, "and it will affect the property values along the street." She recognized that the development had positive benefits, but she was disappointed that the developer was not being sensitive to the visual impact of the project for those residents who have a direct view of it.

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Private Letter to Regional Authority May Delay Approval of Housing Element

By Sophie Braccini
In a letter dated July 17, 2009, Dick Loewke asked the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) not to certify the housing element filed by the Town of Moraga. The Housing Element is a 7-year plan that details how the town will fulfill its regional obligation to build 307 new housing units. Loewke was writing on behalf of Joan Bruzzone, the owner a significant portion of the property in Moraga.

"It is not uncommon to have individuals write such letters," said Moraga Planning Director Lori Salamack, "it is called a 'third party comment' and the town's obligation is now to work with the third party to resolve the issue." Salamack added that the letter surprised her because her department had worked so well with that property owner during the process of establishing the housing plan.

In his letter to HCD Loewke stressed how Moraga had consistently failed to fulfill its regional obligation for producing housing within its boundaries, especially in the very low to moderate income categories. He strove to demonstrate that governmental and economic constraints which limit any developer's ability to work were not realistically identified in the draft housing element that the Town submitted to HCD. Loewke suggested that in order to produce a realistic housing element plan, the town should first study the entire feasibility of the Moraga Center Specific Plan, because most of the proposed housing is located within that plan. He concluded that the plan of building 307 new dwellings was infeasible in the 2007-2014 timeframe.

In her response to HCD Salamack defended the plan and the town's policy. She believes that Loewke's allegations were misleading and she invited Janet Miles, Housing Policy Division of HCD to visit the town on August 26 to get an accurate picture of the local possibilities and constraints. Salamack is establishing a working group composed of staff, planning commissioners, design review board members, and consultants that will work with the main property owners, the Bruzzone and Chi families, to finalize the ordinances for the specific plan area and the housing element over the next six to eight months.

After 35 Years at the Hacienda, Senior Bridge Players Find New Homes

By Sophie Braccini
Alex Teller never thought he would see the day when the Moraga seniors bridge club would feel forced out of the Hacienda de las Flores. Teller was around when the group was created 35 years ago (his wife's aunt was the founder of the bridge club) and he helped even before becoming a senior himself. "The group of players has consistently used the Hacienda two to three times a week in the La Sala building since the 70's," he said, "but when we were told by Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram to pay a fee to continue to use our customary location, we decided to go."

As of July, the bridge club plays at the senior housing facilities, Moraga Royale on Monday evenings and Aegis on Friday

evenings, where they are warmly welcomed.

"We never told the players that they had to go," said Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram, who manages the agenda of the public Hacienda, "but it is clear that if they were not willing to contribute financially to the cost associated with their usage, having them continuing to play here was our least favorite option."

For Teller and his friends the financial argument is not valid. "We the seniors, along with the rest of the community, have paid for the Hacienda with our taxes already," he said, "many of us were already here when the town purchased the Rheem Estate in the 70's. It belongs to us, the residents, and taxing or squeezing us seniors now is not acceptable."

Jay Ingram has his own budgetary constraints and says all groups are now required to pay a fee to use public buildings, granting no grandfathering, however ancient the custom might be. "The Council approved the fee structure and we have to apply it," he said, "I know it's a change of culture but most groups have adapted and they end up paying it."

The seniors want to continue to contribute to the town and still consider Ingram their good friend, however, "It's a sorry day when seniors can no longer have complimentary use, for six hours a week, of the building designated as a community center," said Teller, "and we will not come back to the Hacienda under the current terms."

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Moraga, CA 94556
www.willowspringchurch.org
(925) 376-3550

Sunday Service Times:
Prayer.....8:00am
Traditional.....9:00am
Contemporary.....10:30am

We have services for children and youth after the 10:30 worship time

Nursery care is available during the 9:00am and 10:30am services

Weekly Activities Include:
Wednesday:
Community Bible Study...10am
Friday Night:
BLAST! Kids Club.....6pm



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-Nanette Ashley, Member

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1st-5th Grade please call (925) 376-3550 for more information.

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-Dr. Brad Reiches, GodThoughts, Volume 2*



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-Chris Hightower, Regular Attender

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*Willow Spring Church is the home of the Internationally recognized "GodThoughts" Ministry serving more than 10,000 people daily in over 100 countries around the world.

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Check out pages 9-13 of our fall activity guide - it's full of new and returning enrichment classes for people of all ages.

Tiny Tumblers Gymnastics, Mad Science classes, tot soccer, barre workouts, senior stretch fitness, cooking, painting and more.

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