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## "Ministerial Process" Delays Specific Plan Approval

*By Sophie Braccini*

At the December 7th meeting of the Moraga Planning Commission, Commissioner Margaret Goglia, realizing that this was the last time the Commission would be able to review the document, asked for more "green" requirements and for public transportation options to be studied before making a final recommendation regarding the 20-dwelling-units per acre ordinance that's included in the town's housing element. The housing element goes hand in hand with the down town Specific Plan.

Once the ordinance is adopted by the Town Council, a developer will be able to build residences at a 20-dwelling-units per acre density (up to 30 du/a for senior housing) on a six acre lot located in the down town area, either by Aegis of Moraga on Country Club Drive; or on the north side of the creek, across from the Moraga Commons. There would be no public hearing regarding this potential development, and only approval by staff is required.

This "Ministerial Process" is a requirement of the California Department of Housing and Community Development, the agency that must approve Moraga's housing element. Moraga, like every other jurisdiction in California, has a State obligation to plan for the construction of a certain number of affordable housing units. Moraga chose to meet its obligation by zoning a set area for higher density.

The ordinance that defines all the parameters of this potential development was drafted by a sub-committee that included two council members, two members of the planning commission and the design review board, Town staff, and the main property owner, the Bruzzone family.

Since traffic has been a concern both for residents and the neighboring towns of Lafayette and Orinda, Goglia asked that a shuttle or public transportation option to BART be included in the ordinance. The Commission will meet again on January 4th to discuss it and will probably make its final recommendation to the Council that night. The Council will consider its final decision on January 13th.

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