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Moraga Country Club Station Post Office in Danger of Closing

By Cynthia Brian



Moraga postal workers and former Moraga Postmasters attended the April 19th meeting. From left to right, Shelley Hayse (Rheem office), Evelina Ramirez (former Moraga Postmaster, currently in San Leandro), Gurpreet Sohail (former Moraga Postmaster, currently in Fremont), Mark Fahmy (Country Club Station) Photo Cynthia Brian

solely by Congressional authority, post offices may only be closed at lease expirations, for maintenance issues, and for reasons unrelated to profits. As a cost cutting measure, the USPS would like to close as many as 16,000 offices nationwide.

Moraga resident Dick Olsen observed, "My first concern is that the post office did not bother to tell the residents of all of Moraga or South Orinda about their plans to close the Country Club Station."

"My second concern," continued Olsen, "is the potentially significant environmental issues. Will the USPS do an Environmental Impact Report because of the negative environmental impact to the community regarding this discretionary act? People will now be forced to travel to Rheem, Orinda, Canyon, or Saint Mary's College to be serviced. Parking in three of these locales is impossible." Olsen added, "If the Country Club Station closes, there will be a major detrimental impact for seniors, especially those at Moraga Royale and Aegis. The new Moraga Center Specific Plan calls for three hundred additional senior units installed adjacent to the Moraga Center and Safeway, which is basically across the street from this facility."

Traveling a few miles could be a burden, especially if one does not have transportation. The effect on seniors, businesses, and local residents who have depended on the services at this location for years was troubling for the vocal group at the meeting. The School Street building is what many called a "walk-able" post office, meaning that a great number of people who use the services do not drive, but stroll.

After the meeting, Postal Workers Union of the East Bay Area President Stephen Lysaght said that his group has lobbied extensively against the closing of the Moraga station. "We are concerned with the customers' best interest and question the closing a profitable business unit," he said. He encourages residents who do not want to see the station closed to continue lobbying against it.

"We will continue to give good service to the public in the Country Club or Rheem office," said Postal Service worker Mark Fahmy, who is currently the only employee of the Country Club station, "This is our commitment as employees of the U.S. Postal Service. But we should take into consideration the issues that people expressed in the meeting."

Sophie Braccini contributed to this article

Reach Augustine Ruiz, Public Affairs and Communications Director, at 408-437-6841 or Augustine.ruiz@usps.gov.

Letters for or against the closure and consolidation should be directed to the District Manager (or your elected federal representatives):

Kim Fernandez
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1675 7th Street
Oakland, Ca. 94615

USPS Revenue Boost

Shanette Westphal recently got a startling reminder that mail boxes are the property of the U.S. Postal Service and cannot be used for any purpose other than the delivery of stamped mail. "My husband is the president of the Moraga Baseball Association and Opening Day was last weekend," she wrote in a note to the Moraga Citizens Network in February, "The person in charge of the programs kindly dropped off an extra copy of the program in my mailbox (which lives at the bottom of my steep driveway) with a 'thank you' note to my husband. Apparently the US Postal Service collected this program prior to me getting my mail and left a slip stating that there was mail that I needed to pick up with postage due in the amount of \$2.58." A short time later the mail carrier came to her door with the program, ready to collect the money.

A Postal Service employee confirmed that the rule had always been in existence and that it was enforced everywhere: "No one should touch your mail box or you run the risk of paying postage."

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