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## **A Consequence of a Dollar Tree Dilemma**

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The Economic Development Action Team (EDAC) started working on a Community Commercial Ordinance (or retail ordinance) on May 18. Moraga does not currently have a retail ordinance in place, requiring businesses that want to set up shop here to go through a process that sometimes proves to have an unpredictable outcome.

Planning Director Lori Salamack presented a draft ordinance to the 13 members of EDAC. The text is an attempt to make it easier for many types of businesses to open in Moraga, while giving some tools to the public that wants to have some input into the shopping experience in Moraga.

Salamack proposed rules that would permit most business application processing to be streamlined, to the extent that the owners who are proposing a type of activity that is deemed desirable in town could get essentially get a permit over the counter. Her department listed uses such as bakery, hardware store, bank, offices, hotels, restaurants, antiques, music and electronic stores, and grocery stores as possible candidates for permitted-use permits; the Planning Department has listened to the opposition of some of the residents to the Dollar Tree store and added limitations based on size and traffic.

Businesses not part of that first permitted-use category could still apply to operate in Moraga, but the application would be subject to findings, meaning more public review, and less predictability in term of timing and outcome. Some remarked that before influencing what kind of retail experience Moraga should provide, it is necessary to define what that experience should be. The next meeting will address the establishment of a mission statement that will encourage certain types of businesses. Zoning, also a powerful tool to foster a vision, will be reviewed.

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