



Moraga

Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, August 24, 7:00 pm
(no meeting on August 10)
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Monday, August 15, 7:30 pm
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

Design Review

Monday, August 8, 7:00 pm
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

Liaison

Friday, August 12, 8:00 am
Fire Station, 1280 Moraga Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

Town of Moraga:

www.moraga.ca.us

Chamber of Commerce:

www.moragachamber.org

Moraga Citizens' Network:

www.moragacitizensnetwork.org



Police Report

Chevy Tahoe not going to Tahoe, 7/21/11 Actually not going anywhere. A 1999 Chevy Tahoe was stalled on Bollinger Canyon near St. Mary's Road with expired registration tags. Because of the substantial expiration – more than four years – Lamorinda Tow gave the Tahoe a lift. Registered owner happened to be at the scene – cops handed him a letter informing him of the tow – but he probably figured that out already.

D.U.I. 7/21/11 A 19-year-old male was going 65 m.p.h. along Moraga Way at 11:00 one night. Cops were tipped off by his bloodshot, watery eyes, slurred speech and his Eau de Alcohol odor. He was breathalyzed, cited, taken into custody and finally released to a sober family member.

Married couple fighting, 7/22/11 Cops paid a visit to a Moraga couple due to an abandoned 911 call. Turns out they had both been drinking and were involved in a verbal dispute – and thankfully no physical contact was made. Taking the cops up on their suggestion – the male spouse agreed to spend the duration of the evening elsewhere.

Rolling away, 7/23/11 A fellow who had posted an ad for a 2009 road bike on Craigslist agreed to meet a potential buyer at the Chevron station. Of course the potential buyer wanted to take it for a spin. After waiting twenty minutes the seller realized his bike may have been stolen. Although he searched the area, no sign of the bike or erstwhile buyer.

Flames on street, 7/24/11 At midnight, police reported to Ascot Drive on a report of a possible fire in the middle of the road. Cops found a small plant burning – possibly fueled by alcohol. The fire department came and kicked the fire out. There were several empty bottles of alcohol found in the immediate area. Potential suspects had scattered.

Five false alarms, between 7/21 and 7/25, but no actual break-ins during that period. Cops responded to alarms on Sanders Drive, St. Andrews, two at a house on Laird and one at Paseo Grande. In each case, nothing unusual was found. Which begs the question, did the alarms actually work and scare off potential burglars or just malfunctioning? Housesitters accidentally triggered the alarm at the Sanders Drive home. St. Andrews and Laird homes – locked, no signs of attempted entry, and finally the Paseo Grande residence had a small dog inside who may be at fault. No comment from the pooch at this time.

Peralta Construction

CUSTOM HOMES | ADDITIONS | REMODELING

owned and operated by Moraga resident
Pat Geoghegan



Lic #624045

BUILDING THE BAY AREA FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS

925.273.7692

www.peraltaconstruction.com

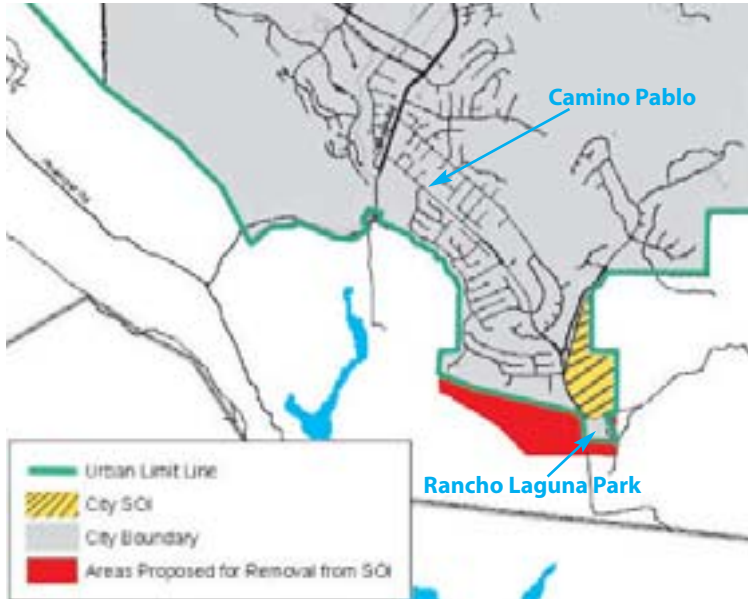
Get Clean.

Total Clean 376-1004
For your home.

Moraga's Sphere of Influence

Town has little control over large projects in some nearby unincorporated areas, such as those near Rancho Laguna Park

By Sophie Braccini



Map courtesy Moraga Planning Department

Moraga has precise rules when it comes to building on open space, such as those limiting density and protecting ridgelines. Yet, near Rancho Laguna Park, grand homes stand on ridgelines to the west and stately dwellings exist in a densely-built subdivision—the Skyline devel-

opment—just north of the park. A bit of Moraga history sheds light on how this came to be, and what the future may hold.

Moraga's Senior Planner, Rich Chamberlain, has a finely-honed understanding of the situation. "One of the key reasons why Moraga resi-

dents voted to incorporate the Town in 1974 was to be able to control the development process," he explains. Prior to incorporation, projects were approved by the County Planning Department; and although the Moraga area had an advisory body that made recommendations to the County, these recommendations were at times ignored.

"One of the challenges of incorporation was to design the boundaries of the Town," recalls Chamberlain "It was a balancing act between what the Town wanted to control and the amount of space and roads it would be able to maintain."

The Moraga Parks and Recreation Foundation, which was formed to buy the Hacienda de las Flores property, determined boundaries that included the property which would later become Rancho Laguna Park, but left out the Carr Ranch lands and other open space properties surrounding the park—creating a strange map with a little pocket at its south-east border (see image).

Years later, when a piece of Carr Ranch was sold to developers for the Skyline subdivision, the Town objected to plans for a density of more than two dwellings per acre. "The County Planning Department agreed with the Town," remembers Chamberlain, "but the developer appealed the decision to the County Board of Supervisors, which overruled the decision. When the Town complained, the response was that the area was not within the Town's sphere of influence."

Typically, a sphere of influence is the territory a city or district is expected to annex. The Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) regulates spheres of influence (SOI). According to its mission statement, "LAFCO must adopt a sphere of influence (SOI) for each city and special district...The SOI serves as the ultimate planning boundary for a local agency." LAFCO reviews SOIs at least once every five years.

... continued from page A4

High Density Single-Family Housing Proposed Across From Rheem Center

By Sophie Braccini



Proposal for 21 homes on two acres

Graphic courtesy Town of Moraga

During a study session at a mid-July meeting of the Moraga Planning Commission, Signature Homes presented a plan to build 21 single-family detached homes on a two-acre lot located across from the Rheem Center on Moraga Road that was once the site of a bowling alley.

The land belongs to Mike and Jim Knuppe, who also own the adjoining lot on which sits AAAAA Rent A Space, and who have struggled to find a profitable use for the vacant lot – they previously proposed a condominium project, which the Planning Commission had supported, that was later deemed economically unviable. Commission was favorably in-

clined toward the new project, considering it compatible with the commercial Rheem Center. Because this was only a study session, should the developer decide to move forward with the plan it would have to go through a full review where issues such as traffic, parking, pedestrian circulation and visual impact in the scenic corridor would be scrutinized.

Signature Homes is a 27-year old Bay Area/Sacramento area developer that builds condos and single family homes, more or less densely clustered together. Its Pleasant Oak project in Roseville is similar to what is proposed in Moraga: two-story homes with an average size of 1900 square

feet on lots of about 2700 square feet. The homes would all have four bedrooms, and 2-car garages and driveways. Patios would form the back yards.

"We choose a Spanish theme to tie in with the existing buildings on this strip," said the developer's representative, "Young families are attracted to this type of home, as well as residents who want to downsize, don't want to have to maintain a yard, but still want to keep the feel of a single detached home."

Some of the residents who came to the meeting said that the project's density was not what the community wanted to see. A resident of the nearby Moraga Place development indicated that he was concerned that this project was out of character with the town. Resident Claire Roth concurred, adding that this project looked like the sort of single-family home subdivision that can be seen outside of urban areas where someone can lean out of his window and shake hands with the person next door. Resident Scott Bowhay commented that he liked the idea of small parcels, but not in a location where traffic is so intense.

Ellen Beans, of the Moraga Citizens' Network, spoke in support of the project, pointing out that smaller, more energy efficient homes are the wave of the future.

The developer indicated that Signature Homes only builds to green building standards and that the average monthly energy bill of the homes would be about \$100, and noted that

this project is quite similar to what is outlined in the Moraga Center Specific Plan, where high density housing adjoins commercial development.

"We were told that high density is vital to thriving commercial use on the other side of town (the Moraga Center area)," said Planning Commissioner Bruce Whitley, "We don't want high density anywhere else in town other than in the commercial centers. If housing is granted here, then it has to be higher density."

Other commissioners agreed that high density in the area was appropriate, but some were a bit uncomfortable with the concept of detached family homes being so close together. "I liked the condominium concept," said Commissioner Stacia Levenfeld, "the concept of smaller homes makes sense, but I am concerned about density." Commissioner Roger Wykle asked the developer if it had thought about the type of neighborhood it wanted to create, "why not put the garage in the back and porches in front to encourage residents to walk outside and develop a community?" he asked.

All of the commissioners expressed concerns about pedestrian traffic. "The Starbucks is just across the street," said chair Russell Driver, "the walk to the next stop sign is down a long and noisy block; some creative solutions will have to be found."

The area is currently zoned Limited Commercial; all uses, other than agriculture, require a conditional use permit.

More Moraga Civic News on Page A10

MORAGA PARKS & RECREATION
925-888-7045 • www.moraga.ca.us

Fall Activities in Moraga!

Look for the next activity guide in your mailboxes mid August.

Activities for the entire family from September to December.

Providing Insurance and Financial Services

It's no accident more people trust State Farm.

Mike Rosa, Agent
Insurance Lic. #: 0F45583
1042 Country Club Drive, Moraga
925-376-2244

LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR STATE FARM IS THERE.®

P040036 02/04 State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company (Not in NJ), Bloomington, IL