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Michael Frazier  
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## Noise, Fountain and Colors Adjusted for Gas Station

By Sophie Braccini

The Design Review Board (DRB) recently approved the concept for the gas station Nick Ghassem purchased last year and will renovate on Moraga Road, next to 5A-Rent-A-Space. His ambition is to make the place not only practical and cost effective, but also visually attractive for his customers with front landscaping featuring a water fountain. The DRB made sure that the concept meets the Town's requirements for development along a scenic corridor.

On February 6, the Planning Commission approved the project that consists of remodeling the existing structure to accommodate an expanded convenience store, oil change bay, and automated drive-through carwash. As proposed, the new car-

wash will be made of white concrete blocks, and the entire structure would be painted white. Polycarbonate carwash doors will be installed at the south bay to attenuate noise, matching the existing service bay doors. An outdoor freestanding vacuum air station was proposed near the south property line, in front of the car wash.

"The building is still in good shape and we just want to bring it back to life," said Patrick Whelan, the project's architect, of a station that was foreclosed about a year ago. "We chose the white color to match the existing building and to keep it neutral since the owner has not decided yet with which brand of gas he will contract for."

The color white, even if it had

been the existing color of the station, did not appeal to the DRB Members. "A more neutral color would not be as contrasting with the surrounding hillside" said DRB member Christine Kuckuk. Others who were not fan of the concrete blocks agreed with her that beige would minimize the visual impact.

The proposal for a fountain raised concerns as well. "I will not make any money with it," said Ghassem, "it's going to make the town very pretty." But Kuckuk said she believed that the fountain was out of the semi-rural character of the town, while during public comment resident staff engineer John Sherbert expressed concerns over adding a fountain when Moraga might be

confronted with drought. "I like the fountain," said DRB Chair Allan Sayles, "and during drought years, it can be filled with dirt and planted with flowers." A majority of the Board approved that position.

A concern about noise was raised by resident Mark Weinberg who lives close to the station. "What are the hours of operation?" he asked, "noise reverberates in the Rheem Valley, and I can hear the crowd at Campo (Campolindo High school) when they play at night."

Planning Director Shawna Brekke-Read said that the Planning Commission set the hours of operation of the carwash to 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. seven days of week, while the pumping station would be opened

from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Kuckuk, who had additional concerns regarding the noise impact of the vacuum station that completes the car wash, asked that it be moved where it would create the least off-site noise. Her recommendation was added to the conditions of approval by the DRB, with the additional requirement that existing pine trees be replaced should they die.

Ghassem still has to get the construction bid out and complete the renovation of the station; he plans for a late June opening. "I already own a station in Walnut Creek," said Ghassem, "we were voted the cleanest and best service station in California; I intend to do the same in Moraga."

## Jerry Meyers Retires at 87

By Sophie Braccini



Mike Metcalf presents a Certificate of Appreciation to Jerry Meyers

Photo Sophie Braccini

It's not every day that a volunteer is honored in Moraga for 38 years of unflinching service. The ceremony that was held on March 9 to honor 87-year-old Jerry Meyers was one of those unique and precious events at which everyone suddenly becomes aware that a part of local history is being memorialized before changing forever.

Meyers moved to Moraga 51 years ago with her family. 38 years ago, she institutionalized, and has been moderating ever since, the monthly Town Firehouse Liaison meeting. That gathering, every second Friday of the month at 8:00 a.m., is an opportunity for the Town, the library, the schools, and the service groups to inform each other of what is happening in their immediate envi-

ronment, and then to broadcast this information to their constituencies. Some people, like the Mayor, the Town Manager, the Fire and Police Chiefs are always there; others come when their group is preparing a big event.

Meyers has been conducting these meetings with a firm hand, making sure that by 9:00 a.m. everyone was done, and that all those who had something to say were able to do so. Meyers has had more than her share of hardships, her only remaining live descendant is a grandson whom she loves dearly, but she has always maintain the calm and courteous composure of a lady. Her frail build has never kept her from being a strong presence and it was with the utmost respect that Town and District

officials paid her tribute.

Former Mayor Ken Chew captured it in a simple sentence, "When I got ready to go to my first Liaison meeting as a mayor someone told me 'You might be the mayor, but when you get to the Liaison meeting, Jerry Meyers is in charge'," he recalled. Current Mayor Mike Metcalf gave her an official Town Certificate of Appreciation that highlighted the service she's rendered to the community by facilitating communication between all of the Town's major players.

Carol Yates, on behalf of Supervisor Gayle Uilkema, presented her with a Resolution signed by the Board of Supervisors that recalled some of Jerry Meyers' accomplishments, like her participation in the 1974 committee to incorporate the Town, her nomination as Citizen of the Year in 1979, her participation in the planning and construction of the current library as a member of the friends of Moraga library, her participation in the 2000 campaign to incorporate the Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD), and her role as a founding member of the Rescue One Foundation.

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## First Casino Night in Moraga

By Sophie Braccini



Photo Sophie Braccini

The ladies were elegant, the younger ones sexy, and the gentlemen on their best behavior, on Saturday night, March 3rd, at the Hacienda de las Flores. Tables of Craps, Poker, Blackjack and Roulette were well-attended for the first Moraga Casino Night for the Parks, and the excitement was palpable.

About 80 residents bought tickets that gave them access to a Hacienda that had been turned into a mini Las Vegas for a night, with the help of Aces Up Casino Parties and its very professional dealers. "We are very happy with the turn-out," said Mor-

aga Parks and Recreation Assistant Kim Burrows, "we have people from all ages here tonight and the stakes are high!"

The younger crowd came in support of new play equipment for Rancho Laguna Park, while more mature residents came just for the fun. According to Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram the evening raised \$2,000 for the play structure, "I'm encouraged by the fact that we got very nice feedback from the people who came, and that the community wants to do it again next year," said Ingram.

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