

**Correction, issue date Nov. 21, 2012**—Moraga's Plan for the Adobe Takes Shape: If you found this article confusing, you are not alone. About halfway through the fourth paragraph, the text of the Adobe article disappears and part of a completely different article, "Thumbs Up for 50+ Units of Housing" takes its place; seamlessly and without warning. The original article, as it should have appeared, is reprinted here; with apologies to our readers and our reporter.

## Moraga's Plan for the Adobe Takes Shape

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Town Council has a plan to save the Joaquin Moraga Adobe from becoming a private club house for 13 homeowners, wanting it preserved as a historical treasure that is open to the public for educational purposes. Trouble is, the Adobe is in Orinda—so last week the Town Council sent a letter to the City of Orinda.

The Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe (FJMA) recently appealed the Orinda Planning Commission's approval of the development of the Adobe property; the appeal will be heard by the Orinda City Council in January.

Introducing the agenda item at the council's Nov. 14 meeting, Town Manager Jill Keimach said that Moraga was respectful of Orinda's process and that the letter was an effort to start a discussion while proposing very specific strategies aimed at preserving the Adobe as a historical site. The staff report reads in part, "The first goal is to provide public access to the Adobe structure in order to educate and showcase the Adobe structure as it was initially

built in 1841, in conformance with the Historical/Cultural Resources Study by the Architectural Resources Group." The second goal is to preserve the view from the Adobe's porch.

The council believes the best solution is for FJMA to purchase both the Adobe and Lot 12, a piece of land where the developer plans to build a house that would, according to FJMA, annihilate the panoramic view from the Adobe's porch—the view that drew Joaquin Moraga and his family to that location in the first place. FJMA would restore and maintain the building as a museum, with help from the Moraga Historical Society.

FJMA President Kent Long expressed hope that with the weight of the town thrown into the battle, albeit "at the 11th hour," the dynamic will change. The property owner and developer, J&J Ranch, requested a delay before the appeal of the project is heard by Orinda's council and Long views this as a positive sign; he anticipates new discussions with J&J Ranch will take place before the

hearing.

If negotiations with the developer are successful, FJMA's challenge would be to find enough money to purchase the property. "Now that we have a plan, we can approach foundations and private companies who might be willing to participate in a non-profit venture," said Long.

Michael Olson of J&J Ranch shared a few thoughts the day after the meeting. "The Town of Moraga reached out to us and gave us a heads up about the letter to the City of Orinda," he said. Although he would not comment on the proposal itself, he indicated that one of the reasons he had to ask to postpone the Orinda hearing was to resume discussions with FJMA. "We have always been open to talking with them and explore options that would be mutually beneficial," he said, "but we also needed to move on with the project."

"The developer is interested in doing the right thing," said Orinda Planning Director Emmanuel Ursu, who added he is hopeful that a compromise would be found.

## Runaway Librarian Settles in Moraga

By Sophie Braccini

There is a twinkle in the eye of Diane McDonnell, Moraga's new librarian – a spark that promises interesting surprises for residents. A long time Placer County librarian, McDonnell's worked in branch libraries and on the administrative side of the public library system. But she and her husband wanted to run away. Not from their children and grandchildren in Placer County, but from their lives

there. "We were ready for the next adventure," she says. "We wanted some unpredictability in our lives." Contra Costa County Library asked her which of four libraries with openings she would like to work at and she chose Moraga.

"I researched statistics about the different municipalities and set my heart on Moraga," says McDonnell. "I got the sense that the library was important to the

community here. I also saw many values that are important to me like family, open space, individualism."

For McDonnell and her husband, who is also a librarian, this is a return to the Bay Area. "I was raised in the Santa Clara/Los Gatos area," she says. "I looked into what the Contra Costa County Library had to offer because it has such a reputation for excellence and innovation." ... continued on page A9

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