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Share Your Thoughts about Moraga Commons Park

By Sophie Braccini



The new skatepark parking lot recently opened on Moraga Road.

Photo Andy Scheck

Moraga Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram just announced that a survey about the future of Moraga Commons Park is now online. Ingram expects about 1,000 residents to participate and provide direction in the development of the park's three key areas: the "back forty," the bocce ball courts and the sand volleyball courts. The survey will be available until April 12.

"We should be able, as a community, to maximize the use of our park acreage for as many residents as possible," said Ingram. In general the park is widely used; except for the zone dubbed the "back forty"—the easterly part of the park that's home to the disc golf course—and the sand volleyball courts. The director believes that residents should have a say on what the future use of these two

areas should be; he also wants to know what they think about increasing the area dedicated to the bocce ball courts.

"We wanted to design an open survey so people can dream of what the ideal use should be; about what they think is most needed in Moraga," said Ingram. Chris Chamberlain, an assistant professor of hospitality, recreation and tourism at Cal State East Bay, and his students, designed the survey pro bono. Chamberlain and his team are experienced in providing such services to area cities, and after the survey closes students will come to community events and parks to collect additional input from residents.

The survey is composed of about 20 questions with a series of choices and additional space for comments.

"For example, the back forty people can choose between leaving the area as is, transforming it into a sports field, a dog park, a meditation trail, tennis courts, and more," said Ingram. "There is also a field where people can suggest a different use or indicate what they do not want to see happen there." All user groups are invited to participate: youth, sports groups, adults, seniors, service groups and schools. "We also invite Saint Mary's students to fill out the survey," added Ingram.

Ingram will present the survey results and a plan, with financing options, to the parks and recreation commission this summer. A final plan should be presented to the town council in the fall.

The survey can be found on the town's website, www.moraga.ca.us.

Fire Chief Presents Plan to Town Council

By Sophie Braccini

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Chief Randall Bradley gave a presentation to the Moraga Town Council March 13 regarding the possible merger of MOFD fire station 43 in Orinda and Contra Costa Fire Protection District station 16 in Lafayette (read the related articles on pages A2 and A11).

The council did not express a definitive opinion about the consolidation plan, which Bradley estimates would save the fire district about \$1 million per year, but it appeared to be

favorable to the idea.

During the meeting's public comment period, Moraga resident and former MOFD board member Dick Olsen said he believes the merger would have negative consequences for the town. "ConFire chief (Daryl) Louder indicated at the board of supervisors' meeting that one way to find funding for the new joint station would be to convert station 17 into an EMS-only station (no fire engine)," he told the council. Station 17 is on St. Mary's Road in Lafayette.

This idea not only alarms residents of Lafayette's Burton Valley neighborhood, but could have an impact in Moraga as well: "That station is the third responder for Saint Mary's," noted Olsen, who also pointed to financial concerns. "We here in Moraga will suffer the consequences if ConFire defaults on its payments," he stated.

The Moraga and Orinda councils are scheduled to meet with the MOFD board on April 29.



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