

Civic News Lafayette

Future of Bike Park and Manzanita Building Still Uncertain

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Prior to making a decision on either item, city council members focused on the controversial bike park, questioning the increased costs – due to unexpected pricey environmental reviews, now up to \$342,000, and annual maintenance costs that could range from \$5,000 per year to more than 10 times that amount. Additional concerns ranged from the red-legged frog, allegedly sighted in 1994, to safety, city liability, insurance coverage and emergency response times.

Public comments were all over the map. The first of many public speakers stated, “A fear campaign is alive and well in Lafayette.” Geoff Bellinger, a resident since 1971, described a flyer making the rounds filled with “considerable dis-information” that was “misleading folks.” Jorge Torres called it a “BMX park to nowhere,” other opponents suggested a soils study, questioned the overall expense, and worried about a lack of parking among other things.

Each council member had a unique perspective on the situation. Longtime civic servant and city council member Don Tatzin recalled that back in the early 1980s he was chair of the recreation commission when the land that was to become the Community Park was first purchased—everyone celebrated and the new park built a sense of community; but the proposed bike park has been divisive. “I’m not sure that there’s an obvious way out of this conundrum,” he said. “I don’t think we can resolve all of those issues tonight.”

New city council member Traci Reilly has three active boys, aged 11 to 17 – so she’s familiar with driving them to various activities. She’d like to look at other options, preferably sports fields; and to see if it is possible to partner with other organizations, such as schools, to leverage city funds.

Offering a long-term point of view, council member Brandt Anderson opined that while it is true costs have gone up, the bike park’s cost is less than what the city paid for the Community Park bridge, and a fraction of the cost of Buckeye Fields. While some residents are concerned about the proposed amount of earth moved to make the bike park, roughly 2,000-3,000 cubic feet, Anderson pointed out that is substantially less than the 63,000 cubic feet that was moved for the soccer fields. However, he agreed that there are “still some questions to answer.”

The council’s other new member, Mark Mitchell, is concerned about safety and soils, and is in favor of a continuance.

Anderson commented that while he liked the proposed location, the “cost is a little crazy.”

Ultimately city council members decided there were too many outstanding issues at this point to make a firm decision one way or the other, so they opted to continue the matter—giving city staff and council liaisons more time to analyze scope and firm up expense estimates for another presentation to the council at a later date.

Civic News Moraga

Planning Commission Approves Creative Home on Hillside

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Town staff also supported the application and gave a detailed description of the unusual project: the proposed 4,270 square foot single-family residence would step down the hillside with access via a driveway bridge with parking on the upper level, approximately 13 feet below Donald Drive. The upper level would include two single-car garages and entry halls for stairways and an elevator. The 2,647 square-foot middle level, or mezzanine, would include the main living area and a cantilevered back deck. The 1,278 square-foot lower level would include two bedrooms, two bathrooms, and 718 square feet of shell space. The circular bridge driveway off of Donald Drive would lead directly to the garages, and a guest parking area, on the top level.

Everyone who spoke, even some of those opposing the project, declared that they found the design very appealing. “I love this house, I wish I’d live in such a home one day,” said Donald Drive resident Lynda Deschambault, after stating that this was the wrong place for the house because the slope is too steep and its mass too big compared to the surrounding neighborhood.

The owner of the house directly below the new home also asked the commission to deny the permits, invoking safety concerns in a seismic area, drainage concerns, and adding

that the house does not comply with the spirit of the General Plan that seeks to limit developments on hill-sides.

Commissioner Teresa Onoda said that she had lived in Montclair for many years and that this type of home on a steep hill with a garage above it was commonplace; her concerns were the house was three stories and did not fit in with the neighborhood, and that it would sit on too steep a slope.

All of the commissioners praised Wright for the ingenious design that requires very little grading and is conceived to hide the home in the woods. They were concerned with structure’s potential visual impact at night—the front of the house is all glass—but the issue was not serious enough to cause them to withhold their support.

The vote was unanimous to move the project along. Brekke-Read asked that the developer get an additional conformity stamp from the Design Review Board when all plans are final.

Neighbors have 10 calendar days, from April 15, to file an appeal of the decision.

After the meeting, Wright indicated that the owner of the parcel does not intend to build the house himself, but intends to sell the property with its approved plan. He hopes that the new owner will want to work with him to finalize the plans and build the home.

Developing Bollinger Valley

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“We always look at things in a vacuum,” agreed commissioner Stacia Levenfeld. “The EIR needs to look at the cumulative effect of all those developments on traffic and schools.”

Other concerns that residents felt had not been addressed by the DEIR included the impact on wells and springs currently used by residents of the valley, impacts on wildlife and native vegetation, additional noise, air and traffic impacts during construc-

tion, and impacts to adjacent farmland, pedestrians and bicyclists.

After the meeting, Bruzzone said that Orinda, Lafayette, and Moraga took actions in the past that eliminated additional roadway connections for Moraga residents. “The original General Plan assumed those new connections wouldn’t be made, and approved our planned population (anticipated to be in excess of 22,000) based on our existing current roadway network,” he said.

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- 11-2pm Monster Coloring Table
- 11:30am Dunk Tank of Moraga Celebrity
- 11:45am All-Star Jazz Ensemble
- 11:30-2pm Fingerprinting w/ Moraga PD
- 12:30pm Dunk Tank of Moraga Celebrity
- 12:45pm Town Hall Presents Mini-Drama
- 1:45pm Dunk Tank of Moraga Celebrity
- 2pm Oak Grove, a Bluegrass Family
- 3pm Dunk Tank of Moraga Celebrity
- 3:15pm Little Dogz II + I
- 3:30pm Carshow Trophies & Awards
- 3:45pm Dunk Tank of Moraga Celebrity

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