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Letters to the Editor

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. Visit www.lamorindaweekly.com for submission guidelines. **email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com**; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

Editor:

The 1986 Moraga Open Space Ordinance (MOSO) is cherished and considered sacrosanct by most Moragans as a needed protection for Moraga's open space. The Moraga Town Council (MTC) is now considering amending and weakening one of MOSO's existing provisions.

At the MTC meeting on March 25, a request by Adventure Day Camp (ADC) was considered for: 1) a permit fee waiver and 2) a zoning ordinance text amendment for "Conditional Uses" within the Moraga Open Space District (MOSO) (Municipal Code 8.52.110(B)). This requested language change to MOSO is a prerequisite in order for ADC to proceed with its permit process to establish a for-profit recreation business, to be located in a quiet residential neighborhood at the former Moraga Tennis and Swim Club, at a planned activity level that is well beyond any previous recreational activities that have occurred at that location during the last quarter century. Moreover, according to the staff report, such a text amendment could apply to ALL MOSO-zoned land and, potentially, to all zoned non-MOSO open space as well. One neighbor, my spouse, and I gave public comment on this topic and asked that the Council deny these two requests.

During Council deliberations, it seemed that all members of the Moraga Town Council were open to seriously considering approval of the requested text amendment to MOSO. Such council action will put Moraga's open space provisions—provisions that most Moragans have come to enjoy and respect—at risk. Such text amendments should be vigorously opposed. Fortunately, the Council had insufficient information to come to an immediate decision and will need to reconsider this request at a future council meeting, probably in April or May.

Please review the meeting audio recording on this topic (between 1:41:50 and 2:56:50) at: http://www.moraga.ca.us/council/meetings/2015/032515/TC-32515_LARGE%20recorder.MP3

I encourage those residents who value Moraga's open space to write to all five council members and tell them that you do not want MOSO's provisions weakened in any way. All concerned citizens should also attend the council meeting when this item returns to Council and express their concerns during public comment.

Clay Serrahn
Moraga

Editor:

Your report on the Design Review Meeting for the Lenox project behind Trader Joe's in Lafayette seemed to suggest that the review of this project has been taking an excessive amount of time. In the first meeting, the developer presented an eight-unit very large project that pushed the boundaries of the lot. The development would have ruined a number properties adjacent and ruined the neighborhood as well. He was asked to reduce the impact. The second presentation was not much different than the first, eight very large units. It was tweaked a bit and parking was improved a bit, but essentially nothing changed.

At the last presentation, the eight units suddenly morphed to 11, with the original eight units not very different in size from the first presentation. Parking changed, but the building would still go property line to property line. Looking up at this project from any of the surrounding areas (except Trader Joe's, where it would visually be blocked from Mt. Diablo) it would look like an Ocean Liner went aground here.

The developer needs to consider the effect this development will have on the neighborhood, especially the individual neighbors on Bickerstaff, the parking and the traffic. This project needs to be smaller and less intrusive. I understand the developer would like to maximize his profit, but certainly, not at the expense of the neighborhood.

Leonard Dorin
Lafayette

Lafayette

Litigation Dilemma Over Wight House

... continued from page A3

Their preference is to avoid having multiple pickups lined up on Monticello, waiting for a large truck to descend the steep access road to the parcel. Flaggers are supposed to be regulating who is coming up and down, but there are still questions remaining about queuing up, vehicle count and more.

Peter Clark, president of the Happy Valley Improvement Association, found the potential approval of a 10,000-square-foot home on a protected ridgeline aggravating and noted, "Neighbors who attended the meeting sat in disgusted silence, too polite to shout out or throw things."

Urging the city council in a recent

letter to deny the project, Colby Powell, with the support of over 110 Glen Neighborhood families stated, "I cannot fathom a reason why the city should allow construction of a 10,000-square-foot home on a ridge-line in Lafayette. I believe it's too large, and the extent of its impacts are not known."

"The property is not an island of stability in a sea of turbulence," said Donn Walklet, a neighbor who has a professional background in earth science, explaining that the parcel is in an area of highly unstable, steeply sloping hillsides.

Representing the Glen Neighborhood Association, attorney Edward

Shaffer of the Archer Norris law firm, wrote a 14-page letter commenting on the project, pointing out an array of issues including CEQA—the California Environmental Quality Act—to defects in the Mitigated Negative Declaration and more.

Attorney David Bowie, who represents Steve and Linda Wight, didn't respond to requests for comment.

At the moment, it looks like there are no easy options for the all-volunteer city council. The one thing that is for sure is the drama will continue to play out, and not everyone will be happy with the outcome.

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