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Public Invited to Discuss Hacienda's Transformation

By Sophie Braccini



A sketch of possible changes at the Hacienda de las Flores by Gould Evans Image provided

outside the box." The idea is to create a facility that will serve a community center function while allowing for private revenue-generating activities.

Judy Dinkle, chair of the Hacienda Foundation, noted that Gould Evans understands this project needs to incorporate conflicting usage. One of the reasons why the foundation supported Gould Evans' appointment was because of the emphasis it put on public outreach.

The contract approved on May 20 for \$131,000 details two phases of work. The first phase, which will last about six weeks, includes two project meetings (June 2 and 8) and a Town Council meeting; the second phase includes five project meetings and a Town Council meeting. Some of the meetings will include presentations of concept site plans, floor plans, landscape plans, artistic renderings and other exhibits. Cost estimates will be refined; the architect will reach out and contact potential developer and operational partners for assessment of development opportunities and preliminary estimation of operations and maintenance costs. The final council meeting should happen near the end of October.

Ingram invited multiple stakeholder groups and organizations to participate in the first sessions, including the Moraga Juniors, Boy Scout Troops, the Chamber of Commerce, the Moraga School District, Saint Mary's College, and service groups. All residents are welcome to attend. The next meeting will be from 7 to 9 p.m. Monday, June 8 at the Hacienda de las Flores.

Reimagining the Hacienda

Possible changes to the 100-year-old Moraga estate

- Remodel and add to the existing residence and outbuildings to create an intimate conference center and hotel, featuring a fine dining restaurant and events that would attract visitors from nearby institutions and luxury travelers.
- Restoration of the pool, and creation of a spa.
- Build a wine cave to celebrate local wine growers and complement the new restaurant.
- Plant an "edible garden," providing local produce for the restaurant.
- Install temporary and permanent outdoor art, creating a new art destination center.
- Provide facilities, and educational and directional signage, for hikers and bicyclists.
- Maintain and enhance landscaped buffers from adjacent residences, addressing noise and

Should the Hacienda de las Flores in Moraga be reconfigured into a conference center and hotel, with fine dining and events? Or should there be a wine cave on site? Or a spa? Public input sessions to collect residents' ideas about the future of the Hacienda de las Flores began June 2, with the second scheduled for Monday, June 8. This is the beginning of a process that is likely to transform the Hacienda from an underused and unprofitable public facility to a public-private partnership with private operators. The Town of Moraga hired architectural firm Gould Evans to conduct the public outreach and to propose two new concepts for the almost 100-year-old estate.

"The town is at a crossroads regarding the Hacienda property," stated Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram at the May 20 council meeting. "(What we are proposing) will change the property a lot and will challenge the residents to think

other concerns.

- Enhance disability access within buildings and throughout the site.
- Increase environmental sustainability of buildings and grounds.
- Think of pedestrian and vehicle entry and flow, possibly increasing the Hacienda's visual presence on Moraga Road.

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