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New Construction Project in Moraga Center Specific Plan

By Sophie Braccini



At a June 15 Planning Commission study session, commissioners reviewed a proposed development on 0.33 acres that includes seven three-story single-family homes at 1015 Country Club Drive, and expressed concerns to the applicant (DRG Builders, Inc.) about the density and height of the development, which is part of the Moraga Center Specific Plan (MCSP).

The commercially-zoned lot, which has been for sale for years, sits between two office buildings, each one story high. The MCSP, however, defines the parcel as mixed-use, residential and/or commercial, with a density of 18 to 20 units per acre. The fact that the parcel is located between commercial buildings did not concern most planning commissioners since residential housing is less than a block away. The focus was on the density and height.

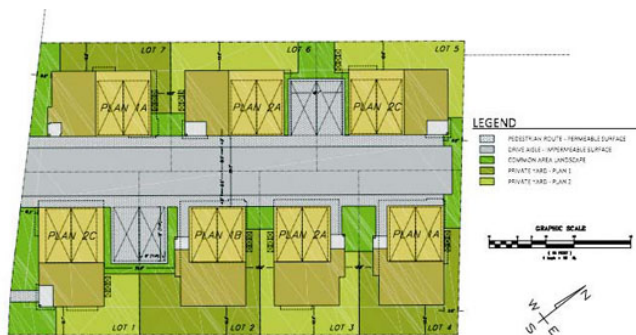
Project map, street rendition of the DRG project Illustration provided

Canyon Road," said Commissioner Christine Kuckuk. "The three stories will be looming over it and will be highly visible from the scenic corridor."

Commissioner Steve Woehleke added that the high-density zoning of that parcel called for attached homes or condominiums, rather than tall homes only 10 feet apart. "This project is a non-starter," he said. "This is inconsistent with Moraga norms. What you put in Fremont is not compatible with Moraga."

Doyle Heaton of DRG Builders explained that he chose the single-family concept because that is what would sell best and that it would be perfect for Lamorinda's downsizing empty nesters. Woehleke noted that three stories are not optimal for an aging population and that what is missing in Moraga are single-story residences.

Other commissioners agreed that the density and height should be revisited. The recommendation to the builder was to come back with a proposal of four or five lower units, instead of the existing seven. Heaton, who said he has been working with the Moraga planning department for a year, did not indicate a time frame for his next appearance. In the meantime, the town is working on a complete rezoning of the MCSP that could affect this parcel.



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