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**Linda Di Sano Ehrich, Realtor**  
 93 Moraga Way • Orinda, CA 94563  
 925.698.1452  
 Linda@LindaEhrich.com  
 www.LindaEhrich.com  
 DRE# 01330298



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## Hacienda Transformation: Economic Stakes Emerge

By Sophie Braccini



Proposed map, with additional annotations

Photo courtesy Gould Evans

**P**arks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram invited representatives of local stakeholder groups to meet with architectural firm Gould Evans Aug. 17 and weigh in as the concept for renovating the historic public property moves into an active business phase. Gould Evans representatives presented the architectural plans as well as the results of their first talks with potential investors. The trade-offs that would be necessary to make a public-private partnership a success are beginning to surface. Partly business, partly community asset, the new Hacienda would concentrate the public amenities in the pavilion area, while a business model still needs to be created to make the rest of the property an interesting investment opportunity. Food and wine pairing plus accommodations is one possibility.

Members of the Moraga Juniors, the Moraga Movers (seniors), the Hacienda Foundation, the Lamorinda Wine Growers Association (LWGA) and interested residents gathered at the La Sala building and heard a quick conceptual presentation by Gould Evans project manager Lauren Maass. "The concept would be to have a community center around the pavilion area, a hospitality center with a restaurant and lodging in and around the main building, as well as a wine center," she summarized.

The entry into the Hacienda property would be redirected through the Moraga Road entry point. The pavilion would be the community hub, the original pool could be restored, a cabana area and a meeting room could be added; parks and recreation offices would be moved there.

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## Referendum on Aug. 26 Agenda

Council likely to take no action

**T**he Town Council will acknowledge at its Aug. 26 meeting the petition that was filed by a group of citizens to stop the Moraga Center Homes development next to the fire station on Moraga Way. The Contra Costa County Elections Division certified that this referendum petition con-

tained the requisite number of valid signatures. The council could either repeal the ordinance against which the petition is filed, or submit the ordinance to the voters. But the developer, City Ventures, and the property owner, David Bruzzone, have filed a lawsuit claiming that the petition violated several state

election laws. For example they say that the residents omitted the actual plans of the site in the information that they showed to those who signed. State law requires the "full text" of a municipal initiative be included in the petition that is circulated for voter signatures. "Because the town went ahead and cer-

tified the referendum despite this violation of state election law, we are put in the uncomfortable position of actually having to turn to the courts to enforce the election laws," said Charity Wagner of City Ventures. The town attorney believes the issues raised bring up serious legal questions that are

best resolved by a court of law. She has recommended that the council take no action on whether to rescind or put the referendum on the ballot until a court decides on the merits of the petition. The Town Council will decide to proceed or not at its regular meeting on Aug. 26. *S. Braccini*

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89 Davis Road Suite 100  
 Orinda  
 925.254.0440  
 www.bhghome.com/Orinda

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