



**Independent, locally owned and operated!**

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published June 1st, 2016

## Planning Commission Needs More Time to Study Wine

*By Sophie Braccini*

Everyone in town who has an interest in Moraga's budding wine industry was holding their breath as the Planning Commission met to regulate wineries in residential districts. But they were able to exhale when, after hearing from staff, residents and considering their own questions, the commissioners made no firm decision. They decided to appoint a study group to delve into the complex ramifications of regulating wineries.

Planning staff has been working for years on creating a new layer of regulation for people who are producing wine on their property. At this time, this activity is subjected to county and state rules that owners have to follow to be bonded and allowed to produce and sale their wines. In Moraga, home businesses are permitted. However, since the town has received at least one complaint from the neighbor of a local winery, it was decided that studying the addition of local protections was necessary.

As they examined what staff was proposing, planning commissioners had additional questions regarding the impacts on neighbors, from the toxicity of allowed sprayed products, to noise, odors, to setback of equipment, just to name a few.

The local winemakers explained that their profession is already very highly regulated and noted that their properties are located in either open space or study areas where agricultural activities are permitted, including processing of the crop.

Planning commission chair Steve Woehleke proposed that a group of two commissioners meet with staff and stakeholders to go further into the question, make sure that the proposed regulation is necessary, protects neighbors adequately, and not nip in the bud an industry that is contributing to the community.

Planning Director Ellen Clark said that the study group made up of commissioners Ravi Mallela and Kymberleigh Korpus met at the end of May with staff and stakeholders, and would meet again early June. June 20 is the target for the next time the planning commission will discuss this topic.

Reach the reporter at: [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA