

# Letters to the Editor

## CV Development is Not What Moragans Want

The City Ventures (CV) development by the fire station is not a “done deal.”

The town is giving away for free approximately 20’ over three acres of public easement on Moraga Way to City Ventures. Moraga is in major debt and giving land away, so the developer can make more money and build a project that is too big for the lot!

CV violates at least 16 clauses in the General and specific plans. It violates the minimal space between buildings, setbacks and height. Other projects were turned down for height and setbacks much larger than these. Why is CV exempt from the same standards?

There are 6-foot setbacks, three stories, and 10 feet between buildings! It is too large for the lot, so they are building 20 feet into the road easement for free! A planning commissioner was horrified by this and voted against CV. A design review board member abstained from voting because it violates the scenic corridor.

This has already set a precedence for other developers to violate the plans. Now three stories, smaller building separations and smaller setbacks are “standard.”

CV traffic report is absurd: 90 parking spaces, they claim it will only add 16 cars in the morning, and 19 cars in the evening commute! If it was 20 or more cars, Moraga is supposed to report it to Orinda and Lafayette!

The town never did a separate traffic report. No specific EIR was done.

The entire process of this project has been questionable. A planning commissioner is challenging one part now.

Fifteen hundred concerned people of a town of 4,000 registered voters signed a petition for the right to vote on rezoning the lot. We ask the town to listen to its residents, and to honor the fire department’s rejection. The town should represent the view of the residents, not developers.

We want the town to honor its’ own codes, character and plans.

If CV had been reasonable with two-story, single family homes that fit the lot, the residents would have accepted it.

Please write to your town now.

Margaret Gee  
Moraga

## A Thanks from Orinda’s Roads Committee

Fix Orinda Roads Now sincerely thanks the Orinda community for approving Measure L, a \$25 million bond to continue progress in repairing our roads and drains. Also, we extend our sincere appreciation to the many volunteers who helped us reach out to citizens to inform them about the benefits of supporting Phase 3 of the Orinda Road and Drainage Repair Plan. To receive updates on road repairs, please sign up for the City of Orinda’s e-newsletter, Orinda Outlook, by going to the City website home page (www.cityoforinda.org) and the Fix Orinda Roads periodic newsletter updates by visiting www.fixorindaroads.org.

With gratitude,  
Brad Barber, Bob Burt, Mark Roberts and Sue Severson  
Co-Chairs, Fix Orinda Roads Volunteer Committee

# Help Wanted

## ... continued from page A1

Moraga 7-11 owner Samir Saleh says the biggest challenge is finding employees from within the community. “I think it’s more difficult due the community being too small and the cost of living [being] very high, so everyone would rather reach out to the city or somewhere where it pays better.”

He said he had to reach out to stores outside the area, like Concord and Antioch, where they get more applicants. “Moraga, being far from the freeway and BART, makes it difficult for people to keep jobs in Moraga.”

Ted Fulmer opened his Moraga café, GRAZE, in the Rheem Valley Shopping Center a year ago, and says finding an employee with experience is tough – and finding an employee with experience in your industry is rare.

Fulmer says the Moraga labor pool has few people over 25 looking for a job.

“The over-25 people either work out of town and not in retail, or don’t work, and the labor pool has very little people 18 and under looking for a job. In the year I have been open, I have had only three people apply that were 18 or under,” he says. “The majority of the younger population does not need to work; they choose to work, and a lot of them choose not to work. The labor pool is tiny for the labor demand.”

Since many of the retail businesses pay minimum wage, and those jobs are currently plentiful in other areas, like Concord, people can find work closer to home and don’t need to come to places like Moraga for a job.

Fulmer says it is rare that someone will drive through Orinda or Lafayette to work in Moraga. “In Orinda, Walnut Creek and Lafayette, the pay is more competitive, the tips are higher, and the commute is shorter,” he says.

Saleh says pay scale plays a big factor because businesses in Moraga are not busy enough to offer the higher pay that’s expected, and nearby cities have a higher minimum wage as well.

Some businesses, like McCaulou’s and Dover Saddlery offer discounts on merchandise to entice workers, but turnover can be high for many businesses offering part-time minimum wage jobs, which currently pay \$10 per hour in Moraga.

“I have had only one employee that has lasted more than a few weeks that has driven through Orinda or Lafayette to work at my business,” says Fulmer.

If someone wants to work, Fulmer says another issue arises, namely scheduling.

One Moraga Shopping Center retailer, who asked not to be named, said she has had applicants who are parents of school-aged children who only want to work when their kids are in school. “They don’t want to work on weekends and want the summers off,” she says. “That doesn’t work for retail.”

Fulmer says the younger employees want to work on their own schedule, which often conflicts with the needs of the employer. “They’ll say, ‘I’m only available in the summer, weekends only, I will be gone for a month. I can work only two to three hours a day.’”

And the job experience of these younger employees is lacking, he says.

“Virtually all of my applicants are between 19 and 25. Most of them have never worked or had one brief job experience,” Fulmer says. “Teaching someone how to sweep, clean, chop, and basic customer service is not something you have to do with new employees in other areas.”

The current unemployment rate in Contra Costa County is 4.4 percent, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, but Saleh says he’s not sure if the low unemployment rate plays a factor in finding qualified help. “I do know one thing: at this current time, there are more jobs than people applying.”

“Moraga has its own economic, social, and demographic realities,” Fulmer says. “It just happens to be in Contra Costa County.”

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](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com) for submission guidelines. **email: [letters@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com)**; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570



**RISTORANTE  
AMOROMA**

**Please join us celebrate our  
13<sup>th</sup> year anniversary.**

Mention this ad and receive a complimentary glass of prosecco

- ★ Authentic Italian Cuisine from the city of Rome
- ★ Premium cocktails made with freshly squeezed juices
- ★ A great selection of Italian and California cellar wines
- ★ Wine tasting every Thursday 5:30 to 7:30
- ★ Brunch on Saturday and Sunday
- ★ Take-out and catering services available

Opening hours: Daily 11:00AM until 10:00PM  
[amoroma1.com](http://amoroma1.com)  
360 PARK STREET, MORAGA (925)377-ROMA(7662)



You'll Wish You  
WERE  
HERE

Orinda Theatre Square




<b>JUNE 30</b> SING-A-LONG FOLLOWED BY STORY TIME	<b>JULY 14</b> SING-A-LONG FOLLOWED BY STORY TIME	<b>JULY 28</b> 3 LITTLE PIGS PUPPET SHOW
<b>JULY 7</b> MAD SCIENCE FUN & DEMOS	<b>JULY 21</b> LIZARD LADY'S REPTILES	<b>AUGUST 4</b> SING-A-LONG FOLLOWED BY STORY TIME

FREE KIDS CLUB  
EVERY THURSDAY  
AT 11AM

ORINDATHEATRESQUARE.COM






rocking chair

Change your perspective

At Byron Park, life is different here. It’s not just a place to live. This is where residents discover the community experience and put passions into practice. Engage, challenge yourself, share knowledge, and build a legacy for future generations. This is where your personal journey begins.

Call 888.713.2228 or visit  
[LifeatByronPark.com](http://LifeatByronPark.com) to learn more.

 License #075601546



**Byron  
Park**  
A KISCO COMMUNITY