



EXPERIENCE MATTERS

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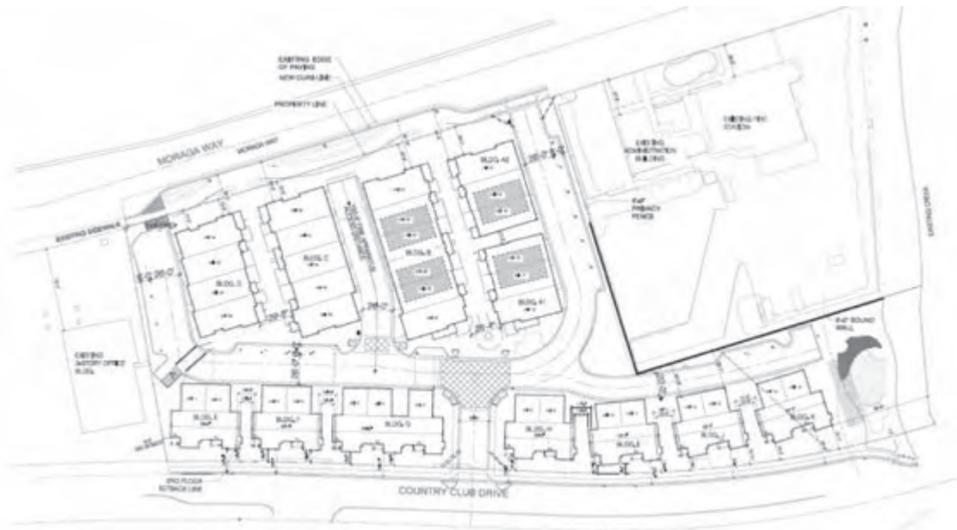
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Planning Commission Stalemate Stalls Moraga Center Homes

By Sophie Braccini



Map of the Moraga Center Homes.

Developer City Ventures met a hurdle on its way to building 36 condominiums along Moraga Way — the Moraga Planning Commission failed to approve its general conceptual plan (GDP) and tentative map.

The highly controversial project that had led a group of residents to file an opposing referendum has not been sent back to the drawing board. City Ventures appealed the commission's action, or lack thereof, and the issue will now go in front of the town council.

With two different perspectives

from commissioners, the board was not able to reach a decision. One group, made of chair Steve Woehleke, commissioners Christine Kuckuk and Tom Marnane, contended that their role was to make sure that the plan presented was compliant with the Conceptual Design Plan that was approved with conditions by the council last year; the other group made of commissioners Kymberleigh Korpus, Ferenc Kovac and Suzanne D'Arcy explained that the CDP required more analyzing of the conceptual text to see if it complied with the town's regula-

tions.

Charity Wagner of City Ventures presented a project now in its 13th public meeting. The new plan for the three-acre lot located between Moraga Way and Country Club Drive, next to the fire station, now includes a setback of at least 15 feet from Moraga Way, increases some of the setbacks buildings from Country Club Drive, splits Building A into two smaller buildings to reduce the massing, and reduces the height of units in Buildings C and D from three stories to two stories.

It can be noted that in 2014

the planning commission had approved the CDP and that it was opponents that had appealed this approval to the council. In the meantime, new members were appointed to the planning commission, tilting the balance and adding commissioners willing to see if the project complied entirely with the municipal code.

Korpus made a 30-minute presentation where she explained that in her opinion the commission should examine as this phase the development standards as required by the code. "The GDP stage is when the rubber meets the road," she said.

Korpus added that the number of units, 36, was in her opinion inappropriate on the lot, "yet it was clearly decided by town council (and) we are stuck with that," she said.

She listed several aspects that in her opinion were not compliant with the Moraga municipal code. "We can meet our obligation to the developer and still protect the town and the guidelines," she said and proposed a new plan with much smaller units.

D'Arcy noted that this development at the edge of the Moraga Center specific plan does not integrate with the neighborhood and agreed that massive units along the scenic corridor needed a

wider setback; Kovac agreed that scenic corridor rules should apply to this development.

Planning commission chair Chair Steve Woehleke summarized the position of those supporting the approval, saying that the commission was not a policy making body, and that since the town council had approved the CDP, with conditions, the task of the commission was to make sure these conditions had been met, and if so approve the GDP. He, Marnane and Kuckuk said they felt the developer had complied with the council's conditions. It was noted in the staff report that this CDP had been approved with more details than is usually required because of the nature of the project at the center of town.

Phil Kerr, CEO of City Ventures, said that his company did not like to go the legal way but "the town has a legal obligation to act at this time to approve or deny (our project's) general development plan as it conforms with the conceptual development plan."

He said City Ventures would appeal the commission's decision. On July 20 Mayor Mike Metcalf requested to "call up" the planning commission's decision on this project to the town council.

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31 Daryl Drive, Orinda

New Listing



Stunning Craftsman in Glorietta neighborhood. 4 BD/2.5BA, 2870 sf with an add. 545 sf game room above garage. Well-designed floor plan. Gourmet kitchen with 9 ft. island; top of the line appliances; custom maple cabinets with ample storage. Tranquil gardens designed by Garden Lights. Walking distance to Glorietta Elementary. **Offered at \$1,875,000 by Lisa Shaffer, 925.528.9278, www.31Daryl.com.**

CalBRE#00996886

40 Merrill Circle South, Moraga

New Listing



Elegant and recently updated Sanders Ranch home offers security and privacy on Moraga's top street. New kitchen appliances, counters and remodeled master bath make this home move-in ready. Peaceful views across the valley and spacious decks with spa for entertaining and outdoor living. **Offered at \$1,495,000 by Jim Colhoun, 925.200.2795.**

CalBRE#01029160

6600 Claremont Ave, Richmond

New Listing



Stunning 3-bedroom home in East Richmond Heights with 2 full baths.. SF Bay views from living room and 2 bedrooms. Beautiful bamboo floors, new granite counters and new oven in kitchen. Two-car garage and laundry room downstairs. Newly landscaped flat back yard. **Offered at \$530,000 by Dana Fillinger, 925.588.6409.**

CalBRE#01731662

3143 Gloria Terrace, Lafayette



Private half-acre setting with updated home featuring 4 bedrooms, library and office tower. Gleaming hardwood floors and modern kitchen with granite counters and stainless appliances. Backyard features lovely setting with a pool/spa and great views. Top-rated Lafayette schools and quick access to shopping or BART. **Offered at \$1,350,000 by Jim Colhoun, 925.200.2795.**

CalBRE#01029160

53 Tara Road, Orinda

For Lease



Contemporary style home with white oak floors, high ceilings, open floor plan is elegant yet comfortable. First floor includes the kitchen, dining, living room, laundry, 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms. Master upstairs with views, balcony, steam shower and more! Top ranked schools! Private 1 acre!
For lease at \$8900/mo. By Dana Fillinger, 925.588.6409.

CalBRE#01731662

405 15th Street, Oakland

Commercial Lease



3600sf Retail space available at \$2/sf. Great property in the heart of downtown Oakland, across from Ogawa Plaza and the Awaken Cafe, BART and all transit lines, great restaurants and shops - 99% walk core. **Call Maureen Caldwell-Meurer for details at 510.915.0092.**

CalBRE#01908929

TIP OF THE WEEK

Yes, both the weather and the market are HOT! In addition to selling all of our local listings, we have been busy helping buyers purchase homes throughout the East Bay. Here are a few of the recent closings:

170 Shuey Drive, Moraga - \$1,190,000 – Larry Jacobs/Kress Hauri
2426 Elgin Lane, Walnut Creek - \$1,086,000 – Jim Colhoun
23 Carr Drive, Moraga - \$1,030,000 – Larry Jacobs/Kress Hauri
8811 Seneca Street, Oakland – \$680,000 - Janine Hunt
4116 Penniman, Oakland - \$650,000 – Maureen Caldwell-Meurer
1810 Central Ave. #307, Alameda - Larry Jacobs/Kress Hauri - \$586,000
4855 Edgewood Court, Oakley - \$290,000 – Tania DeGroot

Meet our Featured Agents ...



Dana Fillinger 925.588.6409 CalBRE#01731662
Melody Shahid 925.270.9580 CalBRE#01922669
Adam Hamalian 925.708.5630 CalBRE#01917597
Tania DeGroot 510.367.1422 CalBRE # 01094898
Maureen Caldwell-Meurer 510.915.0092 CalBRE#01908929
Regina Englehart, Broker-Manager 925.876.9076 CalBRE# 01308462

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