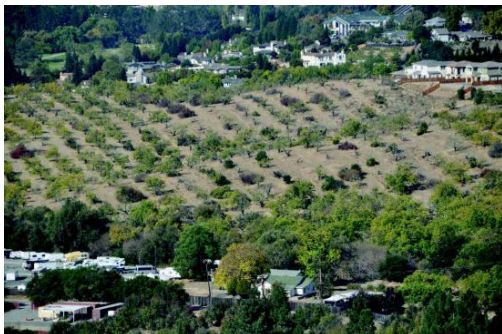


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More property owner input sought for zoning of the Moraga Center Specific Plan

By *Sophie Braccini*



MCSP land south of the new Harvest Court development. Photo A. Scheck

additional \$50,000 allocated in 2015-16.

The Moraga Center Specific Plan was approved seven years ago, envisioning the construction of up to 600 new residences, new commercial spaces, and the creation of roads and civic spaces at the crossing of Moraga Way and Moraga Road. The zoning defining how this space would be developed was never approved. The town secured a grant to start the process of creating this zoning but now the town council has decided that it will not allocate the \$38,000 needed to complete the process with the consultant Opticos. Instead, the council decided to work with the Bruzzone family that owns most of the MCSP land and publicly study what elements of the plan could be amended to make its development possible.

For more than two years, the town has worked with Opticos to create zoning of the MCSP that would foster downtown development. The town has already spent \$150,000 of grant money from the Contra Costa Transportation Authority on this project, as well as an

The City Ventures' project, Moraga Center Homes, was approved as part of the MCSP and the lack of zoning led to the endorsement of a design that created deep resentment with residents who tried to overturn the ruling through a referendum. When she launched this zoning process, Planning Director Ellen Clark hoped to avoid a similar battle in the future and create common ground around a vision accepted by all. At the Oct. 11 council meeting, David Bruzzone forcefully criticized the proposed zoning, indicating that it was going down the wrong path and was inconsistent with the MCSP.

He explained that the proposed zoning would create an element of uncertainty for future developments, and would limit any possible grading of his family's property. He reminded the council that he had several times raised the issues associated with this process and complained that he had been ignored. He showed the council pictures of the Summerhill Development on Camino Ricardo, which has an important visual impact on the skyline from the scenic corridors, and warned that with the proposed new zoning rules his own developments would reach the same height. He asked that the council work with him and define the easy things to do to implement the specific plan.

Council member Dave Trotter asked that the council not pay Opticos any extra money to finish the zoning project at this time, and recommended the zoning process be put on the back burner for six months.

The council did not support Council Member Kymberleigh Korpus' suggestion of a moratorium on any development in the MCSP until the zoning was approved. Instead, the council followed Vice Mayor Roger Wykle's recommendation to have the council work with the property owner and the public during ad hoc study sessions to continue to refine the MCSP and decide on some macro issues such as densities or setbacks. No dates were discussed for future study sessions.

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