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Zoning and general plan amendments for Moraga Adobe parcel approved

By Sora O'Doherty

Although adjacent property owners Charlotte and John Smith urged the Orinda City Council to withhold action on the zoning and general plan amendments for the Moraga Adobe parcel within the J&J Ranch project, the council unanimously adopted the zoning and general plan amendment ordinance and approved by resolution the final map for the J&J Ranch subdivision. The Smiths wanted the council to wait until the Friends of the Moraga Adobe have purchased the site. City attorney Osa Wolff informed the council that it did have the discretion to not act, but that the zoning amendment was appropriate whether the Friends buy the site or it winds up being used as a clubhouse by the future homeowners association. The resolution also approved the subdivision improvement agreement, the stormwater operations and maintenance agreement, and accepted the Grant Open Space and Scenic Easement Deed.

Contacted after the meeting, Kent Long, president of the Friends of the Moraga Adobe, said that the group remains confident that they will be able to raise the approximately \$500,000 required for them to purchase the adobe. Already, even before the commencement of the period of three years allowed for them to raise the money, they have raised upwards of \$140,000.

The three-year period in the Memorandum of Agreement begins after the final state approval of the subdivision plans, which is not imminent.

Previously, the lack of council action on the zoning and general plan amendment has been "a little bit of a hurdle in terms of fundraising," Long said. He added that the group has an excellent working relationship with J&J Ranch and has been engaged with them about items such as the development's CC&Rs and how the adobe parcel will relate to the other members of the homeowners association. The agreement between the Friends and J&J Ranch is that the Friends will purchase the parcel and J&J will restore it for use as a cultural site with limited access for local schools and the general public.

Reach the reporter at: sora@lamorindaweekly.com

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