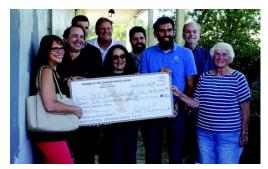


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Friends of Joaquin Moraga Adobe delivers second deposit to J&J

By Sora O'Doherty



Friends of the Joaqum Moraga Adobe with the presented big check Photo Cathy Dausman

The Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe moved one step closer to ownership of the oldest surviving building in Contra Costa County when FJMA President Kent Long handed over a check for \$25,000 to Matt Branagh of J&J Ranch Partners LLC on Sept. 24. The FJMA paid the first deposit of \$10,000 upon entering into the Memoranda of Agreement under which the developer agreed to restore the building and the Friends to purchase it and run it for the public benefit.

The FJMA has been working for nearly 10 years to secure the building's future. The Moraga Adobe is located on a hill in Orinda above Del Rey Elementary School. The Adobe was built by Don Joaquin Moraga, the grandson of Jose Joaquin Moraga, the early Spanish explorer who founded the city of San Jose. In 1835, Mexico granted 13,326 acres, El Rancho Laguna de los Palos Colorados, to Joaquin Moraga and his cousin Juan Bernal. Six years later in 1841, Joaquin Moraga built the house, which

remained in private hands until it was purchased by J&J Ranch. The Adobe was made a historical landmark in 1954 by the state of California.

Under the agreement with J&J, FJMA must pay a total of \$450,000 plus demonstrate an additional \$50,000 in reserves to purchase the 1841 structure and surrounding 2 acres. The deadline to complete the purchase is September 2021. For the next two years, FJMA will pay \$50,000 each year, leaving a \$315,000 balance. Long says that the group is pretty confident that they will be able to complete the purchase. They are currently in a position to pay all the scheduled deposits, and anticipate even greater contributions now that the project is truly underway.

All purchase money from FJMA will be used to partially fund the restoration of the Moraga Adobe; the balance of the restoration costs will be paid by J&J Ranch. As part of the agreement, the building will be restored to its 1848 configuration of five rooms, with adobe walls up to three feet thick. Later woodframe additions will be removed, and the original 1840s walls will be stabilized. A separate structure with restroom facilities will also be built.

FJMA plans to create a museum and learning center focused on the Rancho days of early California, including furnishings and demonstrations of daily life. Historic displays will tell the sometimes poignant stories of families like the Moragas, in addition to hosting rotating exhibits.

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