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Hacienda could finally see a restaurant in its future

By Vera Kochan



From left: Jasmine Bateson (seated), Breyana Brandt and Cynthia Battenberg discuss restaurant options at an Oct. 3 community meeting. Photo Vera Kochan already." Parks and Rec would continue to have its offices at the Hacienda for the time being.

The most common community thread of thought was for a unique experience in dining to hold the town's interest and not detract from long-standing businesses already established within the Lamorinda area.

According to Battenberg, "It's going to take someone who can think outside the box. Moraga is underserved. It's got to be someone who sees the possibilities."

A week later, Brandt presented a request to discuss the release of a Restaurant Operator Request for Proposals at the town council's Oct. 10 meeting. The desire is to locate a casual fine dining restaurant at the Hacienda with or without a full bar. The town would continue to book special events on the property, and the restaurant could act as an on-site caterer.

With the October request for proposals, the town hopes it can have a restaurant lease in place by November 2020.

The actual restaurant space contains approximately 2,250 square feet of inside area and 2,758 square feet of outside patio area. The lease agreement starts at a five-year term with two options to extend and an additional five years each.

The tenant would renovate the kitchen as necessary to comply with Contra Costa Health Department and Moraga-Orinda Fire District regulations. They would also be responsible for installing a bar and other improvements on the Space Plan.

The minimum hours of operation would be five days a week between 5 and 9 p.m. Lunch would be served three times a week with hours as yet undetermined.

Before presenting a request to the town council regarding the possibility of locating a restaurant at the Hacienda de las Flores, Moraga Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg, Parks and Recreation Director Breyana Brandt and Recreation Supervisor Jasmine Bateson held an Oct. 3 community meeting to discuss ideas and receive feedback.

Built in 1916, with the intent of becoming an orphanage, the Hacienda later became the home of the Donald Rheem family and the Christian Brothers of Saint Mary's College. In 1973, it was purchased by the Moraga Park and Rec Authority.

Looking forward to a new incarnation for the nine-acre property, officials hope that a restaurant would increase public access and reduce town costs associated with its day-to-day operation.

Brandt informed the community attendees that "we've had interested folks reach out to us

Minimum base rent would be \$6,750 per month (increased annually due to the Consumer Price Index) plus 5% of net restaurant, on-site catering and event alcohol sales (gross receipts less taxes and gratuity) above \$100,000 in any calendar month. A security deposit would be \$50,000 (\$25,000 upon lease execution and \$25,000 on commencement date).

The town currently pays \$246,000 in annual net operating costs for the Hacienda property. The restaurant plan is expected to reduce those costs by an estimated \$75,000 or more.

During the meeting the council directed staff to release an RFP for a restaurant operator at the Hacienda de las Flores. They also agreed to allocate \$10,000 from the Town Manager's contingency fund for professional support in RFP marketing and operation selection assistance.

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