



**MORAGA**

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**Bay Area Ballplayers vacating outdoor facility**

By Vera Kochan

When many businesses struggled during COVID-related mandates, Bay Area Ballplayers owner Steve Hammond hit a home run by opening Ballplayer Field behind Moraga's Safeway. This extension of his Moraga Shopping Center's indoor facility allowed kids to keep up with their training despite the pandemic's challenges.

Ballplayer Field developed its offerings to include camps, birthday parties, baseball practice and clinics, outdoor batting cage rentals, and community events. However, they did this with the knowledge that the permits granted by the town were always going to be temporary, in order to allow for property development due to the Housing Element. "We never intended to do all of these outdoor activities," Hammond recalled. "They became part of our business and determined what ideas we have

moving forward.

"The property owner isn't kicking us out (they have let us know from day 1 that as soon as a development is in the pipeline, they will give us notice and we'll be on our way)," stated Hammond on his website. "There is no impending development planned (this may change of course, but it's complicated and any development that does take place will likely need a few years to be ready to break ground)."

Hammond said, "I understand that the town wants it ready for development," and even though he would have liked to stay put while eventually upgrading Ballplayer Field into a more stylish and permanent facility, he didn't want to spend more money on attorney fees. "During our last approval, 18 months ago, the town's attorneys needed to be consulted which cost me thousands of dollars, and I was not told this up front. The total cost of getting a permit was becoming prohibitive."

Ballplayer Field's last day was Nov. 5, and it literally went down to the wire as several pre-booked parties had to be honored before it was time to roll up the turf. However, Hammond is in the process of searching for another more permanent location in Moraga that is zoned for what his facility offers. As such, he has ap-



Photo Vera Kochan

**Ballplayer Field prior to this week's dismantling.**

proached both the Acalanes Union High School District and the Moraga School District with the idea of forming a type of partnership. At this point, MSD has proven to be the more receptive of the two, and the possibility of Ballplayer Field relocating to the seldom-used field at Los Perales Elementary School is probable.

"The Bay Area Ballplayers is a welcome small business to the Town of Moraga, and we are excited that Mr. Hammond is now working on a long-term solution for the continued growth of his business," stated Moraga's Planning Director Afshan Hamid. "The Town and the Planning Commission have worked with Mr. Hammond during and after COVID ended to facilitate and allow a temporary outdoor sports and training facility which is zoned to allow for mixed use and hous-

ing. The State, the Planning Commission, the Town Council and residents understand the importance of having housing sites available for all of Moraga. The Town's recent certified Housing Element demonstrates the community's desired long-term vision."

Having resigned himself to the move, Hammond's Oct. 4 statement on his website noted that "we have appreciated all of the support we've received along the way and are really happy with what we built and provided at our oasis by the trailer park. After months of discussion and research, we're (almost) at peace with the fact that we won't have a multi-use field across the parking lot from our indoor facility. Maybe this will be a blessing in disguise for a bigger and better opportunity to present itself in the future."

**Commons Park restroom nears demolition in readiness for replacement**

By Vera Kochan

Moraga Commons Park was developed in 1974, the same year that the town was incorporated. Its main restroom is also nearly 50 years old and long overdue for an upgrade.

The Moraga Community Foundation (MCF) proposed orchestrating a fundraising project in 2018, with the purpose of replacing the old restrooms and worked with the town toward the installation of a pre-fabricated restroom facility to take the place of the outdated one. Also that year the Park and Recreation Commission recommended an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) restroom design.

In 2022, the Town Council authorized \$324,320 for the purchase of a pre-fabricated ADA restroom structure from Public Restroom Company which included shipping, crane service, and onsite construction coordination from the manufacturer that would work with the town's hired contractor.

According to the Sept. 27 staff report by Parks and Recreation Director Mackenzie Brady and Public Works Director/Town Engineer Shawn Knapp, "The proposed Commons Park four ADA all-gender restrooms with two drinking fountains and water bottle filling stations construction and installation scope includes the fol-

lowing major work items: Demolition and removal of the existing restroom structure, foundations, utility connections, adjacent concrete hardscape and minor vegetation; site preparation including grading and earthwork for new restroom foundation; and placement and compaction of aggregate base."

A part of the construction process also includes the installation of utilities conduits to hook up locations for the restroom including plumbing for sewer and water and extensive electrical (including new PG&E meter pedestal installation, pull boxes, and new wiring from pedestal to restroom).

Additional construction involves "pouring new concrete foundations and ADA path of travel sidewalks to the restroom; assisting with crane placement of the new restroom on new foundation and completing all utility hookups and building finishings inside and outside of the restroom; and coordination with permitting agencies."

McNabb Construction's \$165,319 bid for the project, as the demolition and installation contractor, was accepted by the town. The demolition and installation are expected to be completed by the end of the year.

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Map showing location near RHEEM SHOPPING CENTER and RHEEM BLVD.

**Town Council** Wednesday, Nov. 8 & 22, 6:30 p.m.  
**Planning Commission:** Tuesday, Nov. 21, 6:30 p.m.  
**Park and Recreation Commission:** Tuesday, Nov. 13, 7 p.m.