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The New Face of Moraga

By Sophie Braccini



Rendering of what a 20-dwelling-units per acre senior housing complex could look like in the Moraga Center area Image from the Town of Moraga's website

housing, with a height of 45 feet), Moraga will satisfy its obligation."

There are two possible areas that are designated for that density. One is north of the Moraga Center and west of the RV parking, and the second one is located near Aegis on Moraga Way. "Aegis is a good example of what we are talking about," added Salamack, "it is a 70-unit building set on two acres." According to the plan, the property owner would choose one of the two areas to build at the highest density, while the other area would be developed up to 20 units per acre.

"This density is justified from a practical aspect," added Salamack, "to have more residents living in close proximity to retail will stimulate the business community, it will satisfy the needs of the aging population and of the students/faculty/work force from Moraga meaning less traffic leaving the town."

Speaking for the Bruzzone family, which owns most of the land affected by the plan, Dick Loewke expressed concerns about having all the moderate income housing needed in town planned for that same Center area. He expressed additional concerns about the burden of regulations and impact fees.

"We have indicated in the plan that incentives will be proposed to the developer," responded Town Manager Mike Segrest. "If we enter a development agreement with the property owner we can offer to waive fees and streamline the process."

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Moraga's Planning Director, Lori Salamack, was congratulated by both the Moraga Town Council and the main property owner of the Moraga Center at the November 18th Council meeting. Salamack presented the latest versions of several documents: the Specific Plan for the Moraga Center; the Housing Element, needed to bring the town into compliance with its State housing requirements; and an ordinance defining a 20-dwelling-units per acre zone to accommodate those plans. "I have been working on the Specific Plan for seven years," said Salamack, "It is time now to move into the implementation phase." The next steps will be a Planning Commission meeting on Monday November 30th, followed by a Council meeting for possible approval on Wednesday December 2nd. Few residents came to hear her presentation.

"We have worked so much on this plan that the residents have become comfortable with it," believes Salamack. One resident questioned part of the plan. "We are talking about 20-dwelling-units per acre in some portions of the area," said Roger Poynts, "this is a very high density." Council Member Mendonca agreed and asked for more visual simulation of what that density would look like, adding, "I need to reconcile the semi-rural character of the town with this high density."

"Under state law we have an obligation to plan for low income housing," explained Salamack. "If we plan for six acres with a mandate to build 20 units per acre (and up to 30 units for senior