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C 925-377-0977





Linda Di Sano Ehrich, Realtor 93 Morage Way · Orinda, CA 94563 925.698.1452 Linda@LindaEhrich.com

EXPERIENCE MATTERS





Hacienda Transformation: Economic Stakes Emerge

By Sophie Braccini



www.LindaEhrich.com

DRE# 01330298

Proposed map, with additional annotations

Photo courtesy Gould Evans

arks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram invited representatives of local stakeholder groups to meet with architectural firm Gould Evans Aug. 17 and weigh in as the concept for renovating the historic public property moves into an active business phase. Gould Evans representatives presented the architectural plans as well as the results of their first talks with potential investors. The trade-offs that would be necessary to make a public-private partnership a success are beginning to surface. Partly business, partly community asset, the new Hacienda would concentrate the public amenities in the pavilion area, while a business model still needs to be created to make the rest of the property an interesting investment opportunity. Food and wine pairing plus accommodations is one possibility.

Members of the Moraga Juniors, the Moraga Movers (seniors), the Hacienda Foundation, the Lamorinda Wine Growers Association (LWGA) and interested residents gathered at the La Sala building and heard a quick conceptual presentation by Gould Evans project manager Lauren Maass. "The concept would be to have a community center around the pavilion area, a hospitality center with a restaurant and lodging in and around the main building, as well as a wine center," she summarized.

The entry into the Hacienda property would be redirected through the Moraga Road entry point. The pavilion would be the community hub, the original pool could be restored, a cabana area and a meeting room could be added; parks and recreation offices would be moved there.

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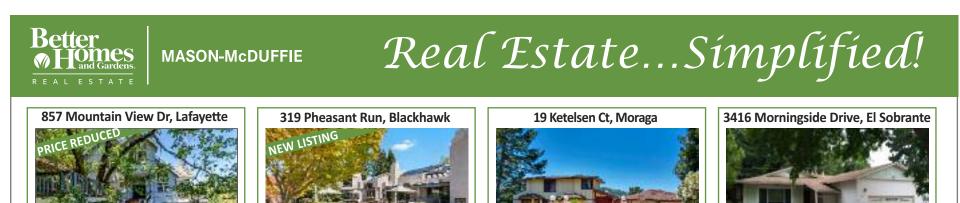
Referendum on Aug. 26 Agenda

Council likely to take no action

meeting the petition that was filed repeal the ordinance against which actual plans of the site in the inforby a group of citizens to stop the the petition is filed, or submit the mation that they showed to those Moraga Center Homes develop- ordinance to the voters. But the dement next to the fire station on veloper, City Ventures, and the Moraga Way. The Contra Costa property owner, David Bruzzone, County Elections Division certified have filed a lawsuit claiming that that this referendum petition con- the petition violated several state

he Town Council will ac- tained the requisite number of valid election laws. For example they knowledge at its Aug. 26 signatures. The council could either say that the residents omitted the who signed. State law requires the "full text" of a municipal initiative be included in the petition that is circulated for voter signatures. "Because the town went ahead and cer-

tified the referendum despite this best resolved by a court of law. violation of state election law, we She has recommended that the are put in the uncomfortable posi- council take no action on whether tion of actually having to turn to to rescind or put the referendum the courts to enforce the election on the ballot until a court decides laws," said Charity Wagner of on the merits of the petition. The City Ventures. The town attorney Town Council will decide to probelieves the issues raised bring up ceed or not at its regular meeting serious legal questions that are on Aug. 26. S. Braccini





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TIP OF THE WEEK

Solid job growth, a recent rise in wages, and low gas prices have given consumers more confidence to spend money. In addition, a strong dollar versus the yuan could keep inflation low and likely delay the Fed in raising its benchmark Fed funds Rate beyond September, keeping home loan rates down. While local home prices are rising at a consistent rate of around 5% annually, home ownership is still at a 20-year low. Let us help more qualified buyers participate in the American Dream!

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925.323.8125 norlatorres.turney@gm CalBRE#01913739



Regina Englehart, m 925.876.9076 regina.englehart@bhghome.com _{CalBRE# 01308462}



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