



MORAGA

See public meetings schedule on this pages and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements
Town of Moraga:
www.moraga.ca.us
Phone: (925) 888-7022
Chamber of Commerce:
www.moragachamber.org
Moraga Citizens' Network:
www.moragacitizensnetwork.org

HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

I count myself LUCKY to live & work in Lamorinda!



With the busy selling season already underway, if you or someone you know is in the market to sell or buy a home, call me today!

**Expert Knowledge...
Exceptional Service**

I look forward to helping you with your real estate needs.

JIM COLHOUN
REALTOR®
925.200.2795
jim@jimcolhoun.com
DRE# 01029160



Council provides direction to staff regarding Comprehensive Advanced Planning Initiative

By Vera Kochan

The sixth cycle Housing Element deadline is December 2022. Also on the table are an Environmental Impact Report, a re-zoning of the Bollinger Valley Study Area, a General Plan update, the Regional Housing Needs Allocation and compliance with new state laws.

A Housing Element provides an analysis of a community's housing needs for all income levels, and a strategic response to provide for those housing needs.

According to a staff report presented by Planning Director Afshan Hamid during the March 10 town council meeting, the town's RHNA

increased from 229 new housing units for the fifth cycle to 1,118 new housing units for the sixth cycle.

New housing legislation, over the past four years, has made it increasingly easier for developers to secure housing projects without interference from local governments. This includes: Mandatory Accessory Dwelling Units laws and amendments; Senate Bill 743 (transportation demand based on Vehicle Miles Traveled); Housing Affordability Act (allows the state to limit the ability of local government to restrict new housing); Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (designates sites for affordable housing in high opportunity

areas and decreases segregation); Senate Bill 330 (speeds up the approval process for housing developments); and Senate Bill 35 (ensures access to affordable housing and authorizes streamlined multi-family housing developments that involve very low to moderate income households).

Beginning in 1969, California has required its cities to comply with the RHNA by determining how many new homes must be built and how affordable they should be within an eight-year period. The period is called a cycle, hence the upcoming moniker – Sixth Cycle, which would cover the period of 2023-31.

The regional agency, Association of Bay Area Govern-

ments, determines through data and analysis what recommendations to make to the state regarding the Bay Area's housing needs.

In order to meet its Sixth Cycle requirements, the town staff has created a timeline of events in order to adopt the housing element by the state deadline of January 2023. The tentative schedule is: a Request for Proposals (March 2021); award a Consultant Agreement (May/June 2021); begin Housing Element and Bollinger Valley Re-zone Project (Summer 2021); Public Outreach (throughout 2022); Planning Commission and Town Council Study Sessions (throughout 2022); draft Environmental Impact Report

(Summer 2022); Planning Commission recommendation (November 2022); Town Council Adoption of Housing Element (December 2022); final submittal of Housing Element to California Department of Housing and Community Development (January 2023); begin Re-zone and General Plan update (Winter 2023); complete Re-zone (Summer 2023); and complete General Plan update (Winter 2024).

Moraga's council members were overall pleased with the aspects of the staff timeline and encouraged the planning department to stay the course.

Town to erect fence around Lamorinda Skatepark due to non-compliance of rules and vandalism

By Vera Kochan

What began as a great place for skate boarders of all ages to hang out and hone their craft has turned into a headache for the town of Moraga.

Since opening in 2003, through a joint funding effort with Orinda and Lafayette, the facility located in the Moraga Commons Park has seen a steady increase in problems. According to a staff report by Parks and Recreation Director Breyana Brandt and Moraga Police

Chief Jon King, "This is largely due to the inability of the town to effectively 'close' and secure the skatepark which is sometimes necessary due to significant occurrences of vandalism, need to complete routine maintenance, inappropriate conduct by users including bullying, fighting, drug use, and failure to obey safety rules and ordinances."

More so within the past year, the town and the County Health Department have received a steady stream of complaints from residents regarding non-compliance of COVID regulations (lack of

mask-wearing and social distancing). Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg acknowledged that the skatepark has seen ongoing problems for several years prior to the pandemic.

MPD has responded to many of the behavioral complaints, only to have the activities resume once officers have left the premises. The police have been hesitant to pursue punitive measures at the risk of creating a hostile relationship with the mostly juvenile offenders. The constant monitoring of the skatepark has become less



Image provided

Aerial view of proposed perimeter skatepark fence

cost-efficient and takes police away from focusing on overall public safety and crime.

During the March 10 town council presentation, King stated, "My officers were met with such language, that I'm not going to repeat it in this public forum, by young teenagers who were using the park and took offense to the fact that the police officers were there, including me, trying to enforce the safety rules and what have you."

Town staff has looked into less drastic measures before coming up with the final permanent fence option. The possibility of a temporary chain link fence was explored. While it would close the skatepark, its design would not effectively keep users out, and it would cost approximately \$7,000 to install, not to mention mounting labor costs required to set up and remove a temporary fence on a regular basis.

Another option was to have a non-sworn staff person onsite serving as a "monitor." However, given the hostile reception MPD has received at the skatepark, the idea was rejected. Additionally, the facility is open daily and may require monitoring for months or years to come making it cost-prohibitive. Liability concerns to the town are also an issue given that the facility would be staffed by a town employee and fall into the category of childcare.

After researching skateparks in Concord, San Ramon and Walnut Creek staff has determined that the fencing would fall under three main categories: chain link, ornamental iron and architectural welded iron. Brandt and King recom-

mended the installation of a permanent 6-foot-tall fence, constructed of ornamental iron with two lockable access gates for users to enter and exit the facility. Because the Lamorinda Skatepark is set into a hillside, style options were limited. The proposed fence will compliment the existing 4-foot-tall fence currently situated along the All-Access Playground. It will be set back approximately 30 feet from Moraga Road.

The proposed fence would be locked as needed to control vandalism, safety, compliance issues or during maintenance. Typical closure durations could last between one to three days with signs posted explaining the reason why. It is hoped that these informational postings would encourage well-behaved skatepark users and offenders alike to understand and hold each other accountable for the closures. "Nobody wants a fence," said Brandt, "but everyone's hoping for a solution."

The town council approved the skatepark fence installation with a 3-2 vote, with Council Member Renata Sos and Council Member David Stromberg voting no.

The project is expected to take 90 days to complete at a cost of \$56,490. An appropriation was made by the town council during Fiscal Year 2020-21 Mid-year Budget Adjustments into Fund 750 – Asset Replacement for the Skatepark Fence Project – pending approval (\$48,000). The Moraga Parks Foundation will donate \$9,000 to help complete the project.

New Construction in Moraga Vista Encinos



Newly constructed 4 & 5 bedrooms homes ranging from 2,802 sq. ft. to 3,798 sq. ft. of living space with sweeping views.

Call to view!



Jay Williams
925.878.5050
jay.williams@compass.com
DRE 00868489



Rob Olson
925.788.6193
rob.olson@compass.com
DRE 00385275



This neighborhood cul-de-sac is located near top-rated Moraga schools, swim club, farmers market and hiking trails. Southwest facing yards provides afternoon light and picturesque sunset views over the undisturbed hills above the Upper San Leandro Reservoir. The bright and dynamic architecture features gourmet island kitchens, hardwood floors and luxurious primary bedroom suites.

Visit VEMoraga.com for more information