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OUSD puts finishing touches on Sleepy Hollow multi-purpose room



Photo Sora O'Doherty

The new multi-purpose room at Sleepy Hollow is almost ready for the return to school. The large space boasts a stage, large garage-type doors that will open onto the large patio area in front, and a very large kitchen area off to one side.

By Sora O'Doherty

A few years after conceiving a plan to shelter in place during a potential wildfire, Sleepy Hollow Elementary School will open for the 2023-24 school year with a new multi-purpose room (MPR) capable of sheltering students, staff and members of the community, according to Orinda Union School District (OUSD) Director of Facilities, Stuart Watson.

The new MPR stands at the entrance to the school in what was formerly part of the parking lot. The building houses a large auditorium with a stage and a up-to-the-minute kitchen with plenty of room and equipment for providing universal meal service. In front of the building is a large concrete patio, and the building has a number of large doors, similar to garage doors, that can be opened to provide a seamless indoor-outdoor facility. The MPR and

the rest of the school are now enclosed by a high black metal fence.

Although the large water tank installed some years ago to provide water to enable the Moraga-Orinda Fire District to protect the building and its occupants during a severe wildfire still remains, the East Bay Municipal Utility District has put in considerable work to install bigger water pipes to ensure an adequate supply for MOFD in the event of a fire.

The old MPR has been torn down. While that location is currently bare, in the future it will be the site of Sleepy Hollows' before and after school care program.

Work has been continuing seven days a week during the summer so that the MPR will be ready for the start of school. Additional work at Sleepy Hollow includes new HVAC units in each building, including classrooms and administration areas, to provide cooling, heating and air filtra-

tion. New HVAC units have also been installed at Del Rey and Glorietta elementary schools and Orinda Intermediate School (OIS).

Sleepy Hollow will have a backup generator. Del Rey and Glorietta will not have backup generators, but considerable work by PG&E has provided a major electrical upgrade to those schools.

Although it will not open until January 2024, work is going full steam ahead at OIS to build a new Student Services Building. Watson explained that it was first necessary to demolish an old building and to build a new canopy on an adjacent building, because once the the Student Services Building goes up, there will not be sufficient room to work on a new canopy. Since the beginning of the summer contractor Overaa Construction has worked on extensive excavation for the new building and has just poured the foundation and associated retaining walls. The work area will be fenced off during continuing construction.

Additional work was done over the summer at OIS to clear storm-damaged trees and foliage from the creek that borders the back of residences on Ivy Drive, and to perform fire fuel mitigation on all the campuses. Watson observed that the district manages to do a tremendous amount of work with only five employees assigned to school maintenance.

Aug. 14 is the first day of school, so prepare for extra traffic and watch out for school children walking or biking to school.



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Moraga Adobe to open in 2024



Moraga Adobe

Photo provided

By Sora O'Doherty

The Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe (FJMA) announced that they plan to own and operate the historic home as a museum and learning center beginning in 2024. In September 2021, the Friends met their goal of raising half a million dollars towards the adobe's rehabilitation, and work as been ongoing to rehabilitate the building, which had been empty and vacant for decades.

According to Teresa Long, member of the board of the Friends, rehabilitation work, which started in September 2020 when the Friends raised the money to purchase the

adobe from developers J&J Ranch LLC, included bringing the building back to its 1840's footprint, adding a new roof, doing extensive interior and exterior work, installation of reclaimed redwood floors, upgrading electrical wiring, providing ADA access, earthquake retrofitting, restoring the historic wooden trim, and adding a new bathroom and storage building. Restoration is now in its final stages of completion.

"The rehabilitation has taken longer than we originally expected," FJMA President Kent Long observed, "but it is worth the extra time and effort to preserve its historic attributes. Fortunately, the J&J Ranch developers, who are

responsible for the rehabilitation, have worked collaboratively with us in getting the result we were hoping for."

FJMA, a nonprofit volunteer organization formed in 2009, has been busy planning the next steps for this oldest home in Contra Costa County including purchasing traditional furnishings, creating museum exhibits, installing a security system, and finalizing landscape plans. Commemorative pavers and a donor wall will be featured in the landscape implementation, taking advantage of the amazing views of Moraga Valley, Mt Diablo and the Las Trampas ridge line. Faculty and students from the Saint Mary's College Anthropology Department met with FJMA last month to explore the possibility of conducting a future archaeological dig on the Adobe property.

There is a wealth of information about the entire project, including videos, on the Friends' YouTube Channel, which can be accessed at www.youtube.com/channel/UC4vRiBoqHt16ENW_Ti8J8JA



City Council Regular Meeting:

Tuesday, Aug. 15, 7 p.m.

Planning Comm.:

Tuesday, Aug. 8, 7 p.m.

Traffic Safety Advisory Committee

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, Aug. 21, 7 p.m.

Sarge Littlehale Community Room, 22 Orinda Way

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