



Meeting Date: September 20, 2011

TOWN OF MORAGA

STAFF REPORT

To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Jay Ingram, Parks and Recreation Director
Subject: September Agenda Items

Unfinished Business

None

New Business

A. Lamorinda Dogs Inc. Proposal for Rancho Laguna Park – (discussion) In an effort to reach out to the larger audience for the park, Lamorinda Dogs has teamed up with a number of community groups to discuss additional proposal options. As of publication time, agenda packet information was unavailable. Lamorinda Dogs Inc. and other groups are diligently working on a proposal to present. I believe a Power Point presentation will be provided. Should staff receive additional information that will assist the discussions beforehand; we will make every effort to forward information and post on the Towns website.

B. Proposed Alternatives for Subdivision of Town-Owned Land at Rheem Blvd. and St. Mary's Road – (discussion/action)

Report provided by Shawna Brekke-Read, Planning Director and Rich Chamberlain, Senior Planner

Summary

This item is before the Parks and Recreation Commission because the parcel is adjacent to the Town's open space, an extension of Moraga Commons Park and adjacent to the East Bay Regional Park District's Lafayette-Moraga Pedestrian/Bike Trail. Town Council will consider and discuss the Planning and Parks and Recreation Commissions' comments and recommendations at its October 12 meeting. At that time, the Council will also consider if it wants to prepare and file a tentative subdivision map application on behalf of the Town of Moraga to sell a portion of the site.

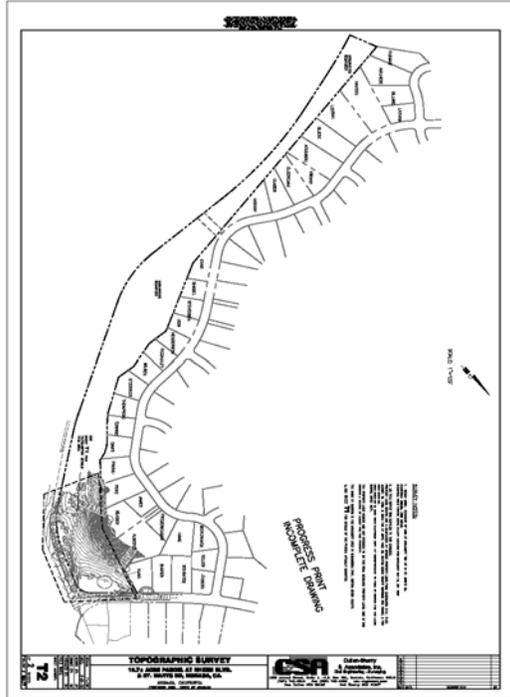
Request

Provide comments and/or a recommendation to Town Council regarding potentially subdividing approximately 1.91 acres of Town-owned land located at the southwest corner of Rheem Boulevard and St. Mary's Road (Figure 1.)

Background

Town Council directed staff to pursue subdividing the subject property during its discussions regarding financing the purchase of 331 Rheem Blvd. (Town's Corporation Yard.) Ron Carter, a local real estate professional who specializes in vacant lots, determined the marketability and potential pricing for one or two lots. Mr. Carter indicated the value of a single estate-sized lot would be about the same as two smaller lots, with a total approximate value of \$700,000. On September 22, 2010, the Town Council discussed whether one or two residential lots could be developed on the property. Robert W. Pickett, a local developer and former Walnut Creek planning commissioner, also prepared an analysis, which recommended development of two or more lots on the property.

Figure 1 – Topographic Survey and Location Map



Location of 1.91 acre site

SMC Ladies Softball Field



Discussion

Property and Alternatives Description

The project site is comprised of 1.91 acres of a 21.4-acre Town-owned parcel located at the southwest corner of St. Mary's Road and Rheem Boulevard; both streets are scenic corridors. The entire 21.4-acre parcel is bisected by Stafford Drive and parallels St. Mary's Road traveling northeast until Rheem Blvd. The Lafayette-Moraga Pedestrian/Bike Trail is located near the project site's southeastern boundary. The parcel is designated MOSO Open Space in the General Plan and zoned OS-M, Open Space-MOSO. The 1.91-acre project site has an average slope of 14.72%, is bordered by heavy brush and vegetation along a creek channel, and contains several trees, including oaks. The elevation of the project site varies between 584-feet to 631-feet and it is not on a minor ridgeline.

There are three different tentative parcel map alternatives, as follows:

1. Single- or one-lot alternative with a lot area of 83,196 square feet and a 16-foot wide access driveway from Rheem Boulevard;
2. Two-lot alternative with a 41,389 square foot lot on the north side of the 1.91-acre project site and a 41,807 square foot lot on the south side of the 1.91-acre project site, with one 24-foot wide access driveway from Rheem Boulevard; and
3. Three-lot alternative with a 41,389 square foot lot at the north side of the 1.91-acre project site and two 20,903 square foot lots at the south side of the 1.91-acre project site, with one 24-foot access driveway.

The remaining 19.49 acres of the parcel would be retained as open space with all three alternatives.

Agency Comments

EBRPD and Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) Fire Marshal both reviewed the alternative tentative parcel maps. EBRPD submitted a letter (Attachment A), and an EBRPD representative spoke at the Planning Commission's June 6, 2011. The EBRPD is opposed to any residential subdivision of the open space land, is concerned about impacts to the Moraga-Lafayette Trail, and requests the Town keep its remaining open space intact. The MOFD submitted a letter (Attachment E) outlining its standards for minimum driveway widths and fire hydrant requirements.

Public Comments

The Planning Commission conducted two noticed public meetings to discuss and consider sketch alternatives for subdividing the property to make a recommendation to Town Council. Members of the public spoke at both Planning Commission meetings. The Planning Commission also received written correspondence. The written and oral testimony addressed a variety of issues, including:

- Suggestion to consider a 4 or 5-lot subdivision or a larger residential project;
- Opposition to the subdivision;

- Preference for one residential lot with a deed restriction to prevent an excessively large home on a single estate lot;
- Concerns about the visual impact of a subdivision along a scenic corridor;
- Concerns about impacts to the EBRPD Lafayette-Moraga trail;
- Issues related to the project site's MOSO designation;
- Need to preserve existing town-owned open space; and
- Potential environmental impacts.

Planning Commission Discussion

The Planning Commission recommended the Town Council pursue the two-lot subdivision if the Council decided to subdivide the land. However, during the Commission's discussion, several commissioners stated it would be difficult to make the findings necessary to allow increased density above the 1 dwelling unit per 20 acres density allowed on open space properties. The two-lot (and the three-lot) alternative(s) would require the MOSO density increase findings, whereas the single lot alternative would not.

Issues

Potential subdivision of the Town-owned property presents a number of different issues, as follows:

- Environmental Review/CEQA;
- MOSO and Open Space Density Requirements;
- Access Road Width and Moraga-Orinda Fire District Requirements;
- Guest Parking Requirements;
- Scenic Corridor;
- Tree Removal;
- EBRPD Lafayette-Moraga Pedestrian/Bike Trail;
- Traffic; and
- Creek/Topography

Conclusion

The Parks and Recreation Commission is requested to provide comments and/or recommendations on alternative subdivision proposals for the 1.91-acre portion of the Town-owned parcel.