



Meeting Date: March 19, 2013

TOWN OF MORAGA

STAFF REPORT

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

New Business

Item IX. A. Conceptual Park Plan for the Camino Ricardo Subdivision – (discussion/action)

The Park and Recreation Commission held their first public meeting on this topic on February 19, 2013. Planning Director Shawna Brekke-Read provided a staff report for the overall development project and focused the discussion on the proposed parkland improvement. The project manager, Denise Cunningham, Director of Development for SummerHill Homes provided an additional verbal report. This being the first assessment of the proposed 2.5 acre park, the Commission had a few comments, one of which was addressing the option of receiving money from the developer in lieu of parkland and park improvements. After discussions and hearing from the public, the Commission chose to further research the option of having the developer provide the parkland and park improvements. Six members of the public spoke and expressed varying views:

- 1) Additional parkland and park amenities are a better idea than in lieu developer funds.
- 2) It issue of safety and security is a strong concern from adjacent neighbors, due to its location, the park is isolated.
- 3) Include the 4.49 Town-owned parcel adjacent to the SummerHill park in the discussion and look at the overall area as a potential seven acre park
- 4) Some type of adjacent parking is imperative

At their February meeting the Commission established a subcommittee formed to assist the entire Commission, allowing three Commissioners the opportunity to attend a site visit and meet with the developer in order to have a better understanding of the possibilities that exist with this proposed park site. Vice Chair Lucacher and Commissioners Khanna and Ryan were selected to serve on the subcommittee.

The subcommittee was first scheduled to meet for a site visit on Thursday, February 28. While only Commissioner Khanna was able to attend, Council Member Metcalf,

Planning Director Brekke-Read, Parks and Recreation Director Ingram, Denise Cunningham from SummerHill and Carrie Mosca from Carlson, Barbee & Gibson Inc. also walked the property to better understand the topography and it's opportunities and challenges.

After the site visit, SummerHill Homes offered the services of their landscape architect to attend a subcommittee meeting, provide typical neighborhood park ideas, and receive feedback and direction from the subcommittee. The subcommittee met on Monday, March 11 (Commissioner Crosby attended on behalf of Vice Chair Lucacher). SummerHill representatives, including Sheri Van Dorn, the project's Landscape Architect from Van Dorn Abed Landscape Architect Inc., received comments and feedback from the subcommittee and staff. They agreed to provide renderings for review and direction at the March 19 Commission meeting. The renderings were not available in time for this packet, but once received they will be distributed. Renderings will include:

- ❖ Option 1 - A park with an open space meadow type setting
- ❖ Option 2 - A park with a hillside slide (created from off-haul grading in the residential area), climbing boulders, picnic area, outdoor ping pong tables, drinking fountains and an open turf area in the middle of the parcel

The lack of available parking was discussed as a constraint during the February Commission meeting and the subcommittee meeting. For the March Commission meeting the developer will include a sample parking area that will be placed on the Town-owned 4.49 acre parcel.

At the meeting, other options for typical park amenities will be available in order to assist with additional discussions and allow for the suggestion of additional concepts. The 2007 Town Council approved Parks and Recreation Master Plan establishes that the standard size of a neighborhood park is between two and five acres. Using this guideline the Camino Ricardo proposed park would qualify as the first and only neighborhood park in Moraga. The Master Plan address a *Level of Service* guideline related to neighborhood parks. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) set park acreage ratio guidelines for communities to strive towards. Their recommended guideline of neighborhood parks per 1000 residents is 2 acres. If Moraga was to follow NRPA guidelines we should strive for 32 acres of neighborhood parkland, we currently have 0 acres of neighborhood parks per 1000 residents.

The Master Plan also addressed typical amenities to provide, consider and avoid when planning a neighborhood park:

Amenities to provide:

Site identification signage

Appropriate site furnishings, including drinking fountains and bicycle storage

Open turf area for unstructured play

General landscape improvements (including tree plantings)

Playground equipment or comparable structure

Accessible pathway connecting park elements
Basketball (full or half court)

Amenities to consider:

Small picnic shelter and barbecues
Skate features
Volleyball court
Community gardens
Interpretive signage
Natural area/greenspace
Portable restroom if necessary
Public Art

Amenities to avoid:

Sports fields
Off-street parking
Permanent restrooms
High maintenance facilities or plantings

During the February meeting SummerHill Homes requested direction from the Commission on park design and amenities to include on the proposed 2.5 acre site. A clear direction from the Commission will allow the developer to proceed with other required approvals regarding their proposed 26 home subdivision development.

Recommendation

Staff requests the Commission hear the second presentation from SummerHill Homes, listen to public comment and discuss and recommend an option that provides the necessary direction to proceed further with the development process.

Given the two options, staff recommends Option 2, “Hillside slide (created from off-haul grading in the residential area), climbing boulders, picnic area, outdoor ping pong tables, drinking fountains and an open turf area in the middle of the parcel.”

Regarding the open space option, the Town already owns and maintains 250 acres of open space, another 2.5 acres might not be the best use for the greater community.

If option two is chosen there is the opportunity to “switch-out” suggested amenities presented at the meeting. However, staff still recommends the basic concept of a middle turf area with a hillside slide, maximizing the size of the turf area as much as possible.

Item IX. B. Assessment Process for Commons Park – (discussion/action)

The survey development process is going slower than anticipated. Originally we had hoped to have the survey available on-line from March 11-22, but those dates will have to be pushed back. Thank you to all the Commissioners that provided feedback on the draft survey. There is not much else to report other than the survey is currently being reviewed through the University Human Subject Review process. Hopefully we will receive final approval from them in time for the March 19th Commission Meeting.

Next steps in the process will include survey distribution to as many individuals and groups in Moraga as possible. Students from CSUEB will also be conducting in-person surveys at community events in the next few months. As soon as the survey is finalized staff will share it with the Commission.