

Published November 29th, 2017

## Moraga Adobe moves closer to approval as an Orinda cultural institution

By Nick Marnell



Moraga Adobe Photo Sora O'Doherty

The Orinda Planning Commission unanimously recommended Nov. 14 that the city council approve General Plan and zoning map amendments applicable to the Moraga Adobe, an historic landmark on the site of the future J and J Ranch subdivision. A local community group, the Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe, is negotiating the purchase of the Adobe with the intent to convert it into a history and learning center for the public.

The Adobe is the oldest residential structure in Contra Costa County. In order for the building to be used as a local cultural institution, with the ability for FJMA to host educational, community and fundraising events, the commission recommended a General Plan parcel designation change and a zoning map change to convert the Adobe to Parks and Recreation status.

Neighbors along Donna Maria Way were not enthusiastic, as they complained about possible damage to their private road and the time and number of events to be hosted at the Adobe, resulting in a change from the semirural nature of the area.

All of the conditions regarding parking, time and number of events and responsibility for property damage will be regulated under the terms of a general use permit, according to senior planner Daisy Miller. "The semirural nature will not be affected by the changes," Miller said.

A memorandum of agreement between J and J Ranch and the Friends specifies that the structure must be restored and opened to the public and conveyed to the FJMA if the group is able to raise \$500,000 for purchase of the Adobe.

"We have \$135,000 in the bank, which does not include a \$100,000 pledge from the Moraga Historical Society," said FJMA President Kent Long, though to operate the center, Long says the group will need much more than a half-million dollars. "We talk about a \$1 million fundraising plan," he said.

The Friends will have three years to raise the money from the time the group enters into a purchase agreement with J and J for the Adobe.

Long said the purchase agreement could be completed in early 2018.

If the FJMA fails to raise the money, the parcel reverts to a J and J Ranch homeowners association, which would allow limited public access to the structure.

Reach the reporter at: [nick@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:nick@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA