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Hacienda Master Plan - Where Will the Money Come From?

By Sophie Braccini



George Fisher, of the Moraga Movers, donned a sombrero to greet Cinco de Mayo guests at the Hacienda de las Flores Photo Sophie Braccini

Iacofano Goltsman for the Town)," says Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram, "the Town wants the Commission to look back at it and see if they want to take further steps in phase one and phase two." Phase 1 of the business plan aims to increase revenues from weddings by holding two weddings a day and improving signage; it does not require a major investment from the Town but requires increased marketing efforts of the facility as a wedding site. It does not impact the community center function of the Hacienda or what the residents can get from it. Phase 2 requires the modification of La Sala building and increases revenue from non-wedding activities. More parking spaces are needed for that phase.

Recently the Town decided to move its professional equipment (the corporation yard) out of the parking area located close to the Pavilion at the Moraga Road entrance of the facility. The first declared objective was to free space for additional parking at the Hacienda, but the conversion of the former corp yard to a public parking area will happen anytime soon. "At this time we have no budget," said Ingram.

Ingram believes that in two or three years there might be enough funding to commission a master plan. "We need more community knowledge about the Hacienda," he said, "We need to give the community a vision of what this beautiful space can become." He believes that it is the Town's responsibility to define that vision, while the Foundation's responsibility is to raise funds to finance the many improvements needed. For example, the Pavilion area needs new drainage, the electricity, bathrooms and insulation need upgrading, and an elevator should be installed in the main building.

The Foundation, comforted by the success of popular events, remains optimistic as far as the future of the Hacienda is concerned. "I would reiterate that we are most grateful to the Council and the Parks Commission for their support of our mission," said Roth, "With all of us working together, we will make the Hacienda the Community Center that Moraga deserves."

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Cinco de Mayo in Moraga this year was just as beautiful and successful as last year. The Hacienda de las Flores was dressed up to greet guests, thanks to the volunteers of the Hacienda Foundation and of Kiwanis (check out the updated ladies' lounge on the first floor.) The outdoor festivities showcased the facility at its best. But there is still a long way and a lot of dollars to go before the Hacienda can really become the community center the Foundation would like it to be. Although the Town Council confirmed, at a joint meeting with the Parks and Recreation Commission (the Commission) on April 28th, that renovation of the Hacienda was an important goal for the town, there is no money to finance the design of a master plan for the facility; not to mention financing the work that the implementation of such a plan would entail.

"We agree that before major projects are begun, a master plan for the property should be done," said Hacienda Foundation President Claire Roth, "Unfortunately the Foundation lacks the resources at present to begin that process. We hope the Town Council will decide it is a priority. In the meantime, the Foundation will continue to work on the considerable project of continuing to refurbish the Fireside Room and the bathrooms in the main Hacienda building."

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