

Published October 30th, 2019

Continuing saga of Rheem sinkhole

By Vera Kochan



Rheem sinkhole gets larger Photo Vera Kochan

For a while, any obvious repairs to the current Rheem sinkhole had come to a screeching halt. The last apparent bit of progress occurred in May when Moraga Star Gas Station property owners had set up two sediment basins to remove debris from the damaged corrugated metal pipe below street level.

Former town of Moraga Compliance Officer Kelly Clancy had issued a Notice And Order To Abate on Sept. 13 and also posted that notice on the chain link fence of the property located at 398 Rheem Blvd. This move comes on the heels of litigation proceedings begun in August against the property owner.

To the naked eye, the sinkhole area appears to have increased in size to even more dangerous proportions than its initial appearance in late March.

The abatement notice states, "The conditions on your Property that constitute nuisances include the following: 1) the cavity in the ground situated near the landscaped median in the driveway and walkway near Center Street ("Sinkhole"); 2) a cavern underneath the surface of the Sinkhole that is larger than the Sinkhole itself ("Unstable Ground"); and 3) the failing stormwater pipe near and below the Sinkhole ("Stormwater Pipe")."

The town also notes that after meeting with the property owner on three separate occasions (March 28, April 15 and July 9) to discuss matters relating to repairs, the property owners have not progressed with satisfactory repairs, thereby allowing the situation to worsen.

The notice also mentions that the "Sinkhole is an attractive nuisance which is dangerous to children and others. There are schools within walking distance of the Property and it is near a pedestrian friendly shopping center which causes the Sinkhole to be publicly visible and accessible to children and other persons in the area." Also mentioned, even though there is a fence surrounding the sinkhole, the outlying area of unstable ground has yet to be identified.

Another potential hazard that the town points out is that the current condition of the CMP is an "obstruction of the stormwater conveyance system," noting that "there are voids in the corrugated metal of the Stormwater Pipe. These voids not only impede the flow of water through the conveyance system but also allow water to flow out of the Stormwater Pipe and disperse into the surrounding soil causing further deterioration of the corrugated metal," a concern with the rainy season fast approaching.

A Special Town Council Meeting is scheduled at 6 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 30 regarding the property owner's Appeal Hearing.

Reach the reporter at: vera@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA