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Planning Commission approves temporary Bay Area Ballplayers' enhanced outdoor facility

By Vera Kochan



Project setting for expanded temporary Bay Area Ballplayers location Photo provided

70,000-square-foot outdoor sports and recreational facility consisting of sports training and camps, baseball and lacrosse training, adult fitness classes, birthday parties, a 22,500-square-foot artificial turf field, batting cages, portable baseball backstop, lacrosse goals, portable medicine ball wall, portable toilet and temporary walkway.

There was hesitation by the Planning Department staff to sanction the notion for a permit as the location might conflict with the Moraga Center Specific Plan's Mixed Retail/Residential (MCSP MU-RR) zoning policies and objectives.

According to Moraga Principal Planner Ashley James' May 3 staff report, "In addition, the site continues to be available as a housing opportunity site under the 2023-31 sixth cycle Housing Element for increased housing in order to meet the state mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) as well as a future Town Center."

In Hammond's favor was an overwhelming response from the public commending his facility for giving the town's youth a place to be after school while doing something constructive during COVID's fallout.

Keeping this in mind, the Planning Commission granted Bay Area Ballplayers the requested permit with a limitation of 18 months and an expiration date of Oct. 31, 2023. There were several Conditions of Approval that applied, including: all features and structures must be dismantled by the expiration date; the hours of operation would be Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to sunset and Saturday through Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and no installation of lighting, amplified sound generating equipment or any permanent buildings or structures. The town is also allowed to inspect the site on a monthly basis.

In granting the permit, the Planning Commission made clear that Bay Area Ballplayers must actively work to find a more permanent location.

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