What’s happening with the old Clubhouse Property?

The former Clubhouse property is the large, 4.8-acre natural parcel surrounded on all sides by the Malibu Lakeside community. It is bordered by Crags Dr., Paiute Dr. and Seminole Dr. It is flat with grassy meadows with many large Valley Oaks, Coastal Live Oaks and Sycamores. The lot is divided into two parcels. Developers have advanced plans to the Los Angeles County for the construction of two large houses (one on each parcel).

Because the property is zoned as R-R (Resorts-Recreation), and the construction would affect several oak trees, the development required a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) in order to alter its usage and remove trees to allow for private residences. In February 2013, the County approved the CUP.

The Malibu Lakeside Homeowners Association is appealing this Conditional Use Permit to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

Approval at the supervisor level would clear the way for additional planning, including plans for a septic system which will need approval from the Los Angeles County Health Department. Approval by the Health Department would be the final major milestone to allow the construction of the 2 large houses.

Many in the Malibu Lakeside community as well as the Malibu Lakeside Homeowners Association are concerned about the development and would rather find a way to use this property as a community resource, such as a park or open space. The developers have indicated that they are willing sellers of the property.

The Malibu Lakeside Homeowners Association

The Malibu Lakeside Homeowners Assoc. (MLHA) formed in the 1970’s to advocate for the Malibu Lakeside community, defend against inappropriate outside development and promote a spirit of community through social activities. Unlike other HOAs, the participation from the community is strictly voluntary.

The MLHA endorses exploring ways to preserve the clubhouse property for passive recreation and community activities and fundraisers. It feels that the primary reason the homeowners chose to live here was because of the high quality neighbors and the unique and special character of the neighborhood. This historic and scenic property symbolizes the future of this neighborhood.

The MLHA is a tax-exempt 501(C)(7) organization led by volunteers elected by the community. Pat Henkel is the current president. It is funded through memberships, voluntary donations and fundraisers.
History of Clubhouse Property

The Malibu Lakeside community was developed in the mid 1920’s. The lots in the community tended to be small without large yards. The Lodge property was zoned R-R for Resorts and Recreation. It was intended to be the community’s primary location for recreation and socializing. A lodge acted as a community center, gathering place and dance hall for the area. It also had a 30 x 70 foot swimming pool, tennis court, a ball field and picnic areas.

The funding sources for the lodge changed in the 1950’s, leading to the sale of the property into private ownership. It continued to be a vital part of the community for decades however, serving as a spot for famous “Sunday morning pancake breakfasts” and family recreation.

Demolished

In the 1980s the property was sold to a Malibu Lakeside resident who partnered with developers Donald Haskins and the Moskowitz family. The clubhouse was demolished, bulldozed into the pool, and covered over. Their plan to build 15 townhomes with horse facilities on the property was fought by the community led by the MLHA. As a result of their efforts, the Conditional Use Permit for the development was denied by the LA County Board of Supervisors.

In the years since, the MLHA has organized cleanups of the property and in 2003 paid to remove several dead and potentially hazardous trees. The land has remained relatively untouched since.
Developer Plans for the Property

Developers Donald Haskins and Mark Moskowitz, propose to build two large houses on the Malibu Lakeside clubhouse property. The proposed homes are in the European Tuscan style. Several oak trees would be impacted and/or removed. Active construction would likely take up to 2 years.

http://planning.lacounty.gov/case/view/r2010-01071/

Each house to include...

- 6,000 sq. ft. floor-plan
- Three-car garage
- Out buildings
- Large areas for parking
- Pools, putting greens, etc..
- Likely: significant lighting and septic systems
- A perimeter fence.
Alternative Vision
Preserving as Parkland

It is likely that the development of the houses will be approved in some form. An alternative to the development would be for the MLHA or some public agency to purchase the property and maintain it as parkland or open space. The current property owners have expressed that they are willing sellers. A formal asking price is not available.

Possible Funding Sources

Below are some of the sources of funding that MLHA is pursuing. A solution would likely be in the form of several sources.

Public sector agencies: Various state and local public agencies (such as the Los Angeles County Parks, or the Mountains Restoration & Conservation Assoc. (MRCA)) invest in local parks and open space. The MLHA has contacted many organizations seeking assistance with this purchase. Unfortunately, in recent years, funding for these projects is very limited and very competitive. This area would be competing with the entire Los Angeles County and any investment for parkland in this area would only serve a limited number of users. Sole funding from public sector is considered unlikely but a partial contribution is possible.

Local Conservancies: The MLHA has approached local private land conservancies looking for possible sources of funding. Many local land conservancies have indicated that they may be able to match contributions from the community.

Large donations: The MLHA is actively pursuing possible donors who have the means and will to donate the needed funds and create a permanent benefit to the neighborhood.

Funding from the local community: Several legal mechanisms exist to allow the local community to purchase open space for the benefit of the area. This could be in the form of a parcel assessment added to local property owners as part of their annual property taxes.

If the community agreed to the property tax assessment, the funds collected would need to be enough for the purchase of the property, plus extra for maintenance, insurance and weed abatement, less any funds collected from other sources. Property assessments can come in various forms. As an example, an assessment could be added to each home and last 20 years. The cost per homeowner could exceed several hundred dollars each year. It is likely that the homes in the area may also see an increase in value due to the proximity of a scenic neighborhood park.

Benefits of Community Park

It has been a dream of many of the neighbors and the MLHA, that the clubhouse property could return to the community.

• This park or open space could provide a scenic, peaceful and safe location for the local families to gather, walk, picnic or play.

• This property would also provide a location to return the tradition of the neighborhood block parties, similar to what our neighbors, the Malibou Lake Mountain Club, currently enjoy.

• It could also provide a source of overflow parking for private parties or areas of staging during a wildfire.

• It would protect the unique character or the neighborhood and preserve the natural views and nighttime darkness.

• It would add value to homes and attract home buyers to the neighborhood.

• It would provide a nature-friendly alternative to development & preserve the wildlife, old-growth trees and native grasslands.