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## Comments Still Accepted on Hetfield Development

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Planning Commission unanimously agreed to keep the comment period for the Hetfield Development Environmental Impact Report (EIR) open until March 22nd. Comments can be made in writing to the Town. The EIR is available on the Town's website, www.moraga.ca.us. The owners of

the properties bordering the proposed development came in large number, to a March 7 hearing, to express their point of views. Possible soil instability (faults and slides) and visual impacts remain at the center of their concerns; it will be months before there is an official response to questions and a ruling.

## Rancho Laguna Settlement

By Sophie Braccini



Rheem Ridge above Rheem Blvd.

Photo Andy Scheck

Preserve Lamorinda Open Space will not sue the Town of Moraga and the developer over the Rancho Laguna Development project, which will bring 27 new homes to the land adjacent to Rheem Boulevard and along the Rheem Ridge. A settlement was reached on March 9 that all parties consider a compromise.

Much of the discussion hinged on the interpretation of the General Plan's wording: "Protect ridgelines from development." To Council Member Dave Trotter, those words mean no development at all; while for Mayor Karen Mendonca they mean minimize the impact of development. Her perspective won the majority of Council member votes.

The settlement does not change anything about where the

homes will be built, but it guarantees that the intermittent creek that runs through part of the property will not be filled by a valley buttress under the current approval. A new Environmental Impact Report would have to be conducted if a buttress (or fill of the creek) were to be proposed, again, to stabilize Rheem Boulevard.

"What we're seeing is more and more of Moraga's open space being chipped away and it's very distressing," added Jones, "this settlement will protect the creek and that's positive, but we are still concerned to see homes built on ridge lines in Moraga."

"I am very pleased that all parties were able to reach agreement without litigation," said Mendonca.

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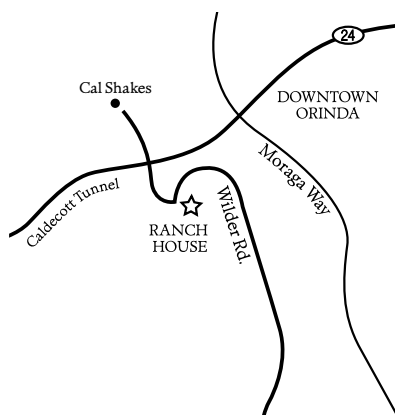
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