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Rancho Laguna Settlement

By Sophie Braccini



Rheem Ridge above Rheem Blvd. Photo Andy Scheck

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.

Reach the reporter at: sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

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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