



# Moraga Civic News

## Public Meetings

### Town Council

Wednesday, Dec. 11, 7 p.m.  
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,  
1010 Camino Pablo

### Planning Commission

Monday, Dec. 16, 7 p.m.  
Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Rd.

### Design Review

Monday, Dec. 9, 7 p.m.  
Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Rd.

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

### Town of Moraga:

www.moraga.ca.us  
Phone: (925) 888-7022

### Chamber of Commerce:

www.moragachamber.org

### Moraga Citizens' Network:

www.moragacitizensnetwork.org

### School Board Meeting

#### Moraga School District

Tuesday, Dec. 10, 7:30 pm  
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Auditorium  
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga  
www.moraga.k12.ca.us  
See also AUHSD meeting page A2



## Police Report

**Cows in the road, 11/20/13** Four good-looking cows were apparently tired of roaming the hills of Moraga and decided to visit the intersection of Crossbrook Drive and Greenfield Drive around 9:30 a.m. It's unclear if this was covered at the police academy, but officers encouraged the foursome out of the street and away from traffic. The ranch owner arrived and wrangled the cows.

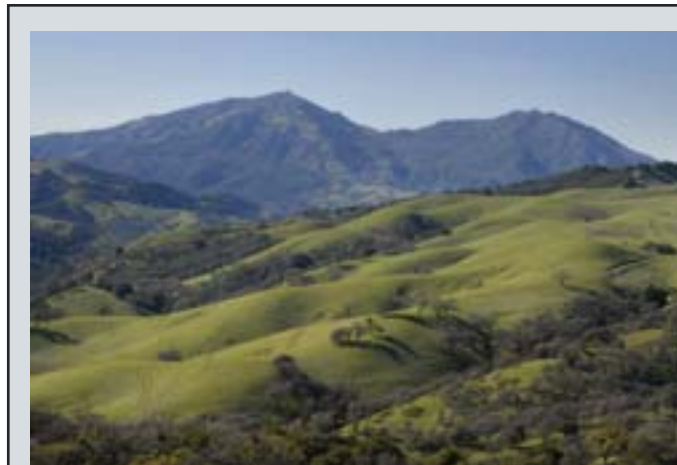
**Neighbors burglarized, 11/20/13** Two homes next to each other on Fernwood Drive were burgled. The thieves entered through an unlocked rear door at one home and via an unlocked garage door at the other place during daytime hours. Apparently the thieves like Apple products; they stole two older Apple MacBook Pro laptops from one house and an iPad and Apple laptop from the other.

**Possession of marijuana, 11/21/13** An anonymous person reported a suspicious vehicle parked on Claudia Court. Police located the car and discovered that one of the occupants was in possession of less than an ounce of marijuana. The teenager was placed in the Town of Moraga Juvenile Diversion Program.

**Attempt to stiff cab driver, 11/23/13** It was almost 3 a.m. when a group of Saint Mary's students refused to pay a cabbie for the ride he provided to their Ascot Drive apartment. Once he was compensated, the driver did not wish to pursue a citizen's arrest.

**TP and vandalism, 11/22/13** Sometime during the night unknown suspect(s) vandalized a home on Augusta Drive: a tree was toilet papered and two cars parked on the driveway were egged and splattered with an unknown substance and written on with a permanent marker. One of cars had a cracked windshield as well. No longer a prank ...

**Low key prank, 11/22/13** A Miramonte Drive resident called police to report not one but two suspicious circumstances; a neighbor's potted plant had been moved to her doorway, then a couple of hours later a branch from a tree in the common area was placed across her walkway. The person reporting the incidents claims to have no issues with anyone in the development. Cops agreed to keep a close eye on the neighborhood and patrol more during the evening hours.



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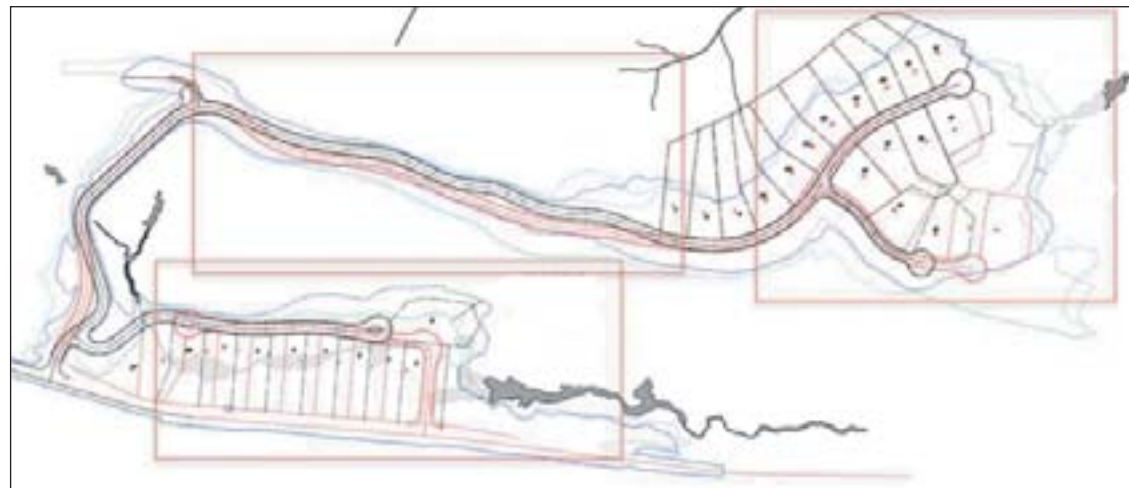
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## New Plan for Rancho Laguna II

By Sophie Braccini



New plan for Rancho Laguna II: previous lots in red, new ones in black

Image provided

During his State of the Town address Nov. 21, Moraga mayor David Trotter talked about 'behind the scenes' discussions with Summerhill Homes that led to a new map of the Rancho Laguna II development project.

Summerhill presented its revised plan to the Planning Commission at a Dec. 2 study session.

Trotter was outvoted 2-1 in 2011 when the Town Council denied an appeal, filed by the local organization

Preserve Lamorinda Open Space, and approved the Conceptual Development Plan for Rancho Laguna II – a 27-home project off Rheem Boulevard that included the construction of two residences on a minor ridgeline

and a large amount of grading. The debate was around whether or not the General Plan allowed development on ridgelines; the phrasing "protect ridgelines" led to different interpretations. The General Plan's perceived ambiguities are driving the current effort to consider revisions of hillside and ridgeline development rules.

"We entered into contract (to purchase the development) the summer of 2012," said Summerhill Homes vice president Katia Kamangar. "Coming into this transaction, we also wanted to take a fresh look at the previously approved plan to see if there were enhancements that we could undertake that would further minimize the project's impacts." Summerhill reached out to Preserve Lamorinda Open Space, which has been critical of the project.

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## Ridgeline and Hillside Committee Appointments

By Sophie Braccini

Mayor David Trotter recently highlighted the importance of the General Plan amendment process to clarify the rules applied to development on ridgelines and hillsides. A committee was appointed that will prepare a plan for the Town Council's approval. It is supposed to include people with different opinions on the issue. The stakes are high, as the results of the effort could limit the ability of property owners to develop the last large areas of undeveloped land in Moraga.

This committee will meet in public session. It is comprised of two members of the Town Council, Dave Trotter and Mike Metcalf; two Planning Commissioners, Frank Comprelli and Stacia Levenfeld; and one Design Review Board member and a Parks and Recreation commissioner yet to be named. "This committee does not have a charter yet," said the mayor, meaning that the scope of the work has not been defined. Planning director Shawna Brekke-Read asked each body to select members who would represent different opinions in town.

Since he's been on the Town Council, Trotter has been on record supporting the protection of ridgelines from development and minimizing the grading of slopes. His interpretation of the General Plan is that all ridgelines should be free of development, as he argued during the appeal of the Rancho Laguna II development project approval. Metcalf said that he accepted the committee post to protect the interests of Moraga. "The town needs to respect property rights and due process," he said. "I am concerned about regulatory taking of private property that could lead to the town being taken to court." Metcalf believes that the code needs to be cleaned up, not rewritten. "We need to simplify a process that's clumsy. We will hire planners to get us a very usable product for all."

Comprelli sees himself as being open-minded; he has not been on the Planning Commission long enough to have a significant record one way or the other – he voted to support the development of a home on Donald Drive on a very steep slope. "There

is not a lot of property left. All of the easy ones have already been developed," he said. "The bulk that are left, including the two major properties, Bollinger Canyon and Indian Valley, have massive ridgelines and hillsides. Each project needs to be evaluated on its own merit." Levenfeld, who works in public policy and development, also says that her mind is not made up yet. "My interest is to explore and understand what is intended by the language of the General Plan, and all the possible angles, to decide the fair interpretation."

For years now people who want to see development in Moraga and people who want to protect as much

open space as possible have been fighting over every development project that comes down the pike. The line of fracture is not as simple as Democrats versus Republicans, or prop-

erty owners against open space advocates; many residents want to see housing and economic development, for the good of the community, without heavily impacting open space.

**HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING**  
**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6, 6:30 PM**  
**MORAGA COMMONS PARK**

**MORAGA PARKS & RECREATION**  
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