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SAN RAMON Cemetery impact report approved

Tassajara Valley project advances to county panel

By Joyce Tsai

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MARTINEZ — A contested final environmental impact report for a planned cemetery in San Ramon's Tassajara Valley has been deemed adequate, meaning the 100,000- to 150,000-plot project in Tassajara Valley will move on to the county's planning commission and could be approved in January.

Catherine Kutsuris, Contra Costa County's director of conservation and development acting as the zoning administrator, approved the report, but not before making a series of changes to the project. Those changes will be posted to the county's website in a few days, said Telma Moreira, the cemetery project's principal planner.

Holly Newman, who with husband Bill Newman lives near the planned 221-acre cemetery site along Camino Tassajara, said she was concerned about the "significant and unavoidable" effects to the area's water supply, despite changes to the report by the county to address those concerns. Holly Newman said the final report has significantly changed from the draft version and that it is "inadequate" because it doesn't allow time for the public to review it and submit comments on it. Although the county requires water levels be monitored for an initial period, Holly Newman said she believes that monitoring should be required for the entire scope of the project and that the report should more strongly outline the mitigation measures should groundwater levels at the site decline.

In addition, Tim Clancy — who owns 9 acres of land near the planned cemetery development — said his name is still listed as the owner of a 33-acre parcel of land next to the site, although Danville developer Sid Corrie plans to use 24 acres of it to build the cemetery. Corrie never got the proper land lot adjustment to separate the two properties, said Clancy, who wants to know how the cemetery project can move ahead without his permission.

"I will do whatever is needed to defend my rights as a landowner," Clancy said after the meeting. However, Corrie said Clancy owns only 9 acres of the property; he owns the other 24 acres. Clancy doesn't have a right to make a claim on that property or stop the cemetery from being built around it, Corrie said. "It is legally sound what we're doing," he said.

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