

Early notification called key to approval of new Lake Michigan layout

By PETER BLAIS

PETOSKEY, Mich. — Approaching every organization and government agency to identify their potential concerns about Bay Harbor early in the planning process was the key to gaining approval for the potentially spectacular golf course community along the shores of northern Lake Michigan, according to one of the developers.

"Our idea was to find out everyone's concerns beforehand,"

CMS Land Co. President Rodger Kershner said.

"We contacted the local governments, state Department of Natural Resources and local environmental groups before we put pencil to paper. We wanted to find out what they were interested in and what they would not negotiate on. Then we built our plan around their requirements."

Their plans, which were approved by DNR and the state attorney general July 11, include a

27-hole Art Hills-designed course, 500-slip marina, yacht club, hotel, shopping center and 1,000 home sites.

Construction on the first nine holes along a portion of the 5-1/2-mile frontage on Little Traverse Bay was scheduled to begin in late July. Plans are to open nine holes every summer between 1996-1998.

The developers include CMS Land (a subsidiary of Consumers Power Co.), Detroit real estate

developer David Johnson and the Kircher family (operators of nearby Boyne Mountain and Boyne Highlands resorts).

In addition to their early research, Kershner said developers benefited from the fact that the course will occupy the site of an abandoned Penn-Dixie quarry and cement plant.

"The local agencies wanted the plant taken down, public access to the lake shore made available at either end of the project and the

dust from the abandoned kilns taken care of," Kershner said. "DNR was mainly concerned about controlling runoff from the old plant into the lake and that an environmentally safe project replace the old facility."

"It's as much to David's credit as anyone that we ultimately submitted a plan everyone could buy into. Getting everyone involved early just seems like common sense, but it's not always done."

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CIRCLE #104

Golf course plans stalled for Illinois airport property

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — A strip of airport-owned land lies dormant here as the city, Airport Authority and Denver-based developer Golf One try to settle on plans for a municipal golf course.

Originally conceived in 1990 as a \$3.4 million, 18-hole facility slated for 160 acres off Camp Sangamo Road, the proposed course has seen the price tag balloon to \$6.4 million. The Federal Aviation Administration didn't help matters when it insisted the local Airport Authority fork over \$328,000 for the parcel because it wouldn't be used for aviation.

The deal looked dead as a door nail after differences arose over Golf One's proposed management fee, according to Airport Authority Chairman Don Bangert. Golf One and the city haven't communicated since March.

However, City Commissioner Phil Spengler insists the deal is not dead. He said it's possible the airport could approach another developer — it never signed a contract with Golf One — or enlist a different firm to manage the course.

Spengler said the city will take up the matter again this fall.

Legislature okays second links for Okla. state park

DURANT, Okla. — The state Senate has approved issuing \$3 million in state revenue bonds to build an 18-hole golf course and clubhouse at Lake Texoma state park.

The project is expected to boost tourism, which is so vital to the economy in the southeastern part of the state.

The existing 18-hole layout turns 45,000 rounds annually, which led park officials to request the extra funds for a second championship course.

Construction is expected to begin later this year.

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Michigan project

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The Little Traverse Conservancy, for instance, was very helpful."

Little Traverse helps organizations obtain land for public parks, which Bay Harbor developers have agreed to do, according to Little Traverse Director Thomas Bailey.

"They went to the local government and state agencies, unrolled their plans on the table and basically said, 'Here's what we want to do. What do you think?'"

"They asked for input and then followed through with everyone's suggestions. So often, developers

say they are going to do this and that, but when it comes down to details, they are very vague. David Johnson and CMS were always open with everyone."

Bailey said he was also very comfortable with Boyne's involvement, calling it one of the area's most successful resort operators.

"They are local folks who do quality work," he said.

The project was so well received that no one responded during the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers required comment period, Kershner added.

"The Corps' people said they couldn't remember that ever happening before," he said.

The final two administrative details were ironed out July 11.

First, the state approved final closure plans for the plant and agreed to indemnify developers against any possible future lawsuits related to the closing, Kershner said.

Second, the developers finalized the purchase of another 750 acres from plant owner Holnam Inc., the largest cement manufacturer in the country, he added.

The course will work its way over varied terrain. Seven holes (one more than Pebble Beach, Kershner said) will play along two miles of shoreline. Another five will work their way in and around

the former quarry. Several holes will travel up and over covered kiln dust piles as high as 150 feet, while others meander through a forested area called The Preserve.

Construction of The Coastal 9 was scheduled to begin in July and open in early 1996. The Quarry and The Preserve 9s will open the following two years. All 27 holes will eventually be private, although they will be open to public play until a certain membership threshold is reached.

Hills was selected to design Bay Harbor for several reasons, Kershner said. Developers wanted a widely known architect because of the relatively isolated

location and the need to sell house lots (25 have already been sold at \$500,000-plus each). Hills was among a handful of designers making that initial cut.

Hills was also a favorite of CMS's chairman, who is a member of the Hills-designed Club at Pelican Bay in Naples, Fla., Kershner said. Finally, Boyne is building a Hills-designed course and "it made a lot of sense to have him work on this one while he was in the area," Kershner said.

Ironically, Hills had visited the site long before a course was planned and felt it would make a great location for a golf facility, Kershner added.