

GOVERNMENT UPDATE

N.J. company saves course as open space

Hackensack Water Co. has been granted permission to lease 32 acres of its property to the prospective new owner of an adjoining tract, making possible the preservation of a 132-acre golf course.

The approval by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) of the 99-year lease was a key element leading to the Feb. 22 sale of the adjoining 100 acres by Winthrop Products, Inc., an Eastman Kodak Corp. subsidiary, to an undisclosed buyer willing to continue a country club at the site.

An earlier plan to destroy the course and convert the site to a corporate office building will be abandoned.

Robert A. Gerber, chairman of Hackensack Water, applauded the BPU decision as the second in a series of positive steps this year for recreational open space preservation in northern New Jersey.

"This is a case of 'leveraging,' where our 32 acres were the key to the preservation of the entire golf course. Since the first of this year four golf courses, totaling more than 500 acres, have been preserved through this kind of initiative," said Gerber.

The state watershed property review board ruled in February that the long-term lease could be exempted from a moratorium on watershed land transfers, because the golf course use of the property imposed no threat to the water supply.

In February the BPU approved a plan to permanently preserve three other courses nearby, when it allowed the water company to transfer 290 acres to a non-utility affiliate. As part of the company's Evergreen Formula, it agreed to place perpetual deed restrictions on that land so that it would never be developed.

The River Vale site was not considered for a similar transfer, since part of it overlaps the protective buffer zone that surrounds Lake Tappan Reservoir. Hackensack Water intends to retain permanent ownership of the acreage as part of the 2,500 acres of protective land that surround the company's water supplies in New Jersey and New York.

The company's 32 acres has been leased to River Vale Country Club for more than 40 years to extend its golf course. In 1985, when the country club sold its 100 acres to Sterling Drug Capital Corp. for a corporate office headquarters, the drug company leased the water company's land to ensure an unobstructed view of nearby Lake Tappan Reservoir.

Sterling later sold the 100-acre site to Winthrop. It is zoned for 1 million square feet of office space.

Hackensack Water hopes to contribute up to 50 percent of any proceeds realized from the lease to the approximately \$7 million already available for distribution to Bergen and Hudson counties under the earlier land transfer.

The BPU reserved a decision on

the sharing and the public open space acquisition proposal. It indicated that it would decide in late March.

The three golf courses involved in the January transfer are Emerson Country Club in Oradell and Emerson; Pascack Golf and Country Club in River Vale and Harrington Park; and Haworth Golf and Country Club in Haworth. Only half of the Haworth club is on water company land.

EPA: Cooperation possible

BY PETER BLAIS

Rather than being adversaries, there are many areas where the government and the golf industry can both be part of the solution to environmental problems, an Environmental Protection Agency official said.

Senior Inter-Governmental Liaison Arty Williams made her comments during February's Golf Course Superintendents Association of America annual conference in Orlando, Fla.

The EPA's top two priorities are risk reduction and pollution prevention, she explained.

The major concern in many ar-

reas of the country involves ground water contamination from golf course chemicals. The EPA does not have sufficient expertise to regulate ground water contamination, said Williams. Consequently it leaves regulatory powers to the states, feeling they are better qualified to make decisions for their particular regions.

"The EPA isn't opposed to the use of chemicals," Williams said. "Our job is to balance costs, benefits and the effects on individual and public health."

Currently the EPA is focusing on the re-registration of some 40,000 chemicals, including a

number of pesticides. The goal is to build up a data base to discover if the chemicals are still doing what they were intended and whether they pose an unreasonable risk to public health or the environment.

"Some of these chemicals were registered 40 years ago. We want to find out if they still work," said Williams.

Congress has given the agency nine years to complete the task. To finance the program, EPA has given authority to levy a re-registration fee on manufacturers.

In the first round of billing, 13,000 products weren't re-regis-

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