

Sierra Club about-face angers golfers

San Francisco-area golfers and San Mateo County officials are upset with environmental groups that have reneged on earlier endorsements of a proposed city-owned site for a regional golf course.

Golfers have been pushing for a new public course since the 1960s. Demand is so strong that it is projected 80,000 rounds would be played on a new facility within three years. A petition to build a course drew 35,000 signatures.

San Francisco Mayor Art Agnos has asked the city's Public Utilities Commission to develop the 390 acres of watershed property located along Canada Road north of Woodside. Architect Robert Trent Jones has designed an 18-hole course that would include a club-

Group forms to save course

While opponents of new courses often gain the headlines, in Countryside, Ill., those trying to save a course are making news.

Centrum Properties Inc. of Chicago wants to buy and convert 62-acre Maple Crest Golf Course into a residential/commercial development.

But area residents have formed an ad hoc committee called "Keep Maple Crest Green" to oppose the development.

"(We) don't need another strip mall and don't need another cinema complex," organizer Ed Krzeminski told the "La Grange Park Suburban Life."

New financing bypasses bonds for communities

First Golf Corp. of Phoenix, Ariz., is offering a new financing approach that lets municipalities build golf courses without using their precious bonding capacity.

The First Golf approach allows the city to lease the golf course and make payments from user fees. Payments are based on expected profits. Once the construction costs are paid, the city owns the course.

First Golf's initial project was a course completed in March 1988 in Rapid City, S.D. Boomerang, an 18-hole championship course in Greeley, Colo., and Eagle's Landing, a \$3 million, championship facility in Ocean City, Md., are under construction.

house and driving range.

The Sierra Club's county chapter OK'd the property for a golf course in 1983 after the county agreed not to develop Edgewood County Park, where rare plants and animals were found.

But the environmental group has since changed its position.

"They don't want anything," county Supervisor Bill Schumacher told the Palo Alto Times Tribune. "I don't know how to make an agreement with them."

One of the reasons for the Sierra Club's about-face was the reported sightings of endangered San Francisco garter snakes, although two

environmental studies failed to show their existence.

Scientists have also declared the property an international biosphere reserve, one of 269 in the world, since the Sierra Club's original endorsement.

The initial approval was given by the club's executive committee. A recent poll of the 6,000 local members showed 82 percent opposed the development.

"We made a mistake. We made a mistake," Olive Mayer, chairman of the Sierra Club's local chapter, told the Times Tribune regarding the executive committee's approval of the \$6.5 million course. "The

point is that we don't think we should whittle away at the watershed this way."

Woodside officials and residents are reportedly also concerned about traffic and contamination of Crystal Springs reservoir.

But since the land is city-owned, it will be up to San Francisco and San Mateo County officials, along with the Golden Gate National Recreation advisory board, to make a final decision.

The city could sell revenue bonds to finance the project or find a developer to build and lease it.

NEWS

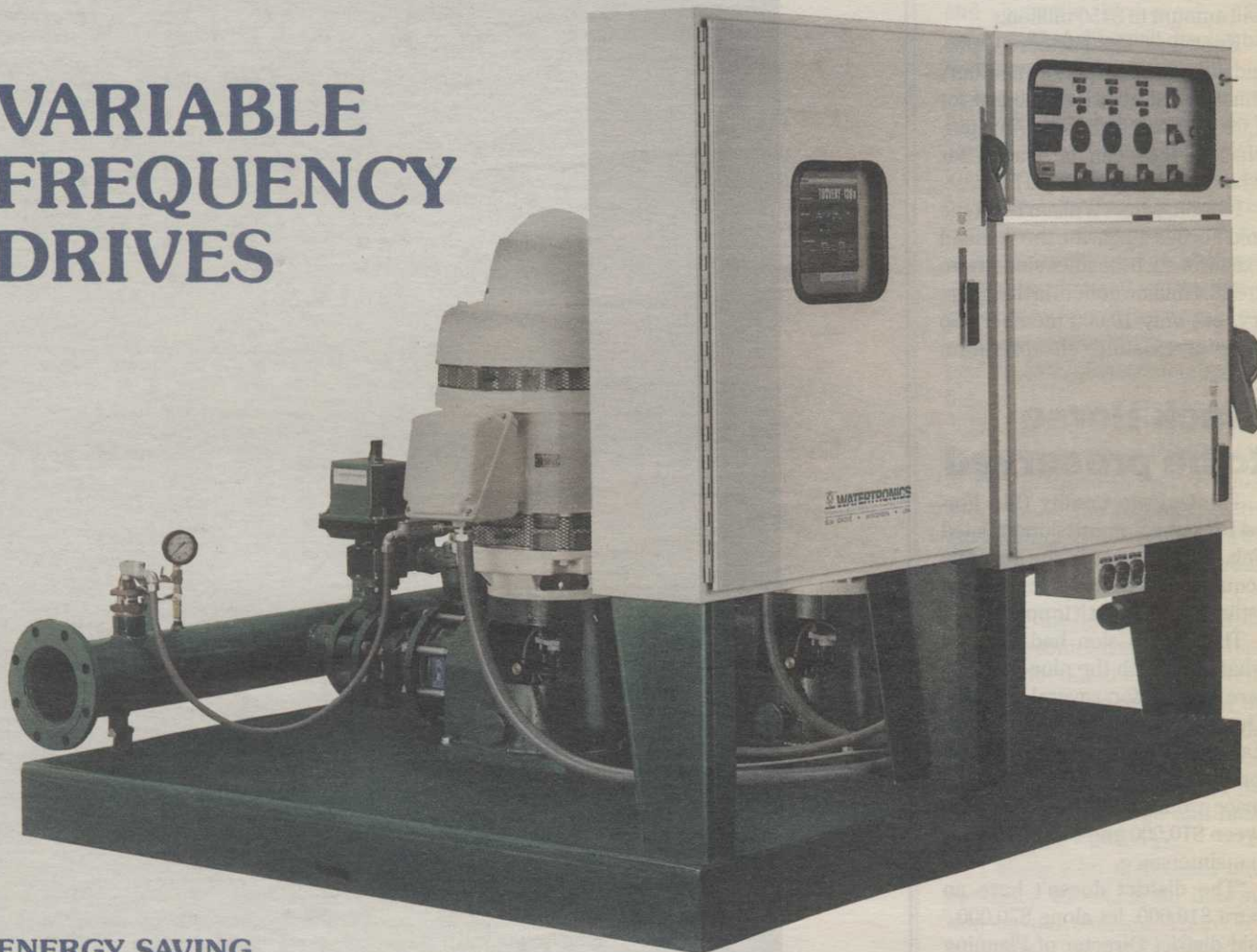
Brits build in Moscow

A British company has been selected to build a \$100 million luxury golf club in Moscow that will include the Soviet capital's first 18-hole course.

Golf Shows Ltd. will build the new facility which features a hotel and conference/business center. It is located 20 minutes from the Kremlin.

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