

Negotiations held to stop deadly Indian protest

BY PETER BLAIS

Representatives of the Mohawk Indians and Canadian federal government began negotiating Aug. 16 over a proposed golf course expansion in Oka, Que. that resulted in Indian barricades leading to the property and a gun battle leading to a policeman's death.

The federal government is reportedly considering buying the 55 acres and turning it over to the Indians of the Kahnésatake Indian Reserve, who claim the area is tribal land. The move would, effectively kill the proposed nine-hole expansion at Oka Golf Club in suburban Montreal.

"It was a nice site," said Canadian architect Graham Cooke, whose office did the preliminary design for the new holes. "It's been two years since we've done any work there. We sent out a staking crew, but the Indians told them to get off the land.

"They (course officials) told us later they had the problem cleared up. But we knew it was just a short-term solution. We knew we wouldn't be going back until everything was cleared up. There was quite a show of arms the last time we were there."

Cooke said he has heard rumors of damage to the existing nine since barricades were erected this spring

along roadways leading to the course. If renovations are necessary, he hopes his firm will be considered.

"There's a shortage of golf holes in the Montreal area," said the former amateur golfer, who finished second in the 1979 Canadian national amateur championship. "We lose a lot of public golfers to Vermont and New York.

"There haven't been many courses built recently because of agricultural zoning laws to protect farmland and a lack of developable land. A lot of people who might have built courses have left the area for political reasons.

"There's a lack of public facilities,

in particular. All the public and private facilities are filled. There's some building going on. But we're a long way off from what we need."

Cooke, who also has offices in British Columbia and Nova Scotia, said disputes involving Indian land claims and private businesses are occurring elsewhere in Canada.

"Our company has had projects out West where land claims are hard to define. But it doesn't get to this stage often," Cooke said.

The town government obtained a court order that the barricades be removed in early July. That led to a gun battle between Quebec Provincial Police and the Indians July

11 that resulted in the policeman's death.

Developers and Indians have reached agreements in the past, Cooke said.

"There's a posh resort on the Kahnésatake Reserve," the architect said. "They negotiated a long-term contract that covers things like hiring Indian workers. They've always had a good relationship."

Testimony complete in Vermont

BY PETER BLAIS

All the testimony has been given and developers are awaiting the decision of the Vermont district environmental board that will determine whether a golf course will be built at Sherman Hollow.

"It's up to the District 4 Environmental Commission," said developer Paul Truax, who has spent five years and hundreds of thousands of dollars pursuing governmental approval of his controversial \$22-million golf resort project. "We could hear any day or it could be another two months."

The commission listened to many hours of testimony during public hearings conducted last winter, spring and summer. Opponents have delayed the project with the help of Act 250, the state's main development-control law.

Truax has not stood still while awaiting the commission's ruling. He recently purchased the Mountain View House and the Spaulding Inn in neighboring New Hampshire. One of the last "grand" hotels in the Mt. Washington Valley, the Mountain View House has a nine-hole course that Truax hopes to expand to 18.

"The course was built around the turn of the century. Many famous people have played it. Dwight Eisenhower was the last president. We'd like to start the new nine next summer and finish it in 1992," said Truax, who is working with Florida architect Charles Ankrom.

Maui zoning laws eyed

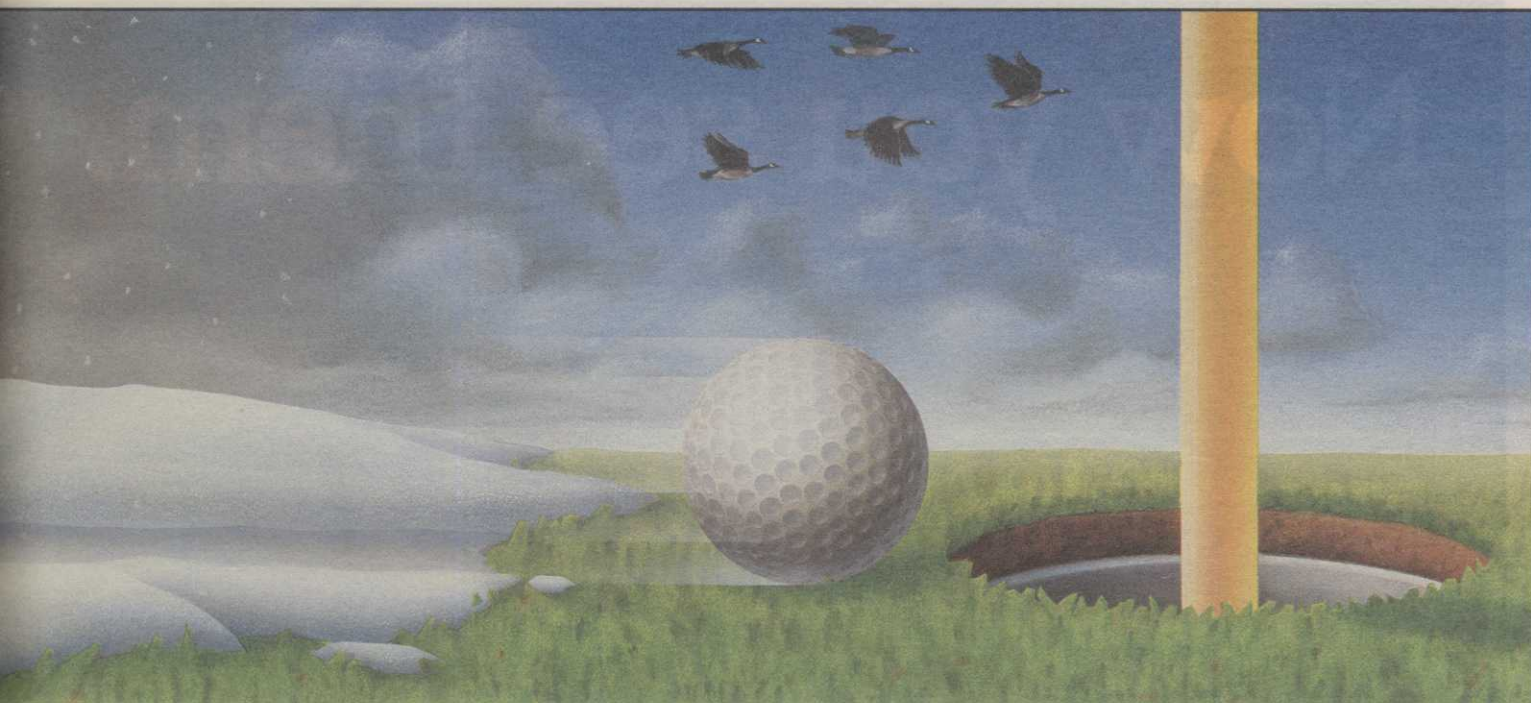
Maui (Hawaii) County officials are considering new zoning laws that would give them more control over golf course development.

Obtaining golf course zoning and designation as parks in county community plans would be required under a proposal supported by the Maui Planning Commission, reported the Honolulu Star.

Currently, county grading permits are all that is needed in some cases to build a new course. Golf course developers of low-valued agricultural land can completely bypass the County Council and Planning Commission.

The proposed ordinance, an outgrowth of the current four-month ban on new courses while officials study ways of regulating course development, is intended to give the commission the chance to consider effects on water, agriculture, archaeological sites and property values.

Golf is booming in Maui County where 11 proposed courses would double the area's total golf facilities. Officials at the Hotel Hana Maui and Manele Bay resort on Lanai have said they want to build courses.



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