

## Developer gives Wisconsin town ultimatum: Buy course or back off

EAU CLAIRE, Wis. — Developer David FitzGerald has offered an interesting proposition to opponents of his plan to turn Lowes Creek Golf Club into a housing development: Buy it and save it, or lose it and get lost.

FitzGerald planned to buy the public, 18-hole course on the city's south side for \$750,000 from Duke and Sharron Severson. FitzGerald plans to build single-family homes and possibly some condominiums on the site.

However, many neighbors and golf course patrons oppose the development, saying they want to keep the green space and recreation opportunities the course offers.

FitzGerald and the Seversons then agreed to postpone the final sale. FitzGerald also agreed to turn over the right to buy the golf course to any financially qualified parties who will maintain it as a golf course — if they come up with an accepted writ-

ten agreement.

FitzGerald said he decided to give golfers and neighbors a chance to buy the course to "clear the air" and to allow him to "Move forward without a cloud over the project" if he ultimately buys the property.

Efforts are underway to raise interest and money to buy the golf course, where several generations of local residents have learned to play golf and attended social functions.

## Course sale nixed by Michigan mayor

LANSING, Mich. — Mayor David Hollister has slapped a rejection on sale of the 9-hole Waverly Golf Course here, foiling developers who had planned to build a commercial and retail development on it.

Two developers had presented proposals to the city last May, both pitching to pave the course over and build a retail complex, an idea that was opposed by many local residents and golfers but

eventually recommended by the city's Park Board. One of the developers even offered to relocate the course to another site in the city.

With Hollister's decision to keep Waverly Golf Course a golf course, the city now faces the challenge of revamping the sagging, 70-year-old layout at Waverly Road and Saginaw Street. The course's irrigation system is one of many critical problems.

## PALMER-DESIGNED EMPIRE LAKES OPEN FOR BUSINESS

ONTARIO, Calif. — Empire Lakes, a \$20 million, 380-acre public-access golf course and mixed-use commercial complex, has opened for play here. Arnold Palmer designed the course for General Dynamics Corp. The 18-hole track will complement other surrounding planned projects, such as the Ontario Convention Center, the Ontario Mills outlet shopping mall, and the California Speedway. The facility also includes a clubhouse, driving range and golf training center.

## Fragile Alaskan site ups project costs

JUNEAU, Alaska — Developer Richard Holden wants to add nine more holes and another 85 houses to the 18-hole, 75-home development he originally proposed for North Douglas island. Holden, president of the Waterfront Park Hotel Corp., said the expansion is needed to cover the higher cost of developing on land soggy and less stable than expected.

Holden has said his \$12.5 million proposal is bankrolled by a group of anonymous European investors. But city officials gave Holden until the end of February to show proof he has long-term financial backing.

If the city does pull out of a deal with Holden, the rights to build the course could go to Totem Creek Corp., which finished second in the city's bidding process. Totem Creek, a non-profit group, wants to build a \$5 million, 18-hole course.

Whoever does build the course will face some unique construction requirements. The proposed site for the golf course is considered structurally fragile, and therefore the golf course can not be shaped by removing trees and pushing soil around. On North Douglas, according to Holden, disturbing the tree roots and thin soil would cause severe erosion.

Holden has said trees at the site would have to be cut level with the ground and the stumps left in place. Geotextile fabric would then be laid across the entire golf course and covered in layers of shot rock, sand and grass. The unique construction methods would add an extra \$2.4 million to the cost of the project, a 28-percent increase over the original projection, Holden said.

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