

## BRIEFS

**METAMORA, Ill.** — The Metamora Park Board approved a development plan for Black Partridge Park that calls for the construction of an 18-hole golf course, lake, hotel and convention center, cottages and camp sites. The course will sit on 260 acres of park land and include a junior golf and practice area. Construction of the park will take place over the next 10 years. The park board is looking to team up with private developers to plan the development components of the project.

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**NOBLESVILLE, Ind.** - The city plans to buy 77 acres to expand the city's 18-hole course to 27 holes. The land will cost \$980,000, with an additional \$1.5 million to \$2million earmarked for design and construction at Fox Prairie Golf Course. The existing course will be reconfigured.

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**KING CITY, Ontario** — ClubLink Corp. has purchased its first Montreal-area golf club—Cedarbrook Golf Club. Superintendent Doug Meyer, immediate past-president of the Canadian Golf Course Superintendents Association, and head professional, Eric Lemarre, will remain with the club. The club was acquired for \$2.4 million.

## Judge rules in favor of environmental group, forces organic golf option

By ANDREW OVERBECK

**SUFFOLK COUNTY, N.Y.** — The fight for organic golf courses has scored a major victory here as a judge threw out Suffolk County's environmental impact study (EIS) for two proposed golf courses in Yaphank.

State Supreme Court Judge Mary Werner ruled in favor of the Long Island Neighborhood Network (LINN), which had fought to halt construction on the projects because the county had failed to take a "hard look" at the option of building a chemical-free organic course. The ruling came as a complete surprise to the LINN and the county because it was made on March 31, 1998 but not made public until this April due to a paperwork error.

The ruling is a rare interpretation of the obscure "hard look" clause in the state's environmental quality review act (SEQRA). "Under SEQRA the county has to consider alternatives that will mitigate or have an alternative effect on the environment," said LINN's executive director Neal Lewis. "The county dismissed the organic option in its draft proposal because it was not 'feasible.'"

With the ruling in hand, Lewis is cur-

rently negotiating with Suffolk County officials to reach a settlement. If a settlement is not reached, the county will have to repeat the two-year process of preparing another EIS.

Suffolk County Deputy Bureau Chief Robert Garfinkle hopes the two sides can reach an agreement and emphasizes that the county is in favor of the organic option. "We are on the same page. The county is very concerned about chemical use and we want to build an organic, virtually chemical-free golf course and maintain it in the same manner," Garfinkle said.

However, Garfinkle also wants to keep this case from becoming a precedent. "My concern is to maintain the ability of the county executive and the legislature to control and direct policy and administration," Garfinkle said. "We can't allow a lawsuit to give an organization veto power over the administration of a project."

Lewis aims to create specifications for the construction and maintenance of an organic golf course and wants to set up an independent oversight committee that would approve any temporary use of chemicals and changes in the maintenance plan. The county has given Lewis



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access to the vendor proposals so he can evaluate their organic guidelines.

Three vendors are being considered for the two courses. West Hills, N.Y.-based Meligolf received the top score in the county's environmental review process but has not been officially selected by the county because financial terms of the contract have yet to be evaluated.

However, while the county appears close to making a decision about a vendor, and Garfinkle and Lewis appear close to an agreement, the process will likely drag out until the end of the summer. "There is a lot of paperwork and details to review. This is not going to be easy," Lewis said.

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