



The background is a detailed architectural site plan for a golf course. It features numerous numbered holes (6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18) and various water features labeled 'WATER'. There are also labels for 'ISLAND' and 'BUILDING REMOVAL BY OTHERS'. Elevation points are marked with 'INV. 43.5', 'INV. 40.0', 'TOP 42.0 INV. 43.0', 'TOP 41.5 INV. 42.5', and 'TOP 41.5 INV. 41.5'. A note at the bottom right says 'SEE CLUBHOUSE AREA PLAN'. The plan is overlaid with a large, bold title and a byline.

# New golf course: Money from the drain

By Joe Doan

In 1963 the town of Glen Ellyn, Ill., faced an acute need to enlarge its storm water drainage system, and as a consequence not only succeeded in proving the system, but as a happy by-product the Illinois village got a municipal golf course as well.

Increased capacity for storm water drainage systems is a need many towns in the United States have had to face in the post-war period because of population increases. Glen Ellyn's population nearly doubled from 1950 to 1963. From 1960 whenever there was a heavy rainfall the town's storm drainage system backed up, not being able to handle the flow, flooding the basements of many Glen Ellyn homes.

Engineers called in to study the problem suggested building an additional network of sewers that would carry the increased runoff into the nearby DuPage River. Estimates to carry out this work ran to about \$500,000.

At this point William D. Galligan, village administrator, came up with a solution that would be less expensive and would provide the town with a recreation area. Run the storm water into a man-made lake, suggested Galligan, and thus get rid of the overflow and give the town a boating and fishing area simultaneously. Galligan had in fact already located a likely site—a 200-acre tract that was little more than a marsh on the south side of Glen Ellyn—a spot no one had thought of developing.

Galligan theorized that the lake would occupy about half the 200 acres and the surrounding area could be developed as an industrial research park. This approach wasn't widely accepted and an alternative, using the area that would surround the lake as a homesite, was suggested. It was thought that about 1,000 homesites could be erected on the remainder of the marsh land after the lake was built.

On the surface this seemed a sound proposal, but Galligan was quick to point out that the new homes would someday add about 2,500 children to the population of Glen Ellyn while only providing taxes that would pay for about 40 per cent of their education. The balance of this educational burden would have to then be borne by those now living in Glen Ellyn.

George Winchell, a village trustee, then suggested to Galligan that Glen Ellyn was ready, if not overdue, for a municipal golf course that could be built in conjunction with the drainage project. In addition, he pointed out, a course could quickly become self-supporting and profits earned from its operation could be used to retire bonds that would have to be issued to finance the entire project.

Winchell, a partner in a large Chicago accounting firm, Arthur Anderson & Company, offered to investigate the revenue picture at several other publicly-owned courses in towns neighboring Glen Ellyn and project the revenue a municipal course could be expected to produce a year. Galligan then asked the village board to authorize the expenditure of \$8,000

to have the 200-acre tract appraised and storm water control engineering studies made. The board authorized the funds.

The terrain in question was dotted with several small lakes and lagoons. In view of this fact the engineering firm, hired to look over the property, suggested that these be retained rather than turn the area into one large lake. It would be far less expensive to excavate the lagoon beginnings than construct a single lake. (This was ultimately to result in even better flood control because engineers could install control gates in three of the lagoons and control the water level in all.)

While this initial engineering study was being made George Winchell was busy digging out financial and operating data on municipal golf courses in the Chicago area, among which were Glenview, Lake Forest, Winnetka and Mount Prospect. From these figures he estimated that the average rate per round should start at \$2.50 for the first year and go up to \$2.70 by the third.

These figures would indicate an operating loss for the first two years, but also project a profitable operation by 1970. A factor that Winchell said would contribute to the loss early in the game was the inability to use golf cars until the turf was mature enough to support their weight. In actuality, the Village Links, as the Glen Ellyn municipal course is known, lost \$8,000 in 1967, its first year of operation. This was in part due to a late opening—July. When the final count is in, Winchell foresees a profit of \$6,000 for 1968 and by 1970 an income excess running possibly as high as \$30,000.

Part of the \$8,000 the Glen Ellyn trustees had appropriated for an engineering study was used to have golf course architect David Gill of St. Charles, Ill., estimate the costs of a course construction. Gill computed an 18-hole layout at the site would cost close to \$300,000. He was also asked, because of his familiarity with other municipal operations, what he thought revenues might run to. His figures agreed neatly with those Winchell had calculated.

When all the figures were finally added up, it became apparent that Glen Ellyn residents would be asked to approve a \$1,500,000 bond issue to install the storm water drain system, build the golf course and develop other recreational facilities in the area.

The village trustees were then ready to submit the general obligation bond issue to the voters in a referendum, although several feared it might be rejected because of the golf course rider. True enough, the increase in taxes for repayment of the obligation would be small, amounting to about a dollar per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. In effect, the average Glen Ellyn homeowner would pay \$11 a year for 20 years for the municipal golf course and the storm drainage system. This would be offset, said Winchell, if the course netted as much as the conservative estimate of \$30,000 a year. In this

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## Money

### drain

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event the tax would be reduced by approximately five dollars.

Ready to present the bond referendum to the village, the trustees discovered there was a legal hitch based on the village administration's setup. A law firm scrutinizing legal provisions of the proposed issue found that the village's park board wasn't authorized to act in concert with the water control board to build a joint drainage system-golf course development. This necessitated a further step, setting up a playground and recreation authority, which would be empowered to act with the water control board, and having the new authority approved by the voters first. The Illinois municipal code requires this. Two referendums would now be necessary: the first to approve the playground-recreation authority, the second, the bond issue.

Winchell, Galligan and the others who were proposing the recreational development now found it necessary to switch from what was about to become a campaign to get voter approval for the bond issue to one that would approve the formation of a new village administrative arm.

The people of Glen Ellyn made their job easy. They passed both referendums by a 6 to 1 margin. Bill Galligan attributes much of the success of the dual referendum campaign to the care with which George Winchell compiled his statistics on clubs and potential revenue figures. He did his work so expertly most of the doubtful were persuaded that a publicly-owned course would not only be self-supporting but that profits from its operation would go a long way toward amortizing the funds raised to build it.

Laying the full scope of the project on the line proved to be another plus when it was discovered that cost estimates would be exceeded by about \$200,000. There had been no effort to sweeten the case by playing up the storm water control side of the project and playing down the golf course. Every interested party was kept as fully informed of what was going on as was needed and when an additional bond issue had to be floated to make up this difference, it was again accepted by the voters. This ready acceptance, many in charge of the project feel, was keyed to this policy of stating things as factually as possible.

Costs ran higher than anticipated because of a variety of factors. Land acquisition costs were higher than expected. Although it was late in 1963 when the bond issue was approved, construction was delayed for some time and during this time costs rose sharply; the irrigation system cost more than originally figured; and in late 1966 high winds and heavy rains blew out and washed out much of the seed, making large scale replanting necessary.

However, the Village Links was opened in 1967 and the residents of Glen Ellyn have a first class municipal golf course through the imaginative and clever use of what had been at the outset a municipal liability. □

## WHAT'S THE COURSE LIKE?

The new Glen Ellyn municipal course has 10 lagoons but players are not beset with water hazards. A player only has to contend with lateral water hazards through the first 16 holes. On the 17th, an extension of the largest lagoon fronts the green. Two-thirds down the 18th, a 370-to-400 yard hole, a finger of the same lagoon intersects the fairway. On both these holes it is possible to skirt these hazards rather than play across them. From a yardage standpoint, the Village Links is really three courses in one. The long route, called the Tiger, runs 6,835 yards; the medium distance, known as Li'l Foxie is 6,300 yards, and Cubs and Chicks can move far enough ahead on the tees to reduce their yardage to less than 6,000. The Penncross tees average 120 feet in length, adding enough yardage to take on the pros at 7,100 yards.

## AND THE DRAINAGE SYSTEM?

The 10 lagoons can impound 15 million gallons of water. Each lagoon is surrounded by a basin that retains an additional 15 million gallons. Thus, if a total of 30 million gallons of storm water drains into the Village Links the course is still playable. Engineers estimate it would take 45 million gallons of water to inundate the course. To this they add that it would take seven days and nights of constant rain to create such a runoff, not very likely!

## WHAT'S THE COST?

How did the monies raised by Glen Ellyn through the storm drainage bond issue break down and help create the municipal golf course? Here's how they were dispensed:

Land Acquisition	\$ 700,000
Storm Water Drainage System	362,000
Course Construction	295,000
Other Recreational Areas (Including lakes development)	50,000
Buildings for Equipment Storage, Maintenance and Clubhouse	50,000
Reserve for Contingencies	43,000
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	\$1,500,000

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