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CSD to pursue golf course ballot measure

El Dorado Hills Community Services District's Board of Directors agreed to support the strong sentiment expressed by residents to keep the former executive golf course at Serrano zoned open space.

At a special June 18 meeting, the directors agreed 4-1 to pursue an advisory vote measure on the next ballot, which would ask the local electorate what their position is regarding the former executive golf course and if it should remain open space or be rezoned for development as is being proposed by Parker Development. Advisory votes are non-binding and do not change the law, but the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors may be more likely to deny a project if they see the community so strongly opposes it, according to speakers at the meeting.

In November 2012, Parker Development Company filed paperwork with the county to rezone the 98-acre property from its current open space designation to residential. **The developer proposes building 763 dwelling units on the property, including some high-density and commercial, leaving 35 acres open space and 15 acres for a public park. The project's final environmental impact report is ready for review and could be voted on by the Board of Supervisors at any time.**

At Thursday's meeting Board President Wayne Lowery described potential next steps, which could include a future measure to provide revenue to acquire the property and preserve it as open space or develop it into a community park in the future as funding becomes available.

In April 2014 the EDHCSD conducted a community survey, which cost \$26,000, regarding the old golf course. Residents overwhelmingly communicated they want the golf course to remain open space. Of those who participated in the survey, 79 percent said they'd pay up to \$58 per year to acquire the property, 65 percent said they'd pay \$79 and 52 percent said they'd pay \$98 annually, which would equate to \$1.4 million a year or \$44 million in 20 years.

"We're not at the point to negotiate just yet," Lowery told the approximately 90 attendees Thursday. "We don't know if that \$98 would be too much money or not enough money."

By early July, the board expects to receive an appraisal on the property, which will fill in the missing blanks.

Of the 17 speakers who shared their thoughts during public comment, no one said they want to see more homes and commercial space. They pitched ideas like giving a working golf course another shot, building a park or future sports complex or keeping it open space.

As it stands, the property is owned by Parker Development and while the public is welcome to submit comments on Parker's proposal, only the Board of Supervisors can approve or deny Parker Development's plans or ask the developer to modify those plans. El Dorado Hills resident Cindy Munt, who previously served as District 1 Supervisor Ron Mikulaco's assistant, encouraged residents to air their concerns and make suggestions directly to the Board of Supervisors.

"We don't need another survey or to spend \$40,000 on a ballot measure," Munt said after the meeting. "People have to go to the Board of Supervisors. They are the ones who make the decision. Tell them to deny the rezone."

CSD Directors Lowery, Noelle Mattock, Terry Crumpley and Allan Priest voted to pursue the advisory vote ballot measure. To make it on the November 2015 ballot, the measure's paperwork must be filed by the end of July. Lowery said a mail-in ballot may also be an option.

"This has to be a community-wide effort," Lowery told attendees. "If you think the five of us (board members) can make this happen alone, no. It's got to be a grassroots effort. Tell your friends and neighbors to get involved."

Director Bill Vandegrift abstained from the vote, explaining after the meeting, "They can wait two or three more weeks to get the results of the appraisal and whether it's even a viable concept to purchase the property. Why spend \$40,000 (a standard county election fee) if you don't even know if you can buy it? I'm concerned about spending taxpayers' dollars."

"Voters should be wary about being given a simplistic statement to approve on a complex issue," said Parker Development Director of Government Relations Kirk Bone in a phone interview after Thursday's meeting. "And supervisors should be concerned about grandstanding politics by proponents who try to tie the hands of elected officials."

The ballot measure's official language has yet to be formalized and has to be approved by the EDHCSD's legal counsel.

To e-mail letters to the Board of Supervisors on the former executive golf course rezone:

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