



ReView

Golf Course View Cluster Association

September 2012

Rescue Reston Gearing Up To Fight Potential Golf Course Redevelopment

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Those of you who participate in the cluster email network already know that Reston National Golf Management, Inc. (RNGC) is "making noises" like it intends to redevelop the golf course for mid- and high-density residential use.

Last spring RNGC requested clarification of the golf course's zoning status from the Fairfax County Zoning Administration. Fairfax County responded in a determination letter that the property was approved for a golf course and that any change to that usage would require an amendment to the Reston Master Plan and the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan and approval of a Development Plan Amendment.

In July RNGC filed an appeal to the determination letter prepared by Fairfax County that contends that the golf course property is currently categorized "residential" under the existing Planned Residential Community zoning, and therefore can be redeveloped for residential use without amendments to the Reston Master Plan or Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan. In other words, that RNGC can do whatever it wants with the property, subject to normal county planning and zoning approvals. On October 24th, the County Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) will hear the case and decide whether to grant or deny the appeal.

Clearly redevelopment of the golf course for cluster and/or high rise residential use would both seriously damage our quality of life and the overall future of Reston as a place to live, work and play. Not only would we lose the beautiful open spaces that make our neighborhood so appealing, but the legal door would be opened to permit redevelopment of the other remaining open spaces in Reston including the lakes, the wooded areas, and the playing fields. Because Reston is not a town or other independent government entity, we are literally at the mercy of Fairfax County, which has long shown its intent to maximize development and grow the attendant tax base. Like Ballston and Tyson's Corner, Reston is seen as a valuable "cash cow" by the County.

As soon as the RNGC appeal became public knowledge, a group of Golf Course View residents led by John Pinkman and David Stroh began to organize a broad-based resistance to the threat of redevelopment. Through their efforts, Rescue Reston, a duly incorporated nonprofit charity, was established to unify and focus all available community resources to stop RNGC's redevelopment plans. Rescue Reston's executive committee and larger leadership group comprise representatives from numerous clusters adjacent to the golf course as well as other areas of Reston.

Among the highest priorities of Rescue Reston is to obtain effective legal advice for and representation at the Board of Zoning Appeals hearing, and to raise public awareness of the threat and mobilize Restonians to get involved in the fray. To finance these efforts, Rescue Reston is looking for funding from three sources: cluster associations, corporate sponsors and individuals.

In a special session in late August, the Reston Association Board of Directors, voted unanimously to oppose any and all plans to redevelop Reston's open spaces. The Reston Citizens' Association (RCA) Board took a similar action soon thereafter. This week Rescue Reston leadership is meeting with representatives from RA and RCA to hammer out a unified approach to the issue.

What We Can Do As Individuals

There are a number of ways that we, as individuals, can influence the outcome of the October 24th BZA hearing.

- **We can make ourselves knowledgeable about the issue.** The Rescue Reston website, rescuereston.org, contains lots of information and provides links to relevant documents. When you add your names to the Rescue Reston community email list, you'll receive updates as they become available.
- **We can contribute to the Rescue Reston legal fund.** The cluster board has already contributed to the fund as have the boards of other affected clusters, but this issue is not, at heart, a "cluster issue." It is an issue that affects each of us as homeowners and Restonians. You can contribute at the Rescue Reston website.
- **We can make our individual voices heard.** We have been reliably informed that the Board of Zoning Appeals pays serious attention to the concerns of affected citizens. Experience has shown that our County Supervisor, Catherine Hudgins, does as well. It's easy to send a couple of emails. The URL for the BZA email contact form is: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/contact/mailform.aspx?ref=1098>. The email address for Cathy Hudgins is: huntermill@fairfaxcounty.gov.

You don't have to write an essay. Just send a brief note that expresses your opposition to any plan to redevelop Reston National Golf Course for one or more of the following reasons. The:

- implied promise of the permanence of the golf course in the Reston Master Plan, real estate documents, name of cluster, etc.
- threat to property value
- golf course has been there for more than 40 years, and has never been anything else
- quality of life
- general value of open natural spaces
- Reston principles that define the place to live, work, and play in which we all invested.

- **We can attend the BZA hearing on Wednesday, October 24th.** The hearing is scheduled for 9:00 am in the Boardroom of the Fairfax County Government Center at 12000 Government Center Parkway in Fairfax. We'll provide more information about this hearing and your participation (yard signs, t-shirts, getting there) as the date approaches.

The next board meeting will be
Oct. 9, 2012 at 7:30 pm at 2174

Storm Damage

What a summer Mother Nature has given us! Amid all the heat and drought, we also suffered major tree damage in two separate storms. Last Saturday's storm uprooted a very large chestnut oak along the Reston Pathway across the street from the swimming pool. The derecho that hit us at the end of June, as you remember, brought down pine and maple limbs that blocked Golf Course Drive for several hours in two places, and, in spite of the hard work of neighbors, necessitated significant professional clean up.

When the tree came down last Saturday, it swiped many branches from three nearby pines and a large black locust, uprooted a couple of wild cherry tree saplings, and crushed our newest little tree and a number of lovely hydrangeas--completely blocking the Reston Pathway. Quite a mess!

JL Trees, Inc. was here Monday to survey the damage and will be back in the near future to remove the debris. Tuesday, a Reston Association crew cut the huge oak into "bite-sized" pieces and moved the debris to the sides of the pathway.

The cleanup cost for the two storms' damage is about \$5,500. We generally hold back some of our tree maintenance budget for such emergencies, but this year we put the whole \$9,000 into preventive maintenance in May. That means that the cluster will need to use some of the "emergency reserves" fund we maintain in our reserves account. The last time we had to dip into the emergency funds was in 2010 to pay for the massive snow cleanup necessitated by the blizzard.

At its meeting this month, the Board asked Capital Improvements Committee Co-Chairman Bob Williamson to review our overall reserves account to determine whether or not we may have to increase the 2013 assessment to rebuild our emergency funds. As always, the board hopes that it can manage the budget so that an increase will not be necessary.

Revised Cluster Directory

This week the most recent edition of the cluster directory will be distributed to all residents. The directory is an important community resource designed to promote communication among residents. We believe, as the Fall 2012 issue of *Reston* magazine noted, that people who live in a close environment such as ours feel more secure when they know who their neighbors are and how to contact them in case of an emergency, and that positive community relationships will result. The information contained in the directory is never shared outside of the neighborhood and is intended solely for our own use.

In addition to identifying residents by courtyard and alphabetically, the directory also contains a list of frequently called numbers of emergency responders, utilities, Reston Association, local schools, and key cluster-related contacts.

Need to call the trash company, the police, Miss Utility, Brad Baecht at Reston Association, or find the address to which to mail your assessment? It's in the directory on pages 2-3. Can't remember the cluster website address? It's on page 3. Need to call Fairfax County Animal Control? See page 3. Same with contact information for EZPass. It's all there.

The value of the directory depends on its accuracy, and we do our very best to keep it up to date. We rely on you to notify us if any of your contact information changes, and we encourage those of you who haven't as yet provided your phone numbers to do so.

2013 Budget Planning

Between now and its next meeting on October 9th, the board will be working to determine what our budget needs will be for next year. **Now is the time to bring any drainage, landscaping, tree maintenance or playground issues to the attention of the appropriate committee chairperson(s).**

Complaint Procedure

The 2012 Virginia legislature approved a final requirement of the Virginia Property Owners Association Act (POAA) that set a deadline of September 30, 2012 for individual homeowner associations to develop and publish a formal members' complaint procedure. This provision of POAA follows previous provisions that established the Common Interest Community Board (CICB) and a CICB Ombudsman's office to resolve homeowner complaints that were not resolved at the community level.

The CICB Ombudsman's office will hear only complaints that the local homeowners' association board has violated a homeowner's rights under state law (POAA). The Ombudsman will not hear complaints that an HOA board of directors has violated a homeowner's rights under the HOA's (cluster's) Bylaws or Regulations.

The GCVCA board of directors is very close to having this complaint procedure finalized, but is not quite there yet. The GCVCA board is never going to violate your rights under POAA, but believes it is worthwhile to formalize a procedure through which any complaint you may have with the way board governance decisions are made can be properly heard and resolved.

Board policy has always been that if you, as a homeowner, believe that the board has misapplied any provisions of the Bylaws or the Regulations contained therein, you should bring your concern to a board member and then attend a board meeting and present your case. If you are dissatisfied with the results of the board meeting, you should put your complaint in writing and submit it to the board for additional review, which can include a review of the issue by the cluster's legal counsel. In our collective memory, no complaint from one of our neighbors has gone beyond this phase, and none have ever been adjudicated in a court of law.

That said, the board is finalizing a complaint procedure that meets the requirements of POAA and will publish the process and links to all attendant documents on the cluster website within the next few weeks. The board will communicate all of the pertinent details in the next newsletter.