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Residents rally to keep golf course

By: Cheri March

In an effort to reopen El Dorado Hills Executive Golf Course, residents held an afternoon rally Monday to gain public support.

Golf course supporters gathered at the corner of Serrano Parkway and El Dorado Hills Boulevard near the course, holding signs and motioned for drivers to honk their horns, while kids putted golf balls around on the grass behind them.

"We strongly advocate that the county purchase and preserve this course for future generations," said rally coordinator Wendy Slepian. "The Board of Supervisors has approved so much development lately, what's another parcel of 200 acres?"



Protesters wanting to keep the El Dorado Hills Executive Golf Course open stood out in front of it Monday, the day after it was closed. Cheri March/The Telegraph

Slepian handed out fliers to stopped traffic, explaining how to get involved and whom to contact.

She believes that for every supporter on the street, hundreds or thousands of others care about the course but are too busy to do anything about it.

Another supporter, Kay Cunningham, came to the event in hopes of preserving the course for local families.

"It's a wonderful family activity. My son has taken lessons here. It's within our own vicinity and it's not intimidating; it's doable and affordable," she said.

Wendy Slepian's own son, Joey Slepian, became interested in golf over the summer and had played the course right up until the end.

"I played here yesterday and there was a long wait because it was the last day," he said.

El Dorado Hills resident and rally attendee Dale Cox recently wrote letters to Community Services District and the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors, imploring them to help.

He asked the supervisors to help finance the purchase of the course. He hopes Parker Development will work with the community to keep the course open, with CSD managing it much like they manage other parks, tennis courts, trails, and other facilities.

Cox expressed high hopes for cooperation between CSD and Parker Development.

"They (CSD) listened to us, and they asked us to perhaps go to the County Board of Supervisors," he said.

The golf course's closure dominated discussion at Thursday's CSD meeting, with director David Trapani commenting the board "got about as much notice as the community got."

Board members noted the Land Acquisition Committee has been in discussion with Parker Development.

Cox didn't see why Parker would not work with residents. "It's not in their style to bait and switch; they planted 28,000 oak trees and provided trails. They could also provide a golf course."

"This is the reason some of us bought homes here. Closing the course could cause homeowners to take a hit," he said. "If they (Parker Development) can't turn a profit, it should be just another recreational facility. El Dorado Hills

is about open spaces."

Bill Parker, president of Parker Development Company, announced plans to close the course in December. The course officially closed on Jan. 15.

Parker claims the course had been losing money since 1999 and had talked of closure since 2002.

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