

Golf course fan causes chilly breeze in Salisbury

By Susan Nienow
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

A dispute over a noisy fan on the Salisbury Country Club's golf course could soon blow over. The club was convicted last October of violating the county's noise ordinance after neighbors repeatedly complained about the fan running. The case was set for appeal on Mar. 12, but has now been continued with no new court date as the club and nearby residents try to work out a compromise.

"We're doing everything we can to accommodate them," said Frank Cowan, attorney for Salisbury Country Club. The fan is being moved to a new location near the sixth green.

"This fan was recommended by the USGA and is used all over the country," Cowan added. "We believe we are in compliance with all laws."

The issue comes down to what's more important: the right to peace and quiet or the right to putt on Salisbury's sixth green. The 50-inch fan was installed to help maintain the turf on the Monacan course. According to John Kelly, the club's general manager, the fan is one of the most effective tools of turf management, cooling the greens during the day and removing moisture from the grass and the air at night. It cuts down on the incidence of turf disease.

But it also creates a lot of noise. "[The fan] sounds like a jet engine," said Duff Young, whose backyard is adjacent to the green.

"The noise comes into the house like there is an air conditioner running under each window when they are all closed," said Salisbury resident Analie Rademaker.

The Rademakers' backyard is the closest to the fan, and they've had to live their lives differently since it was installed. "We can't use the screened porch during the day."

The first night the fan was turned on last July,



Photo courtesy of Analie Rademaker

Salisbury resident Analie Rademaker is hoping quiet will be restored to her neighborhood after the Salisbury Country Club moves a noisy fan on its golf course.

several neighbors called the police because of the noise, said Rademaker. As a result, the club turned the fan down and shortened the hours to 10 a.m.-6 p.m. and 11 p.m.-6 a.m. Still the noise was intrusive, so a fence was erected around the back of the fan. "It looks like a duck blind," said Rademaker, adding that it changed the character of the couple's backyard and the view of the golf course.

Young took measurements with his own decibel meter both before and after the fence was installed, and the reading was about the same, though he admitted his equipment was inexpensive and might not be totally accurate.

The dispute ultimately ended up in court - criminal court - with a misdemeanor charge that the club was violating the county's noise ordinance, which uses the standard of "unreasonably loud or disturbing noise."

Higher proffers could be considered by May

By Greg Pearson
STAFF WRITER

A county staff report on a possible proffer increase should be ready in two months, says Chesterfield Board of Supervisors Chairman Art Warren. The Budget and Management Department evaluates the costs of providing county services for new homes and last fall proposed a \$7,000 increase above the existing maximum of \$15,600. That maximum has been in effect for over two years.

Last week, Warren thanked the school board for helping to defeat Senate Bill 768 proposed earlier this year by State Senator John Watkins (R-Chesterfield). Both boards wrote strong letters recommending that the bill needed more study and should be carried over to next year when the General Assembly reconvenes.

SB768 would have done away with the county version of impact fees and proffers, the fees paid by developers to offset the cost of providing services such as schools, roads and fire/EMS, and imposed a flat \$7,500 fee on all residential lots. Last week, the county board deferred until June a decision on whether to enact a county impact fee of \$5,820 for roads on residential lots that were rezoned prior to the adoption of the proffer system.

The supervisors voted last month to strongly

oppose Watkins' bill, saying losing proffers would cost the county financial resources it needs to build infrastructure for new development. Warren has called the bill "dangerous."

"It should be an issue of economics," explained Warren. He indicated that he would favor state impact fees if the amount rose to about \$15,000 per home. Earlier this month, Planning Director Kirk Turner said Chesterfield has about 48,000 lots already zoned residential that haven't yet been built on.

Though not all supervisors commented on the subject, there seemed to be a consensus that rezonings coming before the county board in the future should be denied if the property is located in more rural areas of the county where available services are scarce. Vice Chairman Dan Gecker suggested denying rezonings that the board believed would not be developed within 10 years after approval. Called "land banking," some properties have been rezoned years before development started. State law does not allow for land to revert back to its previous zoning unless the property owner agrees.

Since Virginia has a long history as a property rights state, the supervisors seemed to be in agreement that rezonings in rural areas without many county services yet available can be denied because of the "health, safety and welfare" of its citizens.

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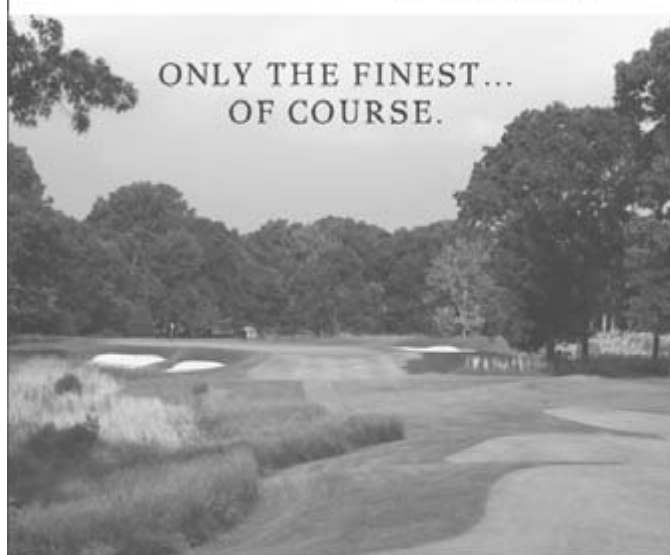
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