

Memo

May 10, 2022

TO: Ramsey-Washington Watershed District Board of Managers  
and Tina Carstens, Administrator  
FROM: Cliff Aichinger, Former RWMWD Board Member and Resident  
SUBJECT: Ponds at Battle Creek Golf Course Property.

I'm sitting at my kitchen table reading the May 10 Star Tribune. One Article that caught my attention was the piece on the Ponds at Battle Creek Golf Course. As you know, this golf facility was closed by Ramsey County last fall with much objection by the neighborhood and golfers. The County's desire was to sell the property to developers, but this has proved unsuccessful. The article goes on to say that the County offered the property to the City of Maplewood to reopen as a golf course or another use. Neighboring residents and other commenting public favored the golf course, an open space property, or low income housing. The City has favored the golf course or open space, but says it does not have the funds to purchase the property or the expertise to run a golf course.

Many of you know that during my tenure as District Administrator and as a Board member, I proposed out-of-the-box ideas to further District objectives of clean surface waters and reduced flooding. I propose that you consider exploring another collaboration that may help our objectives in a more indirect way than normal.

What are the advantages to the District if this parcel were to remain a golf course or open space? What expenses might the District incur if developed and we had to invest funds to retrofit the future development to reduce pollutants or increase infiltration? If we were to compare this 77 acres to other large parcels, one could easily envision a future investment of well over one million dollars if we uncovered that our rules or the developers plans were inadequate.

I request that the District direct staff and its engineering consultant to investigate a potential collaboration with the City of Maplewood to purchase the property and either continue its management as a golf course or as a permanent open space. This would not be dissimilar to the District's contribution of funds to the Fish Creek Open Space project to insure access to our Fish Creek water management project. Also consider that we invested over \$5 million on the Maplewood Mall Project. This action would also insure the continued protection of the restored wetlands on this property (with the assistance and funding of the District).

I know that, initially, this seems a rather outlandish proposal, but consider the fact that the District has concluded, through a number of studies, that the District needs to focus on the reduction of impervious surfaces and the reduction of stormwater runoff volume as the only course of action to reverse the water quality issues facing our urban watershed. If this property were NOT developed, it would likely eliminate a future 30 plus acres of impervious surface (at typical higher density residential coverage). Also consider that this is one of the last large parcel of land in our District that is yet undeveloped (with the exception of existing parks and open space or the old Hillcrest Country Club property).

I look forward to hearing your discussion on this issue.