

# StarNews



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Complete forecast, B6

## LOCAL



### Edgewater Club Road project still on hold

Nearly a year after significant flooding temporarily

## ECHO FARMS

# Golf course plan opposed

### About 650 new residences could be built on the course

By Adam Wagner  
StarNews Staff

WILMINGTON — David Brassard hopes the screened-in porch that's under construction behind his home will be finished by this fall so he and his wife, Amy, can enjoy the cooler temperatures and their view of Echo Farms Golf Course's

eighth fairway.

It's a project that, Brassard said Monday, he might not have started if he'd known about a proposal that could see the golf course replaced by apartments and single-family homes.

"Right now, it's not bad looking out there at this beautiful view we've had for 12 years," Brassard said.

"What good does that do me if it's looking out onto a backyard or a street?"

Like Brassard, residents in the neighborhoods that surround the golf course are worried about the proposal, which is still in preliminary stages. They're worried that replacing the golf course — tentatively dubbed The Woodlands — would remove green space while simultaneously damaging their



The third hole of Echo Farms Country Club is flanked on one side by townhomes. The land's developer is looking at taking out the golf course and adding more homes and apartments to the site, angering many homeowners. DAN SPEARS/STARNEWS

SEE GOLF, A5

# GOLF

Continued from A1

property values and making major aesthetic changes to the area.

The golf course's future is still the subject of planning meetings and neighborhood meetings, with no formal plans submitted. Kyle Kirkpatrick, a spokesman for Matrix Development Group, which is pursuing the project, said Monday it is too early in the process to make any statement or address any specific proposal.

Documents sent to the city from the engineering firm Kimley Horn demonstrate the project's still-fluid nature.

A May email shows 275 single-family homes and 400 apartments, which would lead to 5,166 daily trips. A nearly identical document sent about a month later shows 167 single-family homes, 191 townhomes and 300 apartments, which are estimated to lead to 3,532 daily trips.

Matrix would not need to apply for any rezoning for the proposed golf course redevelopment because the land is already zoned for multi-family buildings, such as apartments.

If the project moves forward as indicated on preliminary documents, it would undergo review by the city's subdivision review board, said Ron Satterfield, the city's assistant

## What comes next?

The development of Echo Farms Golf Course is still in the preliminary stages. Here's what needs to happen:

- Traffic impact analysis must be completed
- Developers submit formal applications
- Applications are reviewed by the city's subdivision review board
- Any appeals appear before the city's planning commission
- Any further appeals appear in New Hanover County Superior Court

Source: City of Wilmington

planning director.

The subdivision review board is quasi-judicial and its decision would be made following a trial-like meeting. Any appeals would appear before the city's planning commission and, from there, any further appeal would be heard in New Hanover County Superior Court.

John Antretter, who bought a townhome facing the golf course's 11th green last year, said he was shocked and surprised at the potential for new housing, given the development of the nearby River Lights neighborhood, which could feature more than 2,500 new homes, and a 184-apartment development spread over 11 acres at 4010 Carolina Beach Road. It is this other development,

more than anything else, that he hopes halts the golf course project.

"There's just a lot going on," he said, "and I really just think it's a bad time for this."

Property owners around Echo Farms also point to the \$38 million parks and recreation bond the city will put to voters in November as evidence that developing the golf course would be a misstep.

"We seem to have an identifiable need for green space, more parks in Wilmington itself. And here we have this absolute precious gem of interconnected ponds and greenspaces threatened to be totally developed out," Brassard said. "It makes no sense at all."

Antretter, for his part, said he would vote against the parks bond as long as the golf course redevelopment is possible because he does not support the idea of effectively swapping one set of green space for another.

Several years ago, Brassard was playing Echo Farms with a foursome. When they reached the course's eighth hole, he saw a bald eagle in one of the trees — he was struck by the entirely white set of feathers on its head.

The group watched as it launched itself from a tree, flew over a pond, dove, snatched a fish and took off, headed toward the marshland near Bradley Creek.

If the course is developed,

Brassard is worried those birds and others would need to find new places to roost.

"The loss of those green spaces and fairways totally changes the reasons why we chose to live here," Brassard said. "It'll completely change the character of the neighborhood."

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## Ask Yourself

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