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# Koch Homes drops golf course from massive Odenton subdivision

An Anne Arundel County hearing officer has cleared the way for a massive west county housing project to go ahead without the golf course it promised neighbors would be a plus for their community.

In a 13-page ruling on Nov. 1, administrative hearing officer Douglas Hollmann granted Koch Homes' request to eliminate the course and a gated entrance from its plans for Two Rivers – a 2,060-unit, age-restricted planned unit development located in the Forks of the Patuxent neighborhood of Odenton.

“Such facilities were thought to be amenities that new home buyers would want but the costs of maintaining and operating a golf course and clubhouse have become prohibitive in the years since the PUD was approved,” Hollmann wrote.

He wrote that the golf course and clubhouse are now viewed as liabilities because new homeowners will not want to pay for them. “This change is needed to keep the PUD economically viable,” he said.

Residents of Forks of the Patuxent, a 127-home community on Conway Road, have been negotiating with Koch Homes on details of the plan for more than a decade. The Forks of the Patuxent Improvement Association signed a covenant in 2006 that spelled out details of the project.

Sue Meyer, whose family settled in Odenton in 1899, said the agreement included what amenities should be included.

“We worked with them, we allowed them to make their presentation,” Meyer said. “They came to us (and) this is what we agreed to.”

County Planner Robert Konowal, however, recommended approving Koch Homes' request to amend its existing special exception. The Office of Planning and Zoning found no evidence that the change would be detrimental to the existing community, he said.

In place of the golf course, the amended plan now calls for agricultural space and a community park.

Last year, Koch Homes approached the association to discuss what type of amendments to the 2006 agreement community residents would consider. It requested the change to its special exception in July.

Meyer said the developer also discussed eliminating the age restriction and adjusting the size of houses.

“They swear up and down that they have no intention of removing the age restriction and they’re going to honor the covenant here,” Meyer said. “That’s a major concern.”

A spokesman for Koch Homes could not be reached for comment.

Hollmann ruled that future changes to the Two Rivers design might not need to go through the special exception process, which requires a public hearing, and instead could be worked out directly with Planning and Zoning.

“It is unusual and unnecessary to require the applicants to seek approval from the Administrative Hearing Officer to amend the Design Guidelines,” Hollmann wrote. “Because of the complexity of the project, further changes will be necessary. Allowing the process to be handled by the applicants and OPZ will reduce paperwork, time, and cost for both the County and the applicants.”

Wendy Cozzone, a fourth-generation Odenton resident, said that despite the ruling her neighbors continue to support the 2006 agreement.

“We’re not changing,” she said. “We still support what we originally agreed to support. They have broken their agreement with us.”

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