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Top Stories

Annapolis Roads residents buy land, block developer

By DAVID ABRAMS, Staff Writer

Annapolis Roads homeowners have bought 33 acres of woodlands in their neighborhood, blocking a developer's plans to build on the site.

Now their sights are set on stopping St. Mary's High School from building athletic facilities on the adjoining golf course.

"The 33 acres will definitely be preserved and give the us the first giant step in preserving our community the way it is," Walter Bigelow, president of the Annapolis Roads Property Owner's Association, told The Capital this morning. The deal was signed last week.

A source close to the negotiations said the 33 acres were purchased for about \$2.75 million.

Before homeowners started a frantic fund-raising campaign about three months ago, Ribera Development LLC of Annapolis planned to build as many as 40 houses on the property.

"Any community that steps up to the plate and is willing to pay a market price for a property, they need that opportunity to be able to do that," said John Stamato, president of Ribera.

The developer still is working with St. Mary's to build ballfields and a gymnasium on the Annapolis Golf Club, a roughly 80-acre golf course next to Ogleton Woods.

"We have an agreement in place, and we're still working on some of the details," Mr. Stamato said. "This does change our plans for what the development would look like. It's obviously a very positive thing for the community."

But the homeowners said they will continue working to preserve the golf course.

In a written statement, a homeowner who organized the fund-raising drive said the purchase will not only benefit the neighbors, but also the environment and people who use Forest Drive.

"We could not have done this were the community not united. Annapolis Roads residents are committed to preserving our way of life," Geri Nicholson wrote.

Rick Lerner, chairman and CEO of BankAnnapolis, is the primary owner of the property sold last week. He said the homeowners brought a good business background to the table.

"As president of a community bank I am sensitive to the wishes of the community, and I

am glad that we were able to work out a solution that benefits all parties," Mr. Lerner said in a statement released this morning. "I congratulate the community of Annapolis Roads for stepping up and taking control of its own destiny. From my perspective, this is an ideal outcome for everyone."

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