

Residents target two sites for open land

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By Nick Petersen

STAFF WRITER

EAST DUNDEE — Dundee Township should take whatever steps are necessary to purchase for open space the remaining 144 acres of the former Meadowdale Raceway in Carpentersville, a united group of more than 40 residents urged the town board Monday night.

And the board should continue its effort to buy the majority of the Galvin property along Illinois 72 on Sleepy Hollow's northern border for open space, the group said, even though West Dundee has annexed the 239-acre property and a home builder has exercised its option to buy the first third of it.

The former raceway property, virtually surrounded by the recent housing boom in western Carpentersville, has been near the top of the township's list of open space acquisition priorities since voters gave it \$18 million in bond authority in 1996 to purchase land for open space.

Township Supervisor James Peterson said after the meeting that the town board, as recently as "in the last month," has held acquisition discussions with the owners of the raceway property. But he would not — and said he could not — respond to requests from Monday's audience to explain why the township has been unable to strike a deal over the past three years.

Meanwhile, Centex Homes has an option to buy the raceway property from members of the Besinger family so it can build homes there.

Those who spoke at Monday's meeting said the board should use its remaining open space money — estimated at about \$9 million — to buy the raceway and Galvin properties.

If that amount is insufficient to buy the parcels, audience members Sue Harney and June Keibler said, the township should enter into an agreement with the Openlands/Corlands group to buy them on behalf of the township while it seeks open space grants and funding from other sources, including the state's Illinois FIRST program and the Kane County Forest Preserve District.

Harney, of Sleepy Hollow, and Glen De Costa, of West Dundee, said they believe there still may be legal avenues the township can pursue to obtain the bulk of the Galvin property, which includes an environmentally

RACEWAY

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significant fen.

Township attorney Ron Roeser said the township's backup offer to purchase the eastern 219 acres of the Galvin property was terminated earlier this month after Pulte Home Corp. closed on its purchase of the first third of the property.

He agreed that some of the original conditions of that contract weren't met by Pulte, but Roeser said Galvin didn't insist on them

being met by closing, since they would only benefit Pulte.

But he said he planned to discuss with the town board in closed session some options it still might have in its quest to keep the property as open space.

Peterson told the audience that the township is using the services of a grant writer currently employed by the county forest preserve district and the Dundee Township Park District to search for additional open space funding sources.

Harney also asked the town board to unite with municipalities throughout the township in seeking

additional open space acquisition and management funds from state and county sources.



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