



Forecast

Sunny, hot and
humid. High near
92. Details A2

Local History
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Supporters seek agencies' backing to buy raceway site

Courier News 7-22-99

By Nick Petersen
STAFF WRITER

CARPENTERSVILLE — Open-space advocates who support the public acquisition of the remaining 144 acres of the former Meadowdale Raceway have a selling job ahead of them.

They'll have to convince some local elected officials — whose backing may be crucial, politically — that the property in central Dundee Township is worth \$7.2 million, which is how much a home builder appears willing to pay for it.

The Dundee Township Board, which is in charge of

purchasing land as open space with proceeds from a 1996 voter-authorized \$18 million bond issue, has been unable to agree on a price for the former raceway property with its owners, Meadowdale Properties Inc.

Meanwhile, Centex Homes has entered into a contract to purchase the land for \$50,000 an acre — a price much higher than the township's last offer of \$28,500, said Frank Scarpelli Jr., spokesman for the owners.

The builder is studying the property as a site for a housing development but has not initiated any discussions with village officials

Inside

Gov. George Ryan touts state's \$40 million open-space plan. A3

about the property or plans for it.

Open-space proponents will admit that not everyone agrees that the raceway property, west of Illinois 31 and north of Huntley Road, has the natural amenities — extensive woodlands, wetlands and varying topography, for example — that some other sites have.

Not perfect

"It's not a perfect piece of

❖ Turn to **RACEWAY, A4**

QUARTER CENTURY OF SERVICE



MARCIA RULES / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Rev. Dominic Cassidy celebrates the Eucharist during a Silver Jubilee Mass on Wednesday at Provena St. Joseph Hospital in Elgin. The popular, sometimes-unconventional cleric has spent 22 of his 25 years in the priesthood as a hospital chaplain, 19 of those at Provena St. Joseph.



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RACEWAY

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land," Sue Harney of Sleepy Hollow acknowledged Tuesday. "But it has more potential to create a real community asset than ... the flat farmland" that Dundee Township this week put on its list of potential open-space acquisitions — the 176-acre Wesemann property northwest of Illinois 72 and Randall Road.

Carpentersville Village President Cheryal Callahan said Tuesday she hasn't formed an opinion on whether public open space is

the best use of the raceway property.

The land is zoned for heavy industrial use, although its neighbors are homes, forest preserve and the Dundee Township Park District's Raceways Woods property.

"I would have to walk the property and see what's there," she said.

Kane cash available soon

The Kane County Forest Preserve District is less than a week away from receiving \$70 million in proceeds from an open-space bond issue voters approved in April.

Open-space advocates listed those funds as among those the

township should try to attract to help buy the raceway property.

Kane County Board member Lee Barrett of East Dundee said Tuesday the raceway property has "a relatively high priority" as a potential open-space acquisition in Dundee Township.

But divvying up open-space purchases among the 26 Kane County board districts will be no easy task, Barrett said.

It would be unrealistic, for example, to expect the forest preserve district board to agree to spend \$7.2 million — more than 10 percent of its open space funds — to purchase the raceway property at its asking price, Barrett said.

Harney and about 40 other

open-space advocates urged the township board earlier this week to seek open-space money from county, state and federal agencies that it could combine with its remaining bond proceeds to buy the raceway property and perhaps the 239-acre Galvin property. The Galvin land, southwest of Illinois 72 and Sleepy Hollow Road, recently was annexed to West Dundee and bought by home builder Pulte Homes Corp.

Township looking at options

Township Supervisor James Peterson told the audience that the township is using the services of a grant writer to explore such opportunities.

Kane County Forest Preserve District President Jack Cook of Elgin said he plans to set up a committee to screen the properties available as potential open-space sites throughout the county and put them in some kind of priority order.

Barrett said he likes that idea. He also believes that to put the county's open-space dollars to greatest benefit, he favors a funding format in which county dollars would have to be matched in some ratio with local government dollars.

But no matter what grant-matching ratio is decided upon or what priority scheme is put into place, Barrett said, "it will not be an easy set of decisions" to make.

the suburbs, in some cases a higher rate than in the city. Foreign immigration also is changing rapidly the demographic makeup of the once-homogenous fringes of the city.

s raise questions of policy initiated on outdated as cities are dangerous intractable social suburbs and exurbs easantvilles," said who prepared the onal Public Health tute.

move in and out nding increasing problems and challenges and metropoli-

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the nation's 100 largest metropolitan areas in the 1980s and 1990s. The data were compiled from a number of sources, including the Census Bu-

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