

Time running out to tee it up at Aptos Par 3 golf course

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APTOS — The Aptos Par 3 golf course apparently will become a thing of the past this Friday.

At an asking price of \$5.5 million, the property is listed for sale with Capitola Realty, and the course operator says uncertainty over the future is forcing him to close.

The course has been in operation for 25 years alongside Highway 1 at Mar Vista Drive.

Plans to close the course have been met by neighborhood opposition and a vow by county Supervisor Walt Symons to prevent development of the open space.

The property owners have said they don't know what will happen to the 14 acres but the course operator, John Menge, said he believes it will be developed.

Menge said he didn't believe anyone would pay \$5.5 million to use the

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land as a golf course.

"No one will pay that much for park land. It just doesn't happen," he said. "It's not going to be a golf course. If it was going to be a golf course, we'd stay there, but they want to be able to build houses on that property."

Winnie Pritchard, an agent with Capitola Realty, said that if area residents want to keep it in open space, they should find a way to buy it.

"All of a sudden it's so loved by everyone in the community," she said. "If the property is so loved by the community, why don't they just buy it from them. They're bankrupting the owners of the property by in-

sisting they keep it."

Menge said that with the fate of the property up in the air, he cannot afford to keep renting the property through the winter. The course loses money in the winter but makes up for it in the summer.

Since local golfers learned of the fate of the greens, many have turned out to play a last round.

"It's been a record business," Menge said. "There are a lot of people who have been coming up there to play the last round of golf. Everybody's just been blown away by this."

Many community members have said the course provided golfers with

an unthreatening atmosphere.

Menge said the previous owner, the late David McFadden, wanted the land to remain undeveloped.

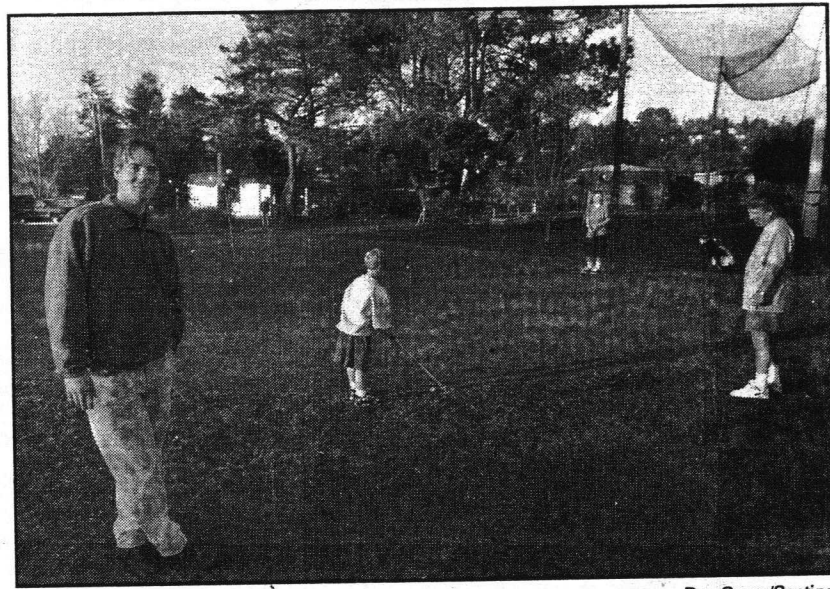
"We never had to worry about it as long as he was alive," said Menge.

Pritchard said McFadden's daughters later sold half the property to Grant Wrathall. Both parcels are listed for sale, Menge said.

One of the daughters, Sonny McFadden, said Tuesday that she was unaware of any development plans. Wrathall did not return calls.

Menge said he believed the property was for sale with a contingency that would allow a buyer to proceed with a purchase only if commercial or residential zoning could be obtained. The land is now zoned as open space.

The only way it might remain a golf course, he said, is if a government agency sues the land owners for the property.



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John Menge says he will close the course this Friday.