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Shaw-Nee Slopes developer tries to woo opponents

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Backers of a controversial housing development being proposed for a private golf course took their plans to area residents Thursday night, hoping to win over those opposed to any building on the site.

Geo-Energy Enterprises, which has an offer to purchase the Shaw-Nee Slopes golf course in south Calgary, is promising to create housing in a park-like setting, retaining much of the site's trees and green space, including the main pond on the west end of the parcel.

It pledges to build a community facility along that pond, which the surrounding communities would own.

"It will become the heart of the community," said Leslie Humphrey, senior planner with AECOM, which is working with Geo-Energy.

Many in the neighbouring communities have been outspoken in their opposition to any development, arguing the golf course should remain a golf course.

The Shawnee community association has taken a hard line, saying it would oppose anything other than a golf course.

Area Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart had wanted to convince her colleagues to consider purchasing the site.

But developer Will Hoes said the owners are selling the property because raising the standards could cost up to \$15 million and it would still be considered short compared to newer courses.

His plans for Shawnee Park include 1,110 units. About 600 of them would be multi-family, at the east end of the parcel, closest to Macleod Trail. The higher-density would include apartment-style condos, likely no higher than five storeys, and townhouses.

Plans would also include a Garrison Woods-like town centre, with local coffee shops and businesses.

The approximately 480 single-family homes would be constructed in the existing park space and there would be a green buffer of about 20 to 30 metres separating the new housing from the existing community.

As well, many homes would be built around green space in a cluster, while the main road into the community would have a large swath of park between the two sides of the road.

Development on the site requires a land use change. Hoes said they plan to put in an application with the city within the next couple of months.

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