

Cully Neighborhood's Colwood golf course to remain green space

Story and photos by David F. Ashton
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Just how old was the document from which Portland City Commissioner Nick Fish read, supporting his decision to deny industrial development? You might be surprised to learn ...



Golfers at this year's East Portland Chamber of Commerce tee off at the northern edge of Colwood National Golf Course, located next to Portland International Airport.

At a regular session of the Portland City Council a couple of weeks ago, the commissioners decided – once and for all – whether the Cully Neighborhood's only green space, Colwood National Golf Course, would be bulldozed for industrial development.

To the chagrin of neighbors near the airport, owners of the 138-acre property located between NE Columbia Blvd. and Portland International

Airport had hoped to sell the land to a developer who wanted to build an industrial park.

Because a hearings officer rejected the plan, Haertl Development Company, the applicant, and Colwood Partnership, the property owner, sought to appeal the decision, and took their case to the City Council.



The Portland City Council met at City Hall to decide the fate of Colwood National Golf Course.

Commissioner Fish quotes report

When the vote was called, Commissioner Nick Fish said he'd like to reread information he'd voiced during the earlier hearing on the topic.

"I want to read briefly from the following report," Fish began.

"And I quote: 'The remaining great landscape feature of the City is that of the Columbia Slough which borders the eastern part of the city on the north. The region is low and distant from the city and seems to be at present comparatively valueless for any other than farming purposes. It is therefore to be hoped that a much larger park, of the meadow type, than can elsewhere be afforded, will gradually be acquired here by the city.'"

He continued quoting the report, "No other form of park has been proved so attractive and so useful to the masses of the people as a meadow park, particularly where there could be associated with it long stretches of still water as a landscape attraction and for boating purposes."



Commissioner Fish tells the City Council that honoring Olmsted's vision is a "historic opportunity".

Says century-old report stands up

After reading several more passages, Fish concluded by saying, "I'm quoting from the 1903 Olmsted report which addressed the question of the possible use of the land adjacent to the Columbia Slough. We have a historic opportunity through this vote to honor the vision of Olmsted, over 100 years ago, to maintain the current designation of open land – and, in my judgment, to correctly apply the law to the facts before us. Aye."

Mayor Potter abstained from voting because he'd missed earlier meetings on the subject – and so the rejection of the industrial plan was upheld at the City Council session on October 22. As a result of the decision, Colwood National Golf Course will remain as it is.



For now, the property will remain a duffer's delight.

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