

## What should we do with the Tyngsboro Country Club?

The Tyngsboro Country Club is an 85- acre parcel that is currently up for sale. On May 14th, residents will vote on whether or not to purchase the parcel with town funds.

You and your group will play the role of a town stakeholder to decide the future of the parcel. You will create a plan for the parcel based on your stakeholder groups interests and will present this plan at a town meeting (Ms. Hawkin's class). At the end of the meeting, residents (classmates) will vote on what to do with the land. The group with the most votes will win maple syrup made here at Greater Lowell!

**You will use the New England Landscape Explorer to: (<https://newenglandlandscapes.org/>)**

- Match the stakeholder's vision to one of the forecasted future scenarios
- Collect data about future land use under the scenario
- Craft a proposal for your group to present at Town Meeting.

You may use any of the following programs to create your presentation: ArcGIS Story Maps, Google Slides, or Adobe Spark.

Your presentation should include:

- ❖ Descriptive statistics from the New England (NE) Landscape Explorer tool
- ❖ Screenshots from the NE Landscape Explorer
- ❖ Arguments backed by evidence that touch four out of the following eight Environmental Science Concepts:
  - *Ecosystem Diversity*
  - *Human Population*
  - *Agriculture*
  - *Smart Growth/Land Use*
  - *Forestry*
  - *Pollution*
  - *Energy resources*
  - *Global water resources*

### **Part I: Introduction to the Case**

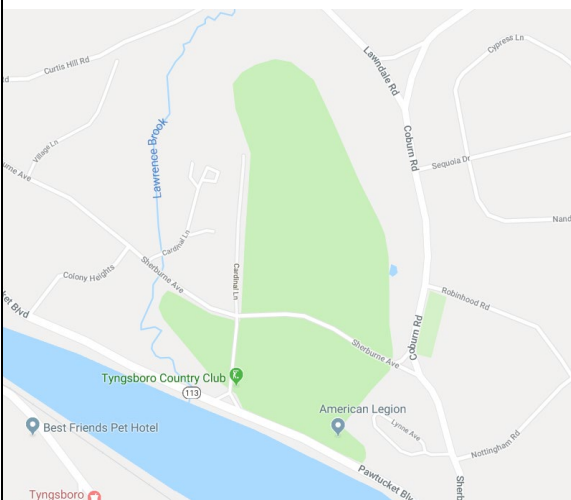
TYNGSBORO -- Residents have had plenty of reactions to the Tyngsboro Country Club being under agreement with a major home builder that hopes to transform the nine-hole golf course property into a community for adults 55 and older with 204 units.

"Well there goes the neighborhood!" one woman wrote on Tyngsboro Talk, a popular Facebook page.

Other residents are fed up with the idea of more housing developments in Tyngsboro and how it would affect traffic and other aspects of their quality of life. Ideas were exchanged of how else the property could be used, such as a park with a playground and central area for events.

Others saw the positive, saying the offer would bring more jobs and revenue to Tyngsboro. They defended the country club's co-owner Tammy Garau, saying she and her husband, Glenn Garau, deserve to

retire in peace after having maintained the country club for decades.



"I don't think it's a good idea," said Jeanne St. Hilaire, a Tyngsboro resident of 27 years. "There's too many communities like that. There's too many of them in town."

Late last month, Garau shared that she's under agreement with Toll Brothers to sell the property of approximately 85 acres. She co-owns the club with her brother, Bobby Spindell.

"My husband and I are getting older and we're tired. We're tired," Garau said at the time. "We want to retire."

The project proposed by Toll Brothers is a mix of town homes and detached single-family homes, according to David Bauer, the home builder's division president. There are plans to also build on the property a clubhouse, walking trails, and sports courts such as pickleball and bocce.

But nothing has been set in stone. Toll Brothers' first hurdle will be at fall Town Meeting when the company plans to bring forth a petition to rezone the property to allow for a 55 and older community.

"Obviously, the property is beautiful and it's a very special property for the town and for the residents and we recognize that, and so we felt because of where it's situated -- with great access to highways and great access to shopping -- we thought it was well-suited for a 55 and over destination that could provide housing to the aging population of Tyngsboro and the surrounding communities," Bauer said.

Because the property on which the Tyngsboro Country Club stands is under the state's Chapter 61B program, the town of Tyngsboro also has the right of first refusal.

"When you're dealing with a property that's in Chapter 61, there's a set procedure and the procedure is that, if there's an offer on the property, the town has the right to match that offer," Board of Selectmen Chairman Rick Reault said. "That being said, Chapter 61 defines that the offer has to be a qualified offer and what that means is that the officer cannot have any contingencies. In this case, the contingency is that the company that wants to purchase the property will purchase the property if they can get project approvals through the town and that's a whole other process."

Reault recalled playing at the golf course as a child. He said he'd ride his bike to Tyngsboro Country Club with friends in the summer months.

Reault said he feels for the Garaus.

"They've done a beautiful job and they've provided a really nice golf course, very nice to look at, but everybody wants to retire at some stage of their life. They've worked very hard and they've earned that right to retire," he said. "It's impossible to determine what the next step is going to be."

He later noted that it's much more valuable for the owners to sell it to real estate developers than it is to sell it as a golf course.

Selectman Hillari I. Wennerstrom said the Board of Selectmen hasn't yet made a formal decision about what to do.

"It's a beautiful piece of property in town and I think people would love to see it remain either open space or active recreation or find some type of use for it other than a housing development, but obviously there's a lot of moving parts to the town being able to afford buying the property and keep it in that condition," Wennerstrom said.

At Town Meeting this fall, Selectman David Robson predicted there will be resistance to the project as it stands from some residents. He said he'd like to see the builder come forward with a proposal that incorporates open space.

"I'd like to see it try to stay open space," he said, "but I see where the owners are coming from -- and the builders."

Selectman Ron Keohane declined to comment and Selectman Steven Nocco did not respond to a request for comment.

According to Town Administrator Matt Hanson, the country club will be discussed again at an upcoming Planning Board meeting. If the town were interested in purchasing the property, Hanson said the most likely scenario would be a request for an override.

"But if we were to try and fund it without an override, it would severely limit our ability to do a lot of other projects," Hanson said. "It would have to be some combination of CPC funds and other internal funds. Anything can be done. It's just what are you willing to sacrifice for other projects?"

Jarret Frank, a Tyngsboro resident, said he isn't thrilled about the idea of 204 housing units being added to the town, but understands that it's a good source of revenue for Tyngsboro. If this were to move forward, Frank suggested that perhaps the home builder could carve out a portion of the land for a public park to maintain some open space.

### **Focus Questions**

1. What is being proposed in this article?
2. Have you ever driven by the country club? Think ahead to the future. Imagine you are 48 years old and attending your 30th Greater Lowell Tech Reunion. What do you imagine in that area when you drive by on the way to the reunion?
3. Think about three possible stakeholders that may have an opinion about what happens to the property. List them in the space below, and brainstorm some of their possible visions for the land.

## **Part II: Stakeholder Development**

- ❖ Stakeholder you will play (circle one): *RS Graphics CEO Tollhouse Brothers Owner Audubon Society Member Hunter*
- ❖ Which New England Futures Landscape scenario does your stakeholder group most closely align with (circle it)? *Yankee Cosmopolitan Go It Alone Growing Global Connected Communities*
- ❖ Justify your reasoning.

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- ❖ Use the NELF Explorer to explore Tyngsboro's future under this scenario. The left hand side should be set to "Recent Trends" as a basis for comparison. Set the timeline under your scenario to 2060 and use those data for the following:
  - Conserved Forest Land:

- Recent Trends: \_\_\_\_\_ Your Scenario: \_\_\_\_\_
- Agriculture:
  - Recent Trends: \_\_\_\_\_ Your Scenario: \_\_\_\_\_
- Low Density Development:
  - Recent Trends: \_\_\_\_\_ Your Scenario: \_\_\_\_\_
- High Density Development:
  - Recent Trends: \_\_\_\_\_ Your Scenario: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Part III: Preparing Your Case**

*Fill in the chart below with the affirmative and negative sides of your proposal. Be sure to link each CLAIM you make to specific EVIDENCE from the New England Landscape tool, the New England Landscapes book, your textbook, or another data source.*

<b>Affirmative (Pro)</b>	<b>Negative (Con)</b>

## Assessment:

### Presentation Grading Checklist:

#### *Data:*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Visual data in the form of satellite imagery are used and analyzed correctly (minimum three screenshots)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Descriptive statistics are used as evidence to support claims (minimum four statistics)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Data matches your claims

#### *C-E-R*

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Claims** are logical and are supported by **evidence** in the form of data
- \_\_\_\_\_ Claims are connected to at least three broader environmental science concepts
- \_\_\_\_\_ Information is accurate

#### *Presentation*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Everyone in the group speaks and presents.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writing is free from spelling and grammatical errors

#### Overall Project Grade:

- Adobe Spark Video/Google Slides: 50%
- Oral Presentation: 25% (Individual)
- Focus Questions/Table: 15%
- REACH Grade: 10%

## Stakeholder Descriptions

### **RS Graphics CEO**

RS Graphics aims to “Change the way your business communicates” by offering “Solutions in Marketing, Print, Mail, and everything in between.” A multi-million dollar company with local roots, RS Graphics is expanding and is eyeing the Country Club property as a possible site for their new headquarters. They promise to bring 500 new jobs to Tyngsboro. RS Graphic’s emphasis on environmental stewardship has earned many awards and certifications.

### **Tollhouse Brothers**

Tollhouse Brothers is an award-winning home builder. They design condominiums and luxury homes, and are beginning to enter the low-income housing market. They are proposing to develop a mix of single and multi-family homes on the Country Club property for a total of 200 units.

### **Massachusetts Audubon Society Member**

“Protecting the nature of Massachusetts for people and wildlife” is the Society’s mission. As Massachusetts’ largest nature conservation nonprofit, they protect 38,000 acres of land throughout the Commonwealth and provide environmental education through a variety of programs. The Tyngsboro Country Club is of particular interest to them because a pair of bald eagles have built a nest on the property. There have also been documented sightings of Whip-poor-wills on the course.

### **Fourth- Generation Hunter**

This stakeholder was born and raised in Tyngsboro. She learned how to hunt from her grandfather, who lives down the street from the country club and often complains about all of the new development in town that has destroyed his favorite hunting spots. She wants Tyngsboro to stay the same and does not want any new development or industry coming into the town.