



# The Capital

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## Fight over Annapolis Golf Course continues

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The battle to stop The Key School from building athletic fields at the Annapolis Golf Course isn't over yet.

Annapolis Roads residents, who sued last year in an attempt to squash development of the historic course, have until October to tell a county Circuit Court judge why it should be left untouched.

In a ruling last week, Judge Paul Goetzke denied residents' attempts to block the sale of the course to The Key School.

But he also gave them another 90 days to tell the court why the Hillsmere private school's proposal violates decades-old community covenants, which spell out how the course may be used.

Thomas A. Deming, an attorney representing members of the Pre-

serve Annapolis Roads group, said The Key School also will have another shot at outlining its plans for the course.

"We'll be able to figure out exactly what The Key School's plans for the course are," Deming said. "Do the covenants allow the Key School to do what they are preparing to do?"

Irfan Latimer, a spokeswoman for The Key School, said school of-

icials have always believed their plans meet requirements.

"We remain very confident in our position and in our proposed uses, and we believe they will fall squarely within the community covenants and the county's zoning requirements," Latimer said.

Last November, The Key School announced plans to buy the 70-acre golf course in Annapolis Roads to build ball fields and outdoor class-

rooms.

St. Mary's High School had proposed similar plans about seven years earlier, with much opposition from Annapolis Roads residents. The school eventually pulled back plans.

But the debate over the course, now owned by George and Linda Graefe, goes back many more

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years.

In the 1970s, the course's former owners sued the Annapolis Roads Property Owners Association over their rights to develop the land.

Thirteen years later, the golf course and association came to an agreement that restricted land use.

The agreement centered around eight land use covenants that permitted a golf course, along with nurseries and other conservation uses.

After The Key School announced the sale, some residents felt its plans for the land violated those covenants.

Plaintiffs Pamela and Chester C. Buckenmaier III and Patricia and Gregory Strott, representing Preserve Annapolis Roads, sued The Key School along with golf course developers Ribera Development LLC and the Graefes.

The Key School's plans "would create a material change in the physical condition of the golf course," the suit stated.

In his July 24 ruling, Goetzke wrote it was inappropriate to halt the sale but gave Preserve Annapolis Roads three more months to file objections.

Latimer said a timeline for building on the course hasn't been set.

The Key School leaders met with Annapolis Roads residents this year to discuss the pending sale. Latimer said school officials are open to that again, though no meeting has been scheduled.

"We are committed to restoring responsible stewardship," Latimer said.

The Graefes couldn't be reached for comment. John Stamato, president of Ribera Development, did not return a call seeking comment.

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