

The Capital  
**Arundel Report**

**A5**  
FRIDAY  
Nov. 11, 2011

WWW.HOMETOWNANNAPOLIS.COM

# Key School buys Annapolis Roads golf course

## Plans to use 70 acres for athletics and outdoor education

By **ALLISON BOURG**  
Staff Writer

The Key School has purchased the Annapolis Golf Club, officials with the private school said yesterday.

The school said the 70-acre plot will be used for outdoor education and athletic programs. The land is about two miles from the school's Hillsmere campus.

"This once-in-a-lifetime opportunity has the

potential to change the way we think about, and plan for, the future of the school," Wes Jones, president of the school's board of trustees, said in a statement.

The sale caps off about a half-dozen years of debate over the future of the golf course, which members of the surrounding Annapolis Roads neighborhood have fought to protect.

Jake Vandergrift, board president of the Annapolis Roads Property Owners Association, said homeowners expressed mixed feelings at a board meeting last night.

"Some people were very upset, and some people wanted to see what Key School wants," said Vandergrift, whose association represents about 340 homes. "This all came as a shock."

Vandergrift said he plans to meet with school officials over the next few weeks to get a better

sense of their plans.

"We want to be sure it's not going to have any negative effect on our neighborhood," he said. "We don't want to see ball fields being used 24/7."

In a letter sent yesterday to parents, school officials said they reached the agreement with the golf club "after much research and deliberation."

"Having adopted a long-range plan for the next decade, Key's board of trustees acknowledged the limitations of the school's location within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area zone," the letter read.

The land owned by the golf club turned out to be the right fit, officials said.

(See **COURSE**, Page A6)

## COURSE

(Continued from Page A5)

"The property ... will greatly enhance the school's athletic, outdoor and environmental programs," the letter read.

The school plans to build playing fields and preserve existing open space to use as outdoor classrooms for environmental students.

School leaders also say they'll work with the Annapolis Roads community to figure out ways for residents

to use the property.

Lincoln Wellander, director of operations for the Annapolis Golf Club, didn't return a call seeking comment this morning.

The Key School administration said it will examine ways to alleviate traffic and noise concerns, which Vandergrift said were his community's biggest worries. Early plans call for a new entrance near the front of the property to keep traffic through Annapolis Roads light, as well as to make traveling easier for students and teachers.

Most games will take place during daylight hours, and there are no plans to add speakers or lights, the school said.

The sale of the golf club has been much talked about in recent years.

In 2005, St. Mary's High School had plans to develop the course into ball fields and other athletic facilities, with up to 40 homes built on an adjacent parcel. But residents protested and raised \$2.75 million to buy that 33-acre parcel.

"We as a community rose up against it," Vandergrift

said.

St. Mary's backed out of the deal and a development company eventually sued the Annapolis Roads property owners. A Circuit Court judge later sided with the community.

Then, in 2008, the city of Annapolis tried to buy the course with Program Open Space money. But the county, which handles those funds, refused to release them, saying the course's land was already protected from development.

abourg@capgaznews.com