

Butte council opposes resort

By PAUL STUART
Frontiersman reporter

THE BUTTE — Nearly 40 Butte area residents braved slick roads and fog Wednesday night to turn thumbs down on a proposed resort-golf course complex.

But the apparently still-optimistic developer, Victor Trygstad, said afterwards he thought it was a "good meeting." His statement followed a unanimous no vote by show of hands

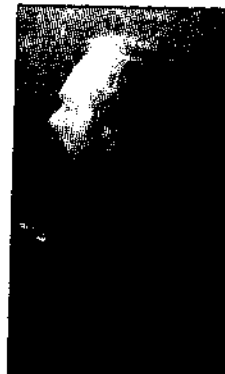
of 25 members of the Butte Community Council — those who remained through the nearly three-hour meeting.

Trygstad explained he meant

he was glad area residents' concerns were voiced, so Mat-Su Borough officials could take them into consideration as they consider whether to sell him a 320-acre parcel of land that

would be the core of his proposed resort complex. He

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Anti-development petition leader Ted Cox (left) and developer Victor Trygstad (right).

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added the assembly or platting board could even write binding stipulations into a purchase agreement.

Those concerns were summarized in a petition being circulated by federal soil scientist Ted Cox, opposing sale of the land to Trygstad. The main objections:

- that there is a need to keep the land for recreational use by

borough residents, as the population increases and open space becomes more valuable;

- that supposedly private land is available adjacent to the borough parcel, where the development could be started before public land is sold;

- that a majority of the land sought for purchase is either very wet or shallow to bedrock, characteristics that limit the suitability for either housing or a golf course, and the adjoining McRoberts Creek is a salmon-spawning stream.

- that broader public participation and comment needs to be sought by the borough before public lands are sold.

Trygstad disputed each point, but not sufficiently to affect the outcome of the vote.

He said much of the land would be kept open, with trails cutting through the parcel to be moved and maintained for public use. Trygstad also said the public land he wants to purchase is critical to his plan, and the project could not proceed without it. He also said he has options on all of the adjacent private land needed for the

complex — once the public land is purchased.

Trygstad flat-out denied that any large portion of the land was unsuitable for development, and added federal guidelines for wetlands protection would be observed. Finally, he said complaints about time allowed for public comment should be addressed to the borough.

He said he is fully complying with ordinances that govern such matters.

In response to one member's concerns about destruction of moose habitat, Trygstad said, "To some extent development is incompatible with wildlife habitat." He added that his company does not intend, however, to maximize profit to the detriment of the environment.

The motion to oppose borough sale of the land was made by Lucille Frey, and was later amended to include the main points of Cox's petition, and a copy of the petition itself. The community council vote and documents will be sent by certified mail to the borough as the organization's official public re-

sponse, community council president Jim Stocker said.

Cox said he had gathered about 40 signatures in one day from residents living near the parcel in question, and he added about 20 more signatures during the session in the Butte Community Center.

The voices of some disheartened and angry council members, who left early and didn't get to hear the unanimous vote in opposition to the resort plan, could be heard in the darkness of the parking lot:

"That's what happened in Eklutna, too. So we moved farther north."

"Maybe we'll just have to move farther north again."

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