



# Assembly may sell Butte land

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**PALMER** — Developer Victor Trygstad has always wanted to buy the Butte land on which he says he'll build a golf course resort. And now the Mat-Su Borough Assembly may give him the chance.

Willow assemblyman Doyle Holmes' proposal would convert the conveyance to Trygstad from a lease with a purchase option to an unconditional cash sale. Trygstad would have 18 months to pay fair market value on the 320 acres of borough-owned land under the plan.

Holmes says the borough administration has been unfair to Trygstad, leaking documents to a neighboring community council and attaching unreasonable conditions to the lease.

"I'm trying to get the development to come about because I believe that's the highest and best use of land, and I want to make sure everybody is treated fairly," Holmes said.

The assembly introduced Holmes' proposal at last Tuesday's meeting. The topic comes up for public hearing at the assembly's Dec. 16 meeting.

The lease, along with 13 performance stipulations, was approved last fall by the assembly, after hours of emotional public testimony, a mayor's veto and subsequent assembly override, plus an attempt to recall assemblyman Larry DeVilbiss.

Homeowners in the area, represented by the Butte Community Council, asked the borough not to give Trygstad the land, saying the area should be pre-

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served for trails and recreation activities.

Trygstad, doing business as Homestead Resort Properties, first approached the borough in 1996. He said he planned to build an 18-hole golf course, resort and high-scale neighborhood on the borough land and another 500 acres of property he owns or has options to buy.

He has always requested an outright sale. But the borough Planning Commission and the assembly, heeding the recommendation of Borough Manager Don Moore, tried to allay the neighbors' concerns by making any sale part of a lease plan, and dependent on certain performance conditions.

Characterizing them as "punitive" and "onerous," Trygstad said Monday the performance conditions were never acceptable to him. The night the planning commission finally approved the plan, however, Trygstad told planning commission chairman Tim Anderson he could live with the stipulations. He characterizes them now as an unprecedented invasion of his business practices. He said the measures would prevent him from getting financing for his development.

"I view the terms and conditions of the lease and the philosophy behind it as being equivalent to putting a tennis player and a football player at a negotiating table and asking them to negotiate a consensus," Trygstad said.

But the neighbors who oppose the development say mak-

ing it an unconditional sale leaves out public comment. And Holmes' cash-sale proposal is like "back-door Arkansas politics," said Butte Community Council chairman Ted Cox.

"This action totally undermines the public process. It violates the established practices of the land management department. And there is no guarantee that a golf course will ever be built," Cox said.

Even more troubling, Cox said, is that the neighbors' concerns are falling victim to political maneuvering and special interests, making the homeowners lose confidence in the public process.

Cox said he's not surprised the sale plan cropped up under the new administration of Mayor Darcie Salmon. Cox referred to Salmon's receiving campaign contributions from Trygstad and doing preliminary land valuations for the developer. Salmon said he no longer has a business relationship with Trygstad.

"We're starting to believe that everybody's corrupt," Cox said.

Moore and other officials say it has been difficult at times to work with Trygstad on the conditions of the lease. Communication has been almost entirely by fax or phone, though officials have requested numerous meetings to negotiate the lease, according to Steve Cypra, borough land management technician.

"Our continuing problem with Mr. Trygstad is that he doesn't respond to us," Moore said. Instead, Moore added, he politicizes the issue by address-

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# eyes sale

ing any problems he has with the lease or the administration to individual assembly members.

And Moore pointed out the lease is modeled on one similar to that associated with the Jack Nicklaus golf course at Whistler resort in British Columbia.

Both Holmes and Trygstad said the administration has been out to see him fail from the beginning, making the developer hesitant in his participation. The community council has received lease documents before Trygstad, Holmes claimed, which he said means members of the community council are being allowed too much say.

"This whole thing is sending the wrong message to people wanting to buy land in the borough. We have a process in effect, but we don't follow it. Special interests can come in the back door," Holmes said.

Trygstad's corporation is in non-compliance with the state Division of Banking, Securities and Corporations. Since organizing in October 1996, Homestead Resort Properties has not filed any of the required reports, which would detail the corporation's officers or representatives.

If noncompliance continues into 1998, the state may administratively dissolve the corporation.

Trygstad said he was unaware of his noncompliance with the state and will remedy the situation soon.

At last Tuesday's meeting, assemblywomen Janet Kincaid and Jay Nolfi both voted



The Hydric Soils/Wetlands map shows details of the layout of the 18-hole golf course and resort.

against introduction of Holmes' proposal, saying the assembly would be going back on its July 14 lease approval.

Nolfi said Holmes was trying to hurry the cash sale through the assembly without soliciting comments from the administration, which is trying to negotiate the lease terms with Trygstad.

"We would be doing a great disservice to that community. It will tear the community apart again," Nolfi said.

Assemblyman Jim Colberg has his own reservations, though he voted to allow another public hearing.

"The bottom line for me is I

hate to see something like this come and go through the assembly several times.

It prevents us from getting to other important business, Colberg said, referring to several public hearings the assembly offered on the lease.

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Laurie Dahms, M  
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**continued in Talkback**