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Former Lamberts Point Golf Course will remain publicly accessible land, Norfolk city officials say



The Lambert's Point golf course in Norfolk, Virginia, as seen July 3, 2023. Norfolk residents are organizing a petition to the city to transform the old Lambert's Point golf course into a public park. (Billy Schuerman / The Virginian-Pilot)

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NORFOLK — Two top city leaders said the 15 acres of city-owned waterfront land at Lamberts Point will remain publicly accessible after questions swirled about Old Dominion University's interest in the site.

The land is the northern portion of the former nine-hole Lamberts Point Golf Course, which was closed in 2022. Hampton Roads Sanitation District bought an adjacent 40 acre-parcel of land from the city for \$30 million and is building a second water treatment plant there. But no plans were finalized for the remaining city-owned land.

Residents were concerned about losing public access to the land and a petition to turn the land into a public park received a [groundswell of support](#).

Those residents seem to have gotten their wish, according to Norfolk City Manager Patrick Roberts, who spoke at Monday's Larchmont-Edgewater Civic League meeting.

"The open space really only lends itself to, particularly along the river and the trail, to passive use," said Roberts, addressing a question from Sharon McQueen, a city resident who's concerned about ODU buying up the remainder of the property.

Residents like McQueen have sought guarantees from the city that it will not sell the land and would instead invest in a park, as well as an easement that runs along the shoreline for much of the parcels. The golf course was built atop an old landfill, which limits potential uses for the site.

Previously, city officials said parking is being leased to ODU and the university's golf team has a lease for use of the clubhouse. Roberts said the ideal long-term use of the clubhouse has not been finalized and is in early talks.

"I don't know the extent of the landfill itself, but you're not going to see that as a private redevelopment," Roberts said.

Doug Beaver, a deputy city manager, said the city wants to make sure ODU has at least some access to or use for site, since the university helped develop the golf course in the first place.

"We're trying to thread that needle: have ODU in some form or fashion over there but have the vast majority of that available for a passive park, open space for the public because it is beautiful," Beaver said in an interview after the meeting.

He said ODU isn't interested in the whole property.

Ideas about what to do with the land have generated lots of public feedback. More than [300 residents turned up to meeting](#) last summer to learn about options under consideration. The city also collected input through a survey, which had [received 568 responses](#).

A Tuesday statement from ODU spokesperson Amber Kennedy did not answer questions about what the university has sought to do with the site, if the university is seeking to buy the land, or if it were to buy it, how residents would be guaranteed access.

"Old Dominion University is committed to working with the city to find a solution that benefits our surrounding neighbors and our very successful student-athletes competing in mens' and womens' golf," the university statement said.

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