

# Like a 'heavyweight bout,' residents, developer square off over proposed Boca golf course conversion

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**WEST PALM BEACH** — About 50 people are attending a zoning meeting today to hear a developer ask for permission to convert an abandoned Boca Raton golf course into new homes.

Mizner Trail Golf Club wants to build 288 homes on the 130-acre course west of Interstate 95 and south of Palmetto Park Road. But residents in the Boca Del Mar community off Palmetto Park Road are fighting the plan – the third attempt in nine years to build on the course.

“This is kind of like round 4 of a world championship heavyweight bout,” attorney Marty Perry, representing Mizner Trail, said in opening remarks to the zoning board. “Hopefully it won’t go the distance of 15 rounds but it’s showing great effort in doing that.”

The county is recommending denial of the project. Planning officials said they have received 135 letters in opposition to the project.

The county first rejected the plan in 2006, a decision that was upheld twice in circuit court. The developer withdrew a similar plan two years ago.

The county commission is scheduled to take up the latest request Jan. 9 and will take into consideration today’s decision by the advisory Zoning Commission.

Discussion on the item started at 11:30 a.m. and debate is expected to extend into the afternoon. The meeting is being held at the Ken Rogers Hearing Room in Vista Center at 2300 N. Jog Road in West Palm Beach.

In an effort to stop the project once and for all, the Boca Del Mar Improvement Association wants to buy the property and turn it into a passive environmental park with walking trails, shelters and exercise stations.

A presentation of “Mizner Trails Conservation Park” was well received by the Greater Boca Raton Parks and Beach District at a meeting Monday, according to an association press release.

But Robert Comparato, president and managing partner of Mizner Trail Golf Club, said in a letter to association attorney Peter Sachs that the property is not for sale and questioned the sincerity of an offer.