

**City Council Hearing 09-28-06**  
**Save the Historic Riverside Golf Course**  
1020 Grove Blvd., Austin, TX 78741

103-106

Good evening,

I'm Barb Fox, an Austin area resident since 1972 and a Crossing Gardenhomes homeowner and resident of the East Riverside/Oltorf Combined neighborhood geography and specifically the Pleasant Valley neighborhood geography for over 21 years. I am, also, a board member and Civic Representative for the Crossing Gardenhomes Homeowner Association which consists of 96 single family homes.

The Austin Community College (ACC) Riverside Campus and Riverside Golf Course properties are, also, in the EROC neighborhood geography and specifically in the Pleasant Valley neighborhood.

Although ACC is exempt from the municipal zoning regulations as are school districts in Texas, ACC has, also, elected to have the ACC Riverside Campus and the 18-hole Riverside Golf Course properties excluded from the City of Austin EROC Neighborhood Plan and excluded from the Future land Use Maps. Staff's recommended FLUM shows the ACC properties in white – we must remember that over 150 acres of this "white" property is green space and is the 18-hole historic Riverside Golf Course.

ACC is revising its current Master Plan and developing a district wide Master Plan and would hope ACC's Master Plans do not eliminate the existing 18-hole Golf Course.

ACC built the existing Riverside Campus on a portion of the old Austin Country Club Golf Course in such a way as to keep an 18-hole Golf Course.

The original Golf Course was designed by renowned golf architect, Perry Maxwell, is where Harvey Penick lived and taught the game of golf for 34 years, and is the course where two time Master Champion Ben Crenshaw, former U.S. Open Champion Tom Kite and other golfing greats learned to play the game.

Even with the construction of the existing Riverside Campus, there is still a strong presence of the original Course:

- 16 of the original Maxwell greens are still intact and Riverside's 4 finishing holes are considered some of the best in golf (per Del Lemon – Golf Historian - Austin American Statesman, 02/01/2001)
- 13 of the original Maxwell holes are still intact (per Avid Golfer Magazine Aug/Sept 2005)
- 4 of the holes have been modified
- 1 hole is new
- original practice putting green that Ben Crenshaw and Tom Kite learned to putt on is still intact

Certainly, the Riverside Golf Course, as it is today, still has both architectural and historical significance and warrants being preserved for our golf community and the many out of town golfers who cherish the opportunity to golf this historic Course.

Additionally, the Riverside Golf Course is only a few miles from downtown Austin and is one of the largest green spaces covering over 150 acres and warrants being preserved.

ACC has stated that the Riverside Campus needs to be expanded for its current student enrollment and is currently in need of a 400 space parking structure. Further expansion of the Riverside Campus will be needed to provide for future student growth and student growth from the Del Valle Independent School District which has been annexed and is now part of the ACC District - an annexation I supported and voted for.

I know of no opposition to the Riverside Campus being expanded.

**HOWEVER**, there is strong concern ACC's actions may eliminate this historic course. ACC has clearly stated it is not committed to retaining and preserving the 18-hole Riverside Golf Course and ACC may even choose to expand the Riverside Campus onto the Golf Course property and/or sell Golf Course property for future development - resulting in the eliminating of this historic course.

Today, the Riverside Campus buildings are only 1 or 2 stories high, all parking is at street level, the tennis courts are not used for instruction, and there are 28.1 vacant acres for sale that border the ACC Riverside Campus property. Expansion of the Campus and construction of a parking structure can be made on these areas without building on and eliminating this historic course.

ACC stated at the Planning Commission hearings on June 13, 2006, that ACC met with the Mayor and City Manager earlier this year and ACC stated it is willing to consider district wide trade and/or purchase to accomplish resolution of the Riverside Golf Course land as well as other land acquisition near ACC campuses. ACC, also, stated June 13th no offer or further discussion regarding the City acquiring the 18-hole Riverside Golf Course had occurred.

With the needed expansion of the Riverside Campus and ACC's lack of commitment to preserve this course, it is critical that our Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, Council Members, City Manager, and other City officials take action now to acquire the existing 18-hole Riverside Golf Course before ACC makes a decision that could eliminate this course.

We ask that the City of Austin proactively work with ACC to ensure the acquisition of the historic Riverside Golf Course property for the community while this public golf course still exists and before this green space is built on by ACC and/or sold for development.

Previously, I provided each of you a binder that included photos of the Riverside Campus and the Riverside Golf Course. If you haven't already, I encourage you and your staff to view the 2 DVDs contained within this binder - 1 is Ben Crenshaw and the other is golf historian and others talking about this historic course and the need to preserve this course.

Thank you,

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