

## **1969 & 1970**

It's a new year and the Town re-elects J. Mortimer Woodcock to serve a second term as First Selectman. He is a supporter of the efforts to create a Golf Course in Town, perhaps due to his love of Nature and Open Space (Woodcock Nature Center is named in his honor). Both his Syracuse Forestry degree and decades of operating a thriving Nursery business proved beneficial for the drive to implement the vision of a Municipal Golf Course for the Town. (He supplied large plantings to the 1964 NY World's Fair, Harvard, Yale, and the National Art Gallery among others). 1969 is the year where the Land Acquisition process finally becomes a reality.

**FEBRUARY**: Contracts are drawn for the Purchase of two important parcels: 50 acres of the Kraus land (previously owned by James Lawrence, and before him, Dubois - referenced in the 1967 summary) and 40 acres of the Leighton family land. But Town Counsel John Dowling informs First Selectman J.M. Woodcock that these contracts are for naught if the Dhly property is also not acquired. As of the middle of February there is no indication that Mrs. Dhly has any intention of selling to the Town. ([1969-1](#) and [1969-2](#))

**MARCH**: What a difference a month makes! The Town receives word that Mrs. Dhly has in fact agreed to sell a portion of her land. The record is non-existent on why she had the change of heart, but thousands of future golfers remain in her debt. ([1969-3](#))

**JULY**: The Warranty Deed for the Kraus property ([1969-5](#)) is drafted and reveals two stipulations, which if not met, provide Mr. Kraus the right to re-acquire the land at the same price the Town paid him to take ownership:

1. The Golf Course Construction must begin within 2 years of deed transfer
2. The Golf Course Opening must occur within 5 years of deed transfer

Town Counsel Dowling successfully negotiates an additional 5 years to the latter point, buying a 10-year window for construction. But the Ground-breaking must start within 2 years. This deadline will prove to be crucial in the coming months.

**SEPTEMBER**: James Lawrence, one-time owner of the Kraus parcel that is to become a component of the Ridgefield Golf Course, writes that he is "very glad indeed" to hear of his former parcel (which he offered to sell to the Town in Feb 1967) becoming part of this project. So glad, in fact, that he enclosed a check for \$3,500 (the equivalent of \$30,645 in 2024 dollars) for help in covering the expenses of "improving the property". He credits Mr. (Fred) Montanari for the idea for the donation ([1969-6](#)).

**OCTOBER**: The month ends with a key piece of the puzzle falling into place. Mrs. Dhly signs the Option giving the Town the right to acquire additional acreage - at \$1,500 per acre. ([1969-7](#))

**FEBRUARY 1970**: The only document from the archive for 1970 is a brief letter from Fred Montanari providing an official valuation of the Dhly land at \$1,500 per acre. ([1970-1](#))

Now the real work can begin...the fact that it doesn't puts the project in jeopardy and threatens to erase 4 years of effort to get everything in place. The clock truly starts ticking.