

1971

The 1971 Archive only starts in the middle of Summer, but the records from June to December show the plans and actions to bring golf to Ridgefield were ramping up at a quickening pace.

JUNE: Don Brooks demonstrates his passion for golf, the love of his Town and the vision he possessed for the Ridgefield Golf Project by writing to USGA Executive Director PJ Boatwright. Don proposed that the USGA relocate their World Headquarters to Ridgefield, touting the logistical benefits of the site as a good match for the USGA. (1971-1) His bold proposition bore no fruit, but was well timed; the USGA moved to Far Hills, NJ just one year later, in the summer of '72.

AUGUST: In a memo to the Golf Committee, Don Brooks summarizes a 'long conversation' he had with George Fazio via telephone. (It was Boatwright who suggested Brooks should consider the 'up and coming' Fazio design team). The upshot: Fazio is willing to take a side trip to Ridgefield in the next few weeks, while he is in Larchmont, New York, preparing Wingfoot for the 1974 US Open. (1971-6) The visit from Fazio occurs on Friday, September 24. Shortly thereafter he estimates construction cost to be \$600,000 - excluding a Club House and Pro Shop. (1971-13)

The excitement of the Fazio conversations were likely tempered by a looming potential disaster for the entire project. On July 30th Mr. Kraus gave notice of his intent to exercise his Option to take back his parcel. He had every right - Construction had not commenced in the 2 years since he conveyed Title to the Town. Conversations were happening outside the available record however. On Aug 27th, Mr Kraus's attorney gives notice the parties must agree within 30 days or the Option, temporarily on hold, will be firmly invoked. (1971-8) The Town successfully negotiates a reprieve - pushing the Option date ahead one full year, but with ominous terms: Construction must be approved - first in a Town Meeting with the Board of Selectmen, then in a Town-wide vote. If not, Mr. Kraus obtains the right to reacquire not only his parcel, but the other two as well (Leighton's and Dhly's) - a total of nearly 115 acres. (1971-9)

OTHER 1971 HIGHLIGHTS OF NOTE:

(1971-15) - Brooks invites Fazio to play a Round in Pennsylvania - (with a Nassau on the line!)

(1971-16) - Committee asks Selectmen to purchase an additional 51.2 acres from Suzanna Dhly

(1971-19) - Town Vote set for Dec 9, with 5 Initiatives each needing Approval to move forward

(1971-21) - Brooks' Detailed Proposal - excellent reading: giving a great overview of the project

(1971-20) - Committee preps for their Presentation, including a pre-meeting with opponents

(1971-23) - The Ridgefield Press publishes a supportive Editorial

(1971-24) - Don Brooks and Judge Shields present their case to the Public before the vote. The minutes reveal a handwritten note: Voters approve, by more than 2 to 1 - roughly 1,300 to 600

(1971-25) - Brooks' message to the Committee: "Probably our greatest work is ahead of us"