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## Golf course topic of CVCA meeting

By Robin Goldsworthy

Verdugo Hills Golf Course, whose fate is uncertain, has the potential to become a regional park, a community activist told a receptive audience at the March meeting of the Crescenta Valley Community Assn.

Richard "Rich" Toyon, president of Glendale-Crescenta Volunteers Organized in Conserving the Environment (V.O.I.C.E.), addressed the association, giving an in-depth presentation of options that included saving the course and adding hiking trails, restored habitat and opportunities for additional active recreation, especially in areas that are currently under-utilized.

"It was very exciting to see Rich's vision of what the golf course could become," said Sharon Raghavachary, one of about 50 audience members. "As a non-golfer, it was great to see that this can be a recreational space for everyone."

During his presentation, Toyon explained that a development firm, MWH, purchased the land in 2005 with the intention of developing a 320-unit condominium complex (eventually scaling the project back to 229 units) there; a proposal is working its way through the approval process of the city of Los Angeles.

When the community learned a project was in the offing it swiftly reacted with calls for the golf course to be preserved. As a result, local organizations have joined forces to investigate a joint purchase by the cities of L.A. and Glendale, L.A. County and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. With an ailing housing market, the developer has indicated a willingness to sell the course for about \$12 million, Toyon said.

Also at the meeting was planning deputy Jim Dantona from Los Angeles City Council member Wendy Gruehl's office. Dantona praised Toyon's presentation and the efforts of community members. Commenting on instruction by Toyon to "send a letter to Gruehl and other powerful people," Dantona said many such letters have already been received.

"Your voice has been heard; money is the issue. What we discussed [included] the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's interest in the mountain area and wash area," Dantona said of finance meetings that have been held between the four municipalities. "The city and county want to look at the status of the golf course."



A rendering of a possible scenario for the existing Verdugo Hills Golf Course includes a regional park. Rendering provided by V.O.I.C.E. website

The status, Dantona explained, included the viability of the course to remain solvent.

Dantona was enthusiastic of the vision outlined by Toyon.

“I loved the plan as put forward,” Dantona said. He encouraged the audience to become active in preserving the site by playing golf there, attending meetings and writing letters.

The course has a varied history, including having served for a brief time as an internment camp during World War II. It is also believed to be the location of the ancient Tongva/Gabrielino village of Wakanga.

The evening meeting came to a close with questions and comments from the audience, many relaying stories of learning how to play golf on the course that just celebrated its 50th birthday.

Commenting on the obvious visceral and emotional attachment to the site, Toyon said, “It’s a family-friendly local recreational resource. We’re lobbying for something that is right to do.”

For more information on the Verdugo Hills Golf Course, visit [www.savethegolfcourse.org](http://www.savethegolfcourse.org).

The next meeting of the CV Community Assn. will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 23 at the Community Room of the CV Sheriff’s Station, 4550 Briggs Ave., La Crescenta.

To learn more, visit [www.crescentavalleycommunity.org](http://www.crescentavalleycommunity.org) or e-mail to [cvcommunityassoc@yahoo.com](mailto:cvcommunityassoc@yahoo.com).