

Sierra La Verne Country Club owners signal intentions to close, file bankruptcy

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The owners of [Sierra La Verne Country Club](#) have signaled their intentions to shut it down in the coming months and begin bankruptcy proceedings.

A letter announcing the decisions, just three months after listing the golf course for sale at an undisclosed price, was sent to the city in October.

In the Oct. 18 letter, Delaware-based Sol Long Term Land Investment Trust claims it attempted “to keep the golf course in operation through the solicitation of offers from capital sources willing to invest in the property.”

The trust is blaming city officials for stopping efforts to redevelop the private golf course into a public facility with “recreational and open space amenities.”

That’s not entirely true, said Eric Scherer, La Verne’s community development director.

In an August listing for the property, which was being handled by [Irvine-based Hoffman Co.](#), the property was billed as a potential housing development. But the site cannot be sold as residential-ready because it’s currently designated “open space” under the city’s general plan, its blueprint for development, Scherer, explained.

When [residents alerted the city to listing](#), Scherer said he reached out to a representative with Hoffman to explain what is allowed to be built on the site. At that time, a representative relayed the owners’ main goal was to sell the golf course to another operator.

While the current designation prohibits development, Scherer said, the owners are not barred from initiating what would be a lengthy process to attempt to change it.

The 111-acre, privately-owned golf course is north of the 210 Freeway and along the east side of Wheeler Avenue and south of Golden Hills Road.

The golf course opened in 1978 as a public nine-hole course. It was converted into a private country club when it expanded to 18 holes.

According to the investment trust, the golf course has changed ownership three times since 2009.

“It is no surprise to anyone that over the past several years, the golf course has experienced significant challenges,” the Oct. 18 letter notes, citing rising water costs and declining membership as key factors.

“We had hoped that the private club might have been re-imagined to become an asset to the community and the city of La Verne,” the letter said. “It is unfortunate that the city has no apparent interest in beginning a dialogue to ensure this property remains a productive and valued part of north La Verne.”

Scherer said Tuesday he doesn't have a name or phone number for the owners but responded by sending a letter dated Nov. 5. In the correspondence, he noted the ownership has failed to reach out to the city directly, but that La Verne officials had met with housing developers to explain the the great lengths needed to develop the golf course.

There's a much easier route: keeping its current use, he said.

"The idea of keeping it operating as a golf course, private or public, was supported by the city and remains an option without other city discretionary approvals," Scherer wrote in the Nov. 5 letter.

As of Tuesday, he still hasn't heard back, he said.

In an emailed response this week to this publication, the trust indicated it has already begun the legal process to close.