



COURTESY

This artist's rendering shows the proposed warehouse facility that would be constructed on land now used for golf in Hudson.

**HUDSON**

# Plan calls for sale of Green Meadow land

■ Developers propose building large warehouse and distribution center on the golf course land.

By Ryan Lessard  
Union Leader Correspondent

The end may be near for the venerable Green Meadow Golf Club in Hudson.

Hillwood Investment Properties, a national developer of industrial warehouse and distribution centers, has submitted a preliminary site plan to construct three buildings totaling 2.6 million square feet on the property just west of Route 3A.

Under the purchase agreement, Hillwood would buy the roughly 370-acre property from Green Meadow. Construction would involve about half the land. The rest of the property would not be used for golf.

David Friel owns the land with his older brother, Philip Friel III, and younger brother, Thomas Friel. He said their parents, Phil, a former golf pro from Nashua, and Jeanne Friel created the golf course in 1961 and gradually grew it to what it is today. Phil Friel is enshrined in the New Hampshire Golf Hall of Fame.

"He managed to borrow some money, bought the farm and eventually turned it into a 36-hole golf course," Friel said. The two courses, nicknamed "The Prairie" and "The Jungle," have been hugely popular with golfers on both sides of the New Hampshire/Massachusetts border for decades.

Friel said his mother's maiden

name was Green, which is where they got the name Green Meadow.

The course was used for state and regional professional tournaments over the years, and the family built a small golf empire after it began acquiring foreclosed golf courses and building new ones in the 1970s, Friel said.

Over the years, they owned 15 or 16 courses in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, he said. Between the three brothers, they still own seven golf courses and a driving range.

Friel said the no-membership, daily-fee golf course has remained profitable, but traffic has decreased in the past 20 years.

"There's been a whole thing with golf that... in the late '90s around the turn of the millennium there, everyone was building golf courses. So there's kind of an oversupply of golf courses now," Friel said. "It's not like it used to be."

Friel said the plan is for Green Meadow to reopen May 11 for one last year and to stay open until the end of the season on Nov. 1.

Another developer came close to purchasing the land in 2006 and proposed a large retail development, but the Great Recession of 2008 caused the buyers to back out, Friel said.

About a year ago, Hillwood was introduced to the Friels by their Realtor, Thomas Farrelly of Cushman & Wakefield. The Friels researched the company and liked what they saw. They were a large company willing to buy the whole parcel, which was important to the Friels, but they also seemed to be good neighbors, according to Friel.

"We did some research and it seemed like they were invested in the

community," Friel said.

Still, Friel, 66, said it will be emotional to say goodbye to Green Meadow. It was where his family started its business, and where he worked since he was 8. But he takes comfort in knowing Green Meadow had a good, long run.

"How many family businesses have lasted 60 years?" Friel said.

The proposed buildings will be 1.07 million square feet, 1 million square feet and 522,000 square feet. They would boast a combined 363 loading docks, plus nearly 2,700 car and truck parking stalls.

Justin Dunn, Hillwood's vice president of development, said that while a complete cost estimate for construction hasn't been done yet, it generally costs the company \$40 to \$50 per square foot to create the building shell, which would total up to \$130 million. Dunn said Hillwood hopes to have the project, the Hudson Logistics Center, completed by fall 2021.

Dunn said the project would create an estimated 2,500 direct and indirect construction-related jobs, and anywhere between 1,000 to 4,000 long-term jobs at the facilities once the buildings are done.

Hudson Town Planner Brian Groth said he plans to have the developers appear before the planning board at a special meeting on May 20 at the Hudson Community Center, given the magnitude of the project and the potential public interest.

Hillwood, which was founded in 1988, is part of the Perot Companies, which are owned by Ross Perot Jr., who also serves as the company's chairman.

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FILE PHOTO

The crowd at Prescott Park last summer waiting for a production of "Beauty and the Beast."

# Arts scene hard hit by COVID-19

■ Assistant Mayor Jim Splaine said COVID-19's impact on the arts community in Portsmouth will affect all businesses.

By Kimberley Haas  
Union Leader Correspondent

Portsmouth's business community likely will need two to three years to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, especially the city's hard-hit arts scene, the assistant mayor predicted.

Late last week, the Prescott Park Arts Festival's board of directors announced the cancellation of the 2020 summer season after it determined that smaller, socially distanced crowds or a partial season would not cover the program's cost.

The festival, which features more than 90 diverse arts events, draws nearly 250,000 people each season, according to its website. People typically are asked for a voluntary donation at the gate.

Organizers expect to forgo more than \$1 million in revenue from the cancellation.

Other parts of Portsmouth's vibrant arts scene are currently closed because of limits on large gatherings. They are suffering financially while trying to provide entertainment during the stay-at-home order, according to organizers.

The Music Hall on Chestnut Street will not reopen until it is "prudent and safe," according to its website.

The Music Hall is offering free streaming services in partnership with The Metropolitan Opera in New York City, National Theatre Live, Exhibition on Screen and the Portsmouth Symphony Orchestra.

Seacoast Repertory Theatre on Bow Street is not holding any events until further notice. They now have a free 24-hour radio station, a ticketed live-streaming service and continued content on their Patreon page for a monthly donation, according to the website.

Sara O'Reilly, a marketing manager at 3S Artspace on Vaughan Street, announced last week that they have created a way for people to experience their postponed "Life is Drag" exhibit virtually while the gallery is closed.

"The artist Rachel Rampleman worked with so many regional artists, and we just simply needed a

way to get it all out there now as something to raise spirits, connect to our community and champion for support of artists and nonprofits like 3S," O'Reilly said.

Jim Splaine, assistant mayor of Portsmouth, said the loss of Prescott Park Arts Festival this season is "devastating to our city."

Splaine said that when people travel to Portsmouth for events in Prescott Park, they shop downtown and eat at locally owned restaurants.

Splaine said COVID-19's impact on the arts community in Portsmouth will affect all businesses, which are heavily dependent on visitors from within New Hampshire, the region and the world. Two million of Portsmouth's four million annual visitors travel to the city during the summer months.

"We have to reinvent our economy," Splaine said. "This is a different world, economically and socially. People will be maintaining social distancing for a long time. Even after then, people will be hesitant to shake hands again."

Splaine and the other members of Portsmouth's Economic Development Commission met virtually Friday morning.

Portsmouth Health Officer Kim McNamara said during the meeting that COVID-19 still presents many unknowns, but she offered suggestions for how some nonessential businesses and nonprofit organizations might potentially reopen.

"Art galleries could require masks for staff and customers, keep people at a good distance and use only non-cash transactions, but until we start very slowly and watch the data intensely, we're not going to know if the precautions are fully safe," McNamara said.

McNamara said without a vaccine, effective treatments or readily available widespread testing, "it's a bit of a shot in the dark to be reopening the economy."

"We are just entering the sixth month of getting to know this virus, and the unknowns are still overwhelming. Making the wrong decisions now could have disastrous effects to our population now and in the long term," McNamara said.

Portsmouth leaders have been working on plans to open downtown shops and offer socially distanced seated dining at restaurants.

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**SCHOOL MATTERS**

# Nashua officials amend decision on grading

■ High school students will be allowed to opt in to traditional letter grades rather than pass/fail grading.

By Kimberly Houghton  
Union Leader Correspondent

After receiving complaints about their decision to implement a pass/fail grading system for high school students in the final quarter, the Nashua Board of Education will allow students to opt for traditional grading if they want.

School officials changed their stance on the new, temporary grading policy after miscommunication between the school board and administrators, they said.

Two weeks ago, the Nashua Board of Education voted 7-2 to adopt a hybrid grading system in which students would receive a pass, fail or audit grade for all second-semester and fourth-quarter classes. In addition, all grades for second-semester high school courses would not be factored into students' grade-point averages but would appear on individual transcripts.

"I am hoping the board would have some reconsideration," Superintendent Jahmal Mosley said on Thursday. "My administrators had no voice or feedback to give to any of the board on the last motion."

Rather than "undercutting administrators," Mosley said that in the future grading issues should first



UNION LEADER/FILE

Superintendent Jahmal Mosley of the Nashua School District, left, says administrators had no voice when the Nashua Board of Education decided last week to implement a temporary pass/fail grading system for high school students.

be addressed by principals with input from teachers before the school board reviews recommendations.

In response to students' and parents' concerns about the change, the board on Thursday voted 5-4 to give each student the option of standard letter grades or pass/fail grading. Students must notify teachers by May 11 of their choice, which will apply to all their classes.

"There was a real failure of communication here," said school board president Heather Raymond.

Raymond said the board received no feedback from administrators on the grading situation and were not included in emails containing information that could have helped in their decision.

"Our students need to be able to show colleges something," said school board

student representative Stephen Norris. He stressed the importance of allowing traditional letter grades to be offered for students.

"I do think that the choice should be the students," said school board member Sharon Giglio.

School board member Paula Johnson also favored giving students a choice.

"These kids worked for this and I am not going to be the one that takes away what they have done for 13 years of their life ... give them credit for what they have done," said Johnson.

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