

# Zephyr Cove disc golf in state of flux



Zephyr Cove's disc golf course is known for its views.  
Photos/Jessie Marchesseau

**By Jessie Marchesseau**

Douglas County Parks and Recreation has no immediate plans for any major changes to the Zephyr Cove disc golf course.

This may come as a surprise to those who have heard the rumors swirling through the local disc golf community alleging that Douglas County had accepted a proposal to make significant changes to the existing course. Hundreds of people even signed a petition trying to stop this work that was never agreed to. The idea of changing a beloved course which is considered one of the top courses in the country by the Professional Disc Golf Association had people up in arms.

It began after Tahoe residents and disc golf enthusiasts Mike Plansky, Will McKissock and Dan Deegan presented a plan for changes and improvements to the Zephyr Cove disc golf course at the Douglas County Parks and Recreation Commission meeting on June 2. The plan proposed adding a three-hole pitch and putt area near the picnic tables, a six- to nine-hole kids course adjacent to the parking lot, a nine-hole "lakeview loop" and reconfiguring several of the existing 18 holes.

The commission listened to the presentation, but did not approve or move forward with the plan.

"We listen to all ideas, we don't restrict," Scott Morgan, parks and recreation director for Douglas County, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We can't restrict."

The official meeting minutes state that the commission was already aware at that time there were some parties in the community who were not in agreement with some aspects of the plan being presented.

One of those parties not in agreement is original course designer Craig Getty. Getty also had a plan to add an additional nine holes to the Zephyr Cove disc golf course and to reconfigure a number of the existing holes. He claimed to have already had a verbal agreement with the acting park ranger to move forward with his plan. However, Morgan said such an agreement is not possible as rangers cannot give consent for park improvements. Douglas County Parks would have to give approval and conduct a public review to make such changes to the course.

Last fall, Plansky had been working with Getty on Getty's plan for alterations to the course, but when the two couldn't come to an agreement on certain aspects, Plansky began working on a different plan with a number of colleagues. This is the plan which was presented at the June 2 meeting. Getty, who has designed eight courses in the Tahoe area, said it was the

first time someone other than himself had submitted plans to make changes to one of the courses he designed.

Since it was built in 1998, most of the changes to the Zephyr Cove course have been pretty minor and completed under the direction of Getty. Morgan described it as having evolved “organically” over the years and said most of the maintenance and enhancements were done rather informally as a result.



The course meanders through the forest above the tennis courts at Zephyr Cove Park.

This is the first time there has been dissent expressed within the community in response to any maintenance or alterations. As a result, the county has decided to move slowly with respect to changes or improvements to the course and require that all parties come to a consensus before any work is done. Until that happens, parks and recreation has put a halt on any work to the course beyond standard safety issues and routine maintenance.

The minutes from the June 2 meeting state that Plansky, McKissock and Deegan were encouraged to "form a nonprofit open to the public organization that would not deny membership to anyone who has an interest in serving in the nonprofit." In short, they must form a nonprofit group where any and all interested parties come together and agree on things before they are done. Consensus required.

The commission also stated that in order to be granted an MOU for the development, operation and maintenance of the Zephyr Cove disc golf course, a Douglas County staff member must be on the board of the nonprofit. In a subsequent meeting with Getty and his associates, Morgan reiterated these requirements.

"We want to recognize an organization that is there to support and preserve the disc golf course," Morgan said.

Such organizations are not uncommon for the development and maintenance of county facilities such as tennis courts and the Dangberg Ranch. It's also not uncommon for disc golf courses. For example, the Reno Disc Golf Association recently finished a large disc golf project in Reno, something RDGA President Skot Meyer said would never have been possible without the existence of their nonprofit group. He said that in Reno, it has worked extremely efficiently and been a great benefit to the community. But noted that most of the people in the RDGA have similar ideas; it may take such an organization in Douglas County a while to come to an agreement on things.

Getty is not optimistic: "not much will get done," he said of having a group overseeing course work as opposed to an individual. He likened it to having an architect and a bunch of carpenters all build a house and giving them all equal authority. "They all want it done a different way," he said. "The history of how the course was designed should take precedence."

But Morgan insists this is the only way, and the county will not approve anything that is not agreed upon by all parties.

“Sounds like we’re all supposed to work together, and that’s what we’re trying to do,” said Plansky, who is moving forward with the development of the nonprofit organization.

While all parties seem to agree that the course needs some work, exactly what that work will be and any progress toward it is unlikely to happen during this disc golf season.