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Verde Villages to donate pond to county

By VYTO STARINSKAS, The Verde Independent
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The Verde Villages Property Owners Association wants the county to take over the Verde Villages pond and make it a regional park (VNN/Vyto Starinskas)



VERDE VILLAGE – The Verde Village Property Owners Association wants the county to take over the Verde Village pond and make it a regional park, and the Yavapai County Board of Supervisors has advanced the plan.

Aislinn Maldonado, president of the VVPOA, said a park would be an amazing way for the community to move forward, and they have tried everything else.

The Yavapai County Board of Supervisors was asked to take the pond in a donation by the VVPOA on Friday, Nov. 19.

“They are in desperate need of a community park,” Supervisor Nikki Check said at the meeting. “The prospect that this pond would be out of commission and be a community blight is really a difficulty.”

Check, who has been meeting with the VVPOA, said the Verde Villages have 12,000 residents and no park.

“I do believe that there is a pathway for responsible donation to the county with the intention to possibly create District 3’s first Yavapai County park,” she said.

The intention would be for it to be a county park on the State Route 260 corridor between Cottonwood and Camp Verde, like Windmill Park in Cornville, Check said.

There is the issue with the domestic ducks, geese and fish, but it’s not a wildlife preserve, Check said.

District 2 Supervisor Dee Jenkins wanted to make sure the fish and creatures in the pond were taken care of before any agreement.

“Draining the pond will be one of the hurdles to get over, and how the county would get over that,” Check said, adding that she brought it to the board to give direction to staff to give them time to research the issue.

The Verde Villages pond — a three-acre water feature located on a 4.22-acre parcel at 3901 E. Del Rio Drive — is 10-feet-deep and serves as a vital community space for recreation.

The pond needs to be drained because it relies on water from the Cottonwood Ditch, which will no longer be available after Jan. 1, 2028, because of a policy change restricting non-agricultural use.

Maldonado said it doesn't qualify for grants, and the county has bigger hands and resources.

The VVPOA is a volunteer and member-driven organization that arose in the 1970s in response to a lack of infrastructure provided by the land developer of the Verde Villages, Maldonado stated in her letter to the board.

Membership is voluntary, and today, fewer than 100 households out of more than 4,000 in the Verde Villages Census Designated Area, are active members, she said. It is not a homeowners' association, no covenants, conditions and restrictions to enforce property standards. Its income is approximately \$50,000 per year.

Check said the project would make a great community block grant.

The agenda item was for staff to begin looking at the county project and come back to the supervisors over multi-years.

Staff will look at costs of draining the pond, site plans and what it will take to make it a regional park.

The board approved action item No. 2, to direct staff to investigate the acceptance of the donation of a private Villages pond from the VVPOA.

Vyto Starinskas

Photo Journalist