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# Editorial: Golf course development clashes with community

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The North Golf Course is a misnomer as it hides more than it reveals.

While golfers use it, the stretch is also a crucial place for community members - be it for walking their dogs, jogging or to just have neighborhood picnics.

But all this may change if the Board of Regents has its way. The board is planning to develop a retirement community on the golf course with the intention of maximizing profit. The community would house alumni and faculty.

It is not surprising that the North Golf Course has been chosen for development over other properties the University owns. The logic is to sell homes in pristine settings to those who want to live amidst nature. The aim is to capitalize on the greenery and convert it into a space that will slowly be purged of its greenery. The class that this sales pitch will be aimed at and the resulting gentrification are another matter.

The development also brings to the fore the disconnect between the University and the community that surrounds it. While the local neighborhood associations are against the move to develop the golf course, the University seems to hold a different viewpoint. One can only gauge the acrimony and distrust this is going to create between the two - something the University might not want if it is thinking long term.

An argument that is bound to be used in favor of developing the golf course is that it is the University's property, which gives it complete rights over its management. That brings us to an important question: Who is the University? Is it just the Board of Regents and the University administration, or is it everyone connected to the University? If the latter is the case, UNM should proceed on the matter only after it gets a feel for the opinions on campus.

The University should start discussion by holding forums for students, faculty and staff. The forums would ensure that everyone's voice is heard. It should then poll the campus community before deciding on the future of the course.

While it is undesirable to bring blind environmentalism in the way of development, it is equally despicable to feed an important lung space to growing real estate expansion. The golf course has a legacy that needs to be kept. More importantly, spaces that break the fragmentation of communities should be preserved.

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