

Private lacrosse facility with two playing fields is being proposed north of Oviedo

By AMANDA RABINES
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Lake Highland players walking to midfield during a girls lacrosse game in 2019. (Stephen Dowell / Orlando Sentinel)

Business owner Joe Norsworthy has embraced the challenge of helping the sport of lacrosse grow in Central Florida.

Seminole County planners will begin discussions with Norsworthy and civil engineer Torben Abbott with Resilient Civil Design LLC this week to go over a proposed recreational lacrosse facility featuring an indoor practice area and storage center, as well as two gated playing fields located on land west of the Black Hammock Wilderness Area, near Oviedo.

“For my daughter to play at a national level we had to travel and for almost a year, and partially live in Maryland,” he said. Being around the sport for so long, also made him realize that other parents were struggling to find opportunities for casual recreational leagues, he adds.

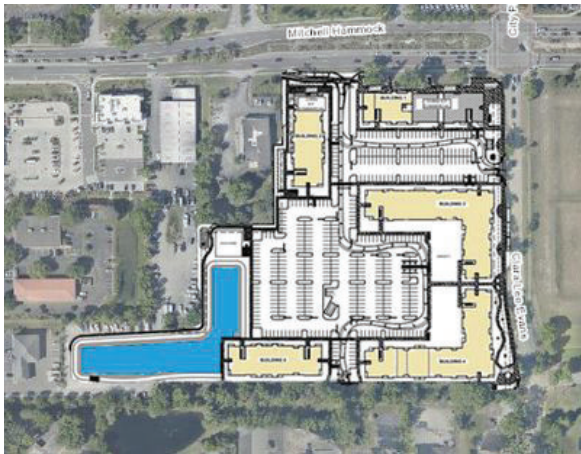
Today, Norsworthy helps run the charity Sol Blazers Lacrosse Inc., which is dedicated to advancing the sport of girls’ lacrosse through education and outreach. Its website says, it focuses on player development for grades K-8 in the form of clinics, academies and organized game play.

The development of the facility is something Norsworthy is doing with his own funds, he said. Its development will allow the charity to have a central location to practice.



The nearly 8-acre site is located west of the Black Hammock Wilderness Area, near Oviedo. (Seminole County Property Appraiser)

Currently a tree farm, the roughly 8-acre site on the northeast corner of Howard Avenue and Elm Street was purchased by a company led by Norsworthy about a year ago for \$175,000, records show. He told GrowthSpotter the facility is in line with a national push to create more opportunities for female athletes to practice lacrosse, which typically isn't as accessible as competing club sports like soccer and baseball. And after seeing his own daughter succeed in the sport, Norsworthy said he wanted to help families become interested and involved.



SEMINOLE COUNTY DEVELOPMENTS

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In high school his daughter, Jackie Norsworthy, played for Lake Highland Prep where she helped the team land record breaking stats and win the Florida High School Athletic Association girls lacrosse state championship in 2019. She currently plays lacrosse for the University of Florida as a freshmen, Joe Norsworthy said.

Before starting his own tourism and strategic planning consulting company in 2003, Norsworthy held a corporate job at Walt Disney World overseeing the marketing, finance and strategic development of its theme parks and resorts.

Highland prep coach Chris Robinson, who won multiple state championships with the Maryland program McDonogh also helps run the charity.

Joe Norsworthy told GrowthSpotter he hopes to serve the nearby Oviedo community by providing a space to play sports that is aesthetically pleasing, and a location that can help bring economic growth to some of the city's small businesses.

“Right now there’s really little out there,” he said. “I’m always trying to think ahead, and as the community grows and evolves I’d like to hope we can also become part of that.”

South of the proposed facility, a number of new developments are proposed or underway in the City of Oviedo.

Developer Marc Hagle is in the midst of converting the shuttered Macy's store at the Oviedo Mall into a mixed-use community with two apartment complexes and a 124-room hotel.

Other developments include Brand Properties' proposed mixed-use project on the southwest corner of Clara Lee Evans Way and East Mitchell Hammock Road. The developer is seeking to build an apartment community with up to 297 multifamily units and 12,000 square feet of ground-floor retail.

LeCesse Development Corporation is also planning a mixed-use development that will consist of a 269-unit apartment complex and two commercial out-parcels at 3200 State Road 426.



Amanda Rabines



Amanda covers development and real estate in Orange County. She was born and raised in Miami, where her mother, like thousands of other Cubans, arrived in 1980 during the Mariel Boatlift. It's because of her that Amanda believes in hard work and the power of Cuban coffee. She is a graduate of Florida International University.
