

## Soccer 'Field of Dreams' Nearly Under Way

by Jim Stickford

The Rochester Soccer Club's dream of having its own fields came a step closer to reality when the club announced that the seeding of property on Dutton, near Bald Mountain, will begin this fall.

Steve Cohen, director of Community Development in Auburn Hills said the club's original goal was to seed the property last spring. But because the fields would receive heavy use, the grass requires time to really take root and there was a fear that the heavy rains of the spring and summer would have washed the seeds away.

"The club purchased the land around Dutton Road, between Bald Mountain and Squirrel Roads, in January of 2012," Cohen said. "They were eventually given permission to build a complex containing several soccer fields."

But because of weather concerns, as well other issues, the planting of the fields won't start until this fall, Cohen said.

Simon Dover, club president, said the club purchased the property from Kensington Community Church in Troy.

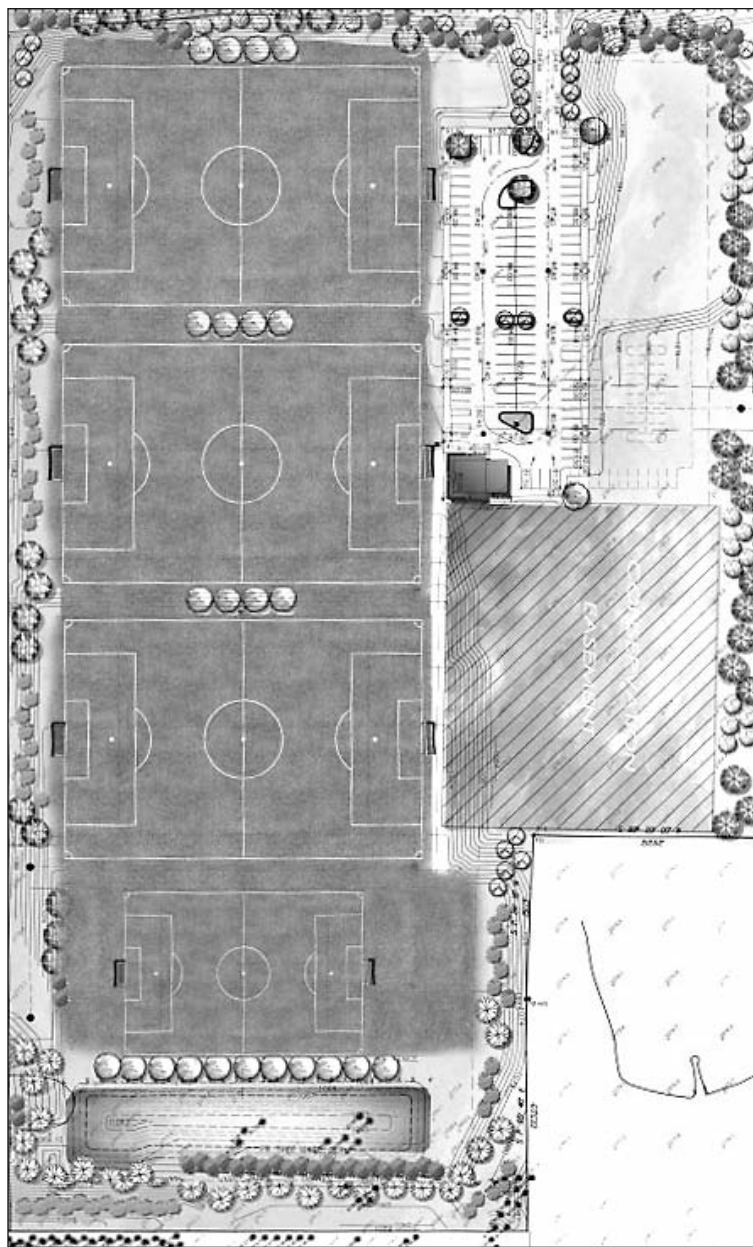
"We got the land about two years ago with the idea that it could be developed at a later date," Dover said. "Even though we're called the Rochester Soccer Club, we draw our members from all around Northern Oakland County."

"The club has about 3,000 members playing in all of levels of soccer in the state – travel, developmental and recreational. Our mission is have a place to play for everyone. Our members range from four years old to adults."

Given the size and number of teams in the club, finding places to practice and play has become something of a chore, Dover said.

"Soccer is popular in Oakland County," Dover said. "A lot of the people get their start as kids and there are a lot of foreign-born people in the county whose sport is soccer. Also, lacrosse is growing in popularity and it's helping make practice space a premium in Oakland County."

The obvious solution is to create a facility for the club and its members. When the land owned by Kensington Church became available, the club's board of directors made the decision to pur-



Artist's rendering of Rochester Soccer Club's proposed complex.

chase it. Once the club obtained the land, it became a matter of lining everything up to begin construction.

Dover said the total amount of property the club owns at that location is 28 acres. The current plan calls for developing only 16 of those acres. They have options for the future.

"Once the project is completed, the total cost will be in the millions," Dover said. "Some of that money will come from our savings. The club has been getting ready for a project like this for some time, but some of the money will

come from loans as well."

Dover said once the complex is complete, it will be used by members for playing and practice.

"This will be our own complex," Dover said. "I can imagine the possibility of maybe someday renting out space for others to use, but we believe the club will use all the available space."

Once the grass is planted, Dover said it should take 18 to 24 months before the fields will be ready to be played on. He said right now there are no plans for any sort of office, but there will be a small building to hold equipment.

## AH Chamber Members Ask, and Receive, More Sessions Helping Businesswomen

by Jim Stickford

The Auburn Hills Chamber of Commerce's "Women Tell All (Almost)" gathering is set for Wednesday, Sept. 18, at the Great Oaks Country Club.

Denise Asker, the chamber's executive director, said those who attend will hear from three guest speakers in the medical, legal and banking professions about how they advanced within their specific fields and managed their personal lives. The event is sponsored by Genisys Credit Union.

The panelists are Judge Lisa Asadoorian, 52nd District Court Division 3, serving within Oakland County; Michelle Hornberger, chief strategy officer of Crittenton Hospital Medical Center in Rochester; and Sandra Pierce, vice chairman of FirstMerit Corporation and president and CEO of FirstMerit Michigan.

"Women Tell All (Almost)" is our idea at the chamber," Asker said. "We formed a women's alliance last year after we held an event for women that featured Anne Doyle, the Auburn Hills city council member and author. It sold out and the feedback we received from our members was that they loved the event and wanted more events like that."

So the chamber created the women's alliance and the goal is to present three or four women's events annually. "Women Tell All (Almost)" is just the latest, Asker said.

"This is important because Oakland County is so strong in automotive and IT businesses," she said. "These industries have a strong male presence and women are a minority, but they are still a vital and growing presence within these industries. We just want to create a way that women can connect and network."

Asker said that these events aren't just for women. Men have been invited to attend "Women Tell All (Almost)," and she said that the chamber wants to bring the genders together.

"One thing these events do is offer a different perspective," Asker said. "Women have to navigate the complexities of business and their home lives and it isn't easy. Our speakers will talk about how they've done that."

"Sandra Pierce got her start in banking as a teller. Now she's CEO. Judge Asadoorian recently adopted a child from overseas, so she's now a single mother.

"The women's event will be more of a personal conversation between the speakers and the audience and there will be more chances for interaction between the two sides."

The event starts at 11:30 a.m. and the cost is \$35 for chamber members, \$40 for non-members.

To learn more about the event, call the chamber at 248-853-7862, or visit the web site at auburnhillschamber.com.

## Culver's Cruise Set for Sept. 22

Saying thanks is easy to do, at least for Joe Zimmer, owner of the Culver's restaurant in Auburn Hills.

Zimmer is hosting a special cruiser appreciation day on Sunday, Sept. 22, as a way of saying thanks for a summer of fun to the many cruisers who participate in the Culver's Tuesday evening cruises.

"Every Tuesday during the summer, we have a cruise here at the restaurant," Zimmer said. "There are about 4,000 people who belong to our cruising club and on any given Tuesday, about 10 percent show for a cruise."

Zimmer said this appreciation cruise will be the fifth one held by Culver's.

"I want to say that this appreciation day isn't just for our cruisers," Zimmer said. "It's also for all our regular customers, or anyone who wants to have some fun on a Sunday afternoon."

Live music will be performed by the band, The Viceroy, who specialize in 1950s and 1960s music. Singer Tom Mazzaro will also perform. The cruise starts at 1 p.m. and goes until 6 p.m.

A special chicken barbecue buffet will be offered, as well as fun events for children.

"We really want this to be an event where the whole family can enjoy themselves," Zimmer said. "I urge everyone who's enjoyed one of our cruises this summer to come out."

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