



THE ISLAND PACKET

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It's cooler by the water

New lakefront community, Hampton Lake, offers numerous amenities

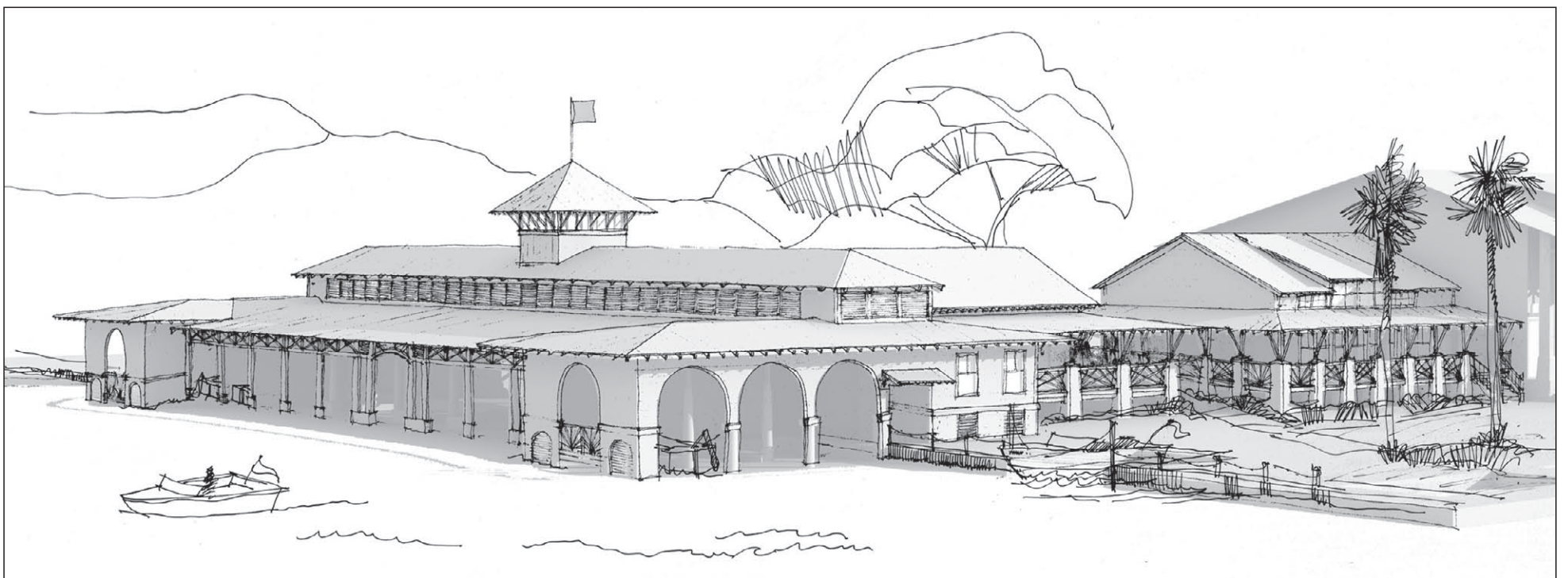


Photo Special to The Island Packet

The boathouse at Hampton Lake will have several boats which belong to the community, for use by residents. Amenities at Hampton Lake will include a giant pool, sandy beach, informal clubhouse, fitness center, dog park, trails, playground, tennis and basketball courts, and a wilderness camp area.

BY CAROL WEIR
The Island Packet

Women want to live on the water. This marketing discovery, and others that showed that women make most of the buying decisions in households, caused the developers of a new Bluffton community Hampton Lake to scrap plans for two golf courses and replace them with a 165-acre lake.

Hampton Lake developer John Reed, in conjunction with Bill Lattimore and Gary Sandor, realized that moving westward from Hilton Head Island over the last ten years, private golf communities have become progressively bigger and better, and for right now, the golf market in the Lowcountry is saturated. In the future, "there will be more golf and we will do more," Sandor said, but now was the time to do something different.

For the people who created Berkeley Hall, Belfair, Colleton River and Hampton Hall, not having waterfront property – the site is in the middle of the Buckwalter PUD – wasn't an obstacle to creating the Lowcountry's first private freshwater lake community. They hired engineering firm Thomas & Hutton of Savannah, and Malphrus Construction. Ground clearing has started at the site, and digging for the lake will start soon, Lattimore said.

The lake will be 15 feet deep at its deepest point, with an average depth of eight feet, the developers said. In addition to being a scenic amenity, it will serve as an important part of the area's stormwater

management system. Rainwater runoff from neighboring communities will move through the lake before discharging towards the May River. The developers say moving water will help keep algae growth down, but the lake won't be swimmable.

About half of the 900 lots in Hampton Lake will be on the lake or have a water view. The waterfront homes are permitted for boat slips, so "no docks will be sticking out into the lake," said Lattimore, president of Hampton Lake LLC.

Kayaks, canoes and motorized boats up to 22 feet will be allowed on the lake, but no personal watercraft, Lattimore said. The whole lake will be a no-wake zone, and gas powered boats will have four cycle engines, with 25 h.p. or less. Several boats will be kept at the community boat house for use by residents.

Hampton Lake will have first-class amenities including a boathouse and community boat ramp, a huge pool, sandy beach, nature center, tennis courts, boat storage, trails and an informal clubhouse with an outdoor pavilion, the developer said.

"We're thinking about making a rule that says, 'No ties allowed,'" Lattimore said. "Also, you can get everywhere in this community by boat."

The community will also have a state-of-the-art fitness center – designed to appeal to women as well as men – a full service spa, a playground, a wilderness camping area and a dog park. Wood + Partners of Hilton Head Island is doing the land planning for the community, which includes

340 acres of wetlands.

So far, the response from the market has proved the developers are on the right track. Initially, the company hoped to sell 100 homesites for custom homes in fall 2005, but demand was so strong the company had 249 paid reservations and 51 homesites left as of Dec. 21. Homesites averaging .3 acre range from \$160,000 for a wooded view lot to \$390,000 for lakefront. About 150 homesites will be released in Spring 2006, the developers said.

Seven local custom builders – Sherdon & Rowe, H2 Builders, Model Homes of Hilton Head, Tom Peoples Builder, Cornerstone Homes, Harden Tuten Custom Homes, and Thad Reardon – and at least two national and regional home builders will build the homes in Hampton Lake. The developers haven't announced the production home builders yet.

Construction of model homes will begin in Spring 2006, and construction of the custom homes will begin next fall. The first residents are expected to move in to Hampton Lake in summer 2007, Lattimore said.

Homes in the community will cost about \$350,000 - \$800,000 (including the homesite), which is one of the hottest segments of the real estate market right

now, the developers said. The Lifestyle homes, which are 2,000 square feet and up, will cost \$550,000-\$800,000, and Coach homes will be 2,000-2,550 square feet for \$450,000-\$600,000.

One hundred townhomes – which will be 1,888 to 2,400 square feet and cost \$375,000-\$475,000 and 120 condominiums are also planned. The condominiums will be 1,600-2,000 square feet and cost \$300,000 to \$375,000. None of these homes are for sale yet.

Property owners fees in Hampton Lake will initially be no more than \$3,500 per year. There are no time limits for owners of lots to begin construction, so buyers in the community are expected to be "a broad spectrum" of families, retirees, near-retirees and investors, Sandor said. Nearly forty percent of the lots already under contract were purchased

by people who live or own property on Hilton Head Island, the developers said.

Negotiations are in the works for an agreement to allow residents of Hampton Lake to purchase a limited number of golf club memberships at nearby club courses, Sandor said.

Access to the gated community will be off U.S. 278 via a new road near Island West that's being constructed now. A second access point will be off a future stretch of Bluffton Parkway by Hampton Hall.

"You can get everywhere in this community by boat."
— Bill Lattimore