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PREMIUM REAL ESTATE INFORMATION
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Developing without devouring

Grandson aims to preserve the tree-filled paradise where Eddy Arnold found his legendary sound

By **Hollie Deese** Updated 10:54AM
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Shannon Pollard has wonderful childhood memories of time spent running around his grandfather's property. Located on Granny White Pike, the nearly 65 acres are thick with trees and provided the perfect place for a child to play and be free.

The land also was an inspiration for Pollard's grandfather, who just happened to be Eddy Arnold.

"My grandfather had a long history of buying large tracts of land, in Williamson County especially," Pollard says. "He would hold them for long periods of time and then sell them off. He did not really care what happened to them. But this property was special. They lived on it from when he bought it until he died in 2008."

Arnold purchased the land in 1950. Called Windy Ridge at the time, he scooped up the 107 acres before selling parts off, including what is now the Radnor Glen subdivision. The remaining land he kept and lived on, drawing inspiration for his music.

While hiking alone on the ridge of the farm, Pollard says, Arnold began singing a ballad in the traditional country style. He then softened his voice into a crooning style of his heroes, giants like Bing Crosby.

It was then he realized he had found his new voice, "singing at the top of his lungs and filling the valley," as he recounted in his autobiography.

"The Tennessee Plowboy" went on to sell more than 85 million records. His 37 charting singles include *Make the World Go Away*, *Bouquet of Roses*, *Cattle Call*, *The Last Word in Lonesome Is Me*, *Anytime*, *What's He Doing in My World?*, *I Want to Go With You*, *Somebody Like Me*, *Lonely Again* and *Turn the World Around*. He helped country music find a broader audience in the 1950s when he hosted shows on CBS, NBC and ABC.

Arnold, who died in 2008 at the age of 89, also was instrumental in the development of Brentwood, less than a mile south of Windy Ridge.

As the land was an inspiration to Arnold, Arnold was an inspiration to Pollard, now 38, to whom he entrusted the land and music legacy portion of his grandfather's estate.

"We were very close," he says. "He was very instrumental in guiding me. He took a real interest in me. Wayward young people sometimes need someone to grab a hold of them and put them in the right direction, and he was that person who did that for me."



For the past few years Arnold and his partner Steve Armistead have been working on developing the land into a sustainable-minded community, Vocè.

Armistead has a long history in Nashville real estate, serving as senior vice president of Crosland Tennessee and co-founding of Armistead Barkley, developers of the BMG/Sony building, The Gulch, 1101 McGavock Street facility and the Bohan Building.

"Steve and I starting our company has been great because we are friends and he has been a mentor to me, as well," Pollard says. "I'd say we are both fairly unconventional in a business that is really conventional."

When planning the development, Pollard says he was very focused on preserving the trees and heart that were such an inspiration to Arnold.

"I was walking around one day with my grandfather on the property," Pollard says. "We were standing there and he said when it was time for it to be developed, he wanted me to save as many of the trees and as much of the land as I could."

"I am environmentally conscious as well, and Steve's history has been to preserve buildings, not destroy them. And with the mandate given to me by my grandfather, the first thing we did was have tree surveys performed. We identified 460 trees and clusters to save on the property. So it all started with the trees."

That green theme continued with the rest of the planning, which has received approval from the planning commission and moves to a council hearing on June 5 for a first reading.

Homes will be built among the trees, preserving as much natural space as possible. Vanderbilt University has given them approval regarding their plan to mitigate light pollution to neighbor Dyer Observatory. The development also will be a walkable community with integrated sidewalks, trails and paths, and a variety of home designs using natural materials will be encouraged.

Land Innovations is handling land planning and design, Civil Site Design Group the engineering, and John Abernathy with DA|AD is consulting on architectural issues.

Getting the zoning approved wasn't easy since the plan was so different from the standard practice of bulldozing a tract of land and building homes next to one other.

"With the conventional plan, we are only required to have 15 percent green space, but that is not what we wanted to do," Pollard says. "It was only until recently that we considered drawing a conventional plan to show folks what it could look like if the scenario is forced upon us. There will be a development there no matter what, and what the planning commission saw very clearly that if something is going to go there, it needs to be the right thing."



Artist's rendering of rail-centered Hamilton Springs development.

Vocè is not the only current development with sustainability as its backbone. But the definition of "green" varies and means much more than choosing renewable resources and installing Energy Star appliances.

"You don't have to be off the grid and have a thatch roof to be greener," Metro Nashville Planning Department spokesman Craig Owensby says. "Greenness takes several forms. Sometimes a community that is built around being more walkable with less use of fossil fuel will not appear to be what some people consider to be green, but it is because it requires less use of fuel. Carbon footprint is a big issue for us."

The new Hamilton Springs development in Lebanon will create a traditional neighborhood "village" of residences and businesses with a Music City Star commuter train station at its center. The 221-acre Hamilton Springs community also will incorporate walking-distance access to offices and retailers from residences. It is the first Middle Tennessee development planned, designed and constructed to emphasize use of transportation modes other than cars. Ground broke on the project May 29.

Good intentions, of course, don't translate into success if consumers don't want to buy the product. And since large, single-family homes on large lots have fallen out of favor since the downturn in the housing market, developers have had to think smarter and more efficient.

"The first-time homebuyer has radically different ideas about what they are looking for nowadays as compared to 15 or 20 years ago," says Jay Everett, project manager for Lose and Associates.

"Even the baby boomer generation, which is what most of the housing stock was built for, their priorities are changing. A lot of them are empty nesters who realize they don't need a five-bedroom house anymore and they don't want to pay to clean it or maintain it or cut grass. They want a more active lifestyle.

"Their kids, the Millennial Generation, are looking for urban or urban-like situations. They want short commutes, opportunities for alternative modes of transportation, living greenways and the opportunity to live, work and shop together," Everett adds.

Pollard, who anticipates Vocè's first phase to begin construction in 2013, says he is excited to bring something new to Nashville, like his grandfather did with his new style of singing.

"When you have low-impact homes with small footprints, you minimize not only the impact for the neighborhood that is built, but also for the people around it," Pollard says. "This is an opportunity for Nashville to have something that is not offered, especially in that area of town."

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