

10/6/89 - Sunday

# Bird sanctuary needs \$615,000 to add to grant for land deal

By STEPHEN HEFFNER  
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

MIDDLETOWN — As bird lovers keep their fingers crossed, several touchy questions are emerging in the Norman Bird Sanctuary's proposed \$1.15 million purchase of large portions of the Grey Craig estate.

Among them are: How much money will the sanctuary ask from the town toward the purchase? Can the town contribute open space bond money authorized by voters in 1988 even though state matching

## MIDDLETOWN

money, promised at the time, is no longer available? How much ownership will the town hold in the property?

The sanctuary is hoping to strike a deal to buy easements and land on 35 acres of the former Van Beuren estate, which is now owned by a development group led by Robert Kempenaar. Kempenaar last Friday completed a deal selling 26 acres (of

the original 78) and the manor house to investor Charles Dana.

The sanctuary last week received a \$400,000 state grant toward the purchase, although the Governor's office mistakenly announced at first that the money had been granted to the town. Sanctuary officials, who still need another \$615,000, say they are planning to ask the town for a substantial contribution toward the purchase.

Councilman Peter Grimes, chair-  
Turn to GRANT, Page C-2

## Grant

Continued from Page C-1

man of the town's open space committee, said yesterday that the town had not yet received a formal request from the sanctuary for town money, but he acknowledged that a figure of \$400,000 was suggested during informal discussions.

The suggested source of the money, said Grimes and sanctuary officials, is \$1 million authorized by voters in a 1988 open space and recreation bond referendum. A potential problem is that, before the referendum, voters were told that any open space bond money they authorized would come with matching state funds — up to three state dollars to every one town dollar.

The state's pool of matching money has been used up, Grimes said, and if the town applies a portion of its bond money to Grey Craig, the support promised by the state in 1988 will not be available. The town's financial advisers have said the bond money can be used, said

Grimes, but he admitted that spending the money without matching funds was probably not what voters had in mind when they approved the referendum.

In the case of Grey Craig, he said, "The sanctuary would be putting up \$400,000 it got from the state, and another \$350,000 it's going to try to get from private sources, so if the town were to contribute \$400,000, we'd be getting better than a dollar-for-dollar match, which was the intention in the beginning."

Grimes also said that the town should share in the ownership of the land and easements. He suggested that "if the town puts up around a third of money, we'd need to have about two-thirds ownership in order to have a one-to-one match."

Grimes speculated that the town would turn over administration and maintenance of the property and easements to the sanctuary after the purchase.