

Minutes

Audio Tape No. 661

The City Council of the City of Leawood, Kansas, met for a Special Call Meeting in the Maple Room at City Hall, 4800 Town Center Drive, at 5:45 P.M., on Monday, April 17, 2006. Mayor Peggy Dunn presided.

Councilmembers present: Lou Rasmussen, Gary Bussing, Jim Rawlings, Scott Gullledge, Mike Gill, James E. Taylor, Sr., Gregory Peppes, and Debra Filla.

Councilmembers absent: None.

Staff present: Scott Lambers, City Administrator
Patty Bennett, City Attorney
Shannon Marcano, Assistant City Attorney
Chris Claxton, Parks & Recreation Director
Joe Johnson, Public Works Director
Deb Harper, City Clerk
Christy Wise, Deputy City Clerk

Others present: Shane Gardner, Orion Managing Officer
Pete Spratlin, Golf Course Superintendent
Dick Fuller, IRONHORSE Advisory Board Chair
John Campbell, IRONHORSE Advisory Board
Bob Reid, IRONHORSE Advisory Board
Chuck Sipple, IRONHORSE Advisory Board
Phil Gibbs, Continental Engineering
Dave Doherty, ISTRC
Bob Oppold, ISTRC

1. Opening Remarks

Mayor Dunn called the Work Session to order at 5:45 P.M. She announced that City Administrator Scott Lambers will be arriving late due to a prior meeting with Johnson County Manager Michael Press and other city managers/administrators regarding House Bill No. 2689. Introductions were made by those present.

Parks & Recreation Director Chris Claxton distributed minutes from the IRONHORSE Golf Course Committee meeting of April 11, 2006. She reviewed recommendations that were determined by the committee as:

1. Recommend USGA [United States Golf Association] greens for any reconstruction that might take place (for all 24 greens).
2. Select a design architect for Hole Nos. 5, 10, 13, and 14. These four holes were determined to still be located in the floodplain and may need to be redesigned.
3. Appoint an overall construction manager.
4. Accelerate the timeframe by 3-4 months, closing for the entire year of 2007.
5. Permit participation by Orion Management Solutions on construction management and inspection.

Ms. Claxton stated further discussion is needed regarding whether to close all golf course facilities for the entire year (golf shop, clubhouse, driving range, etc.). There is also a question as to how the creek bank realignment project along Hole No. 8 will fit in with the permitting process and overall construction. Continental Engineers are approximately two weeks out from submitting a mitigation plan to the Corps of Engineers.

2. Discuss IRONHORSE Golf Course Improvements

Councilmember Rasmussen stated the committee also recommended Continental Engineering as the overall construction manager. He asked fellow councilmembers to consider accepting all recommendations made by the IRONHORSE Advisory Board.

Mayor Dunn asked Golf Course Superintendent Pete Spratlin to explain how materials can be reused. Mr. Spratlin stated the sand could be recycled for various uses such as improving drainage by spreading under the sod, fill for the practice course, driving range improvements, and topdressing. Topdressing is a thin layer of sand spread over the entire golf course. Some of the sand is putrid and will require removal. Reusing the sand is also cost effective as it will not be necessary to hire contractors to haul the material away and will prevent additional wear and tear on the course.

Mr. Spratlin stated guarantees cannot be given for the new greens, only maintenance warranties for the construction. However, because of the extensive research levels performed regarding organic chemistry, installing USGA specification greens will provide a level of safety. A well-constructed, well-drained USGA green should last for 100 years.

Councilmember Bussing confirmed with Mr. Spratlin that materials from the creek bank project as well as green byproducts could also be reused to raise Hole Nos. 5, 10, 13, and 14 out of the floodplain.

Mr. Spratlin stated he is in the process of researching grass mixtures and does not have a definite recommendation at this time. All variations of A-1 and A-4 grass mixtures can be eliminated as they will not withstand the level of traffic at IRONHORSE. He discussed the advantages offered by other grass varieties. The genetically engineered Roundup Ready grass mixture will not be released by the time planting occurs. He explained the process of genetically engineering grass species for certain qualities. A-1 and A-4 grass mixtures have a heat tolerance of 94 degrees.

Councilmember Bussing addressed the channel change along Hole No. 8. In order to consider proceeding with this improvement, there must be a cost-sharing agreement between the City and affected property owners. Mr. Lambers is in the process of communicating with the residents. A decision needs to be made of whether the improvement will occur as it will affect mitigation plans. Phil Gibbs, civil engineer for Continental Engineers, stated the improvement is estimated at \$210,000. Two-thirds of the estimated mitigation costs of \$150,000 are related to the channel change.

Councilmembers Filla and Peppes arrived at 6:15 P.M.

Councilmember Rasmussen voiced concern with schedule delays the channel change may cause to overall improvements.

Mr. Gibbs confirmed for Mayor Dunn that the \$1.6 Million probable cost for the creek bank stabilization project does not include the Hole No. 8 channel change. In order to move the channel, mitigation will include additional ripples in the stream, additional plantings along the course, and additional habitats for flora and fauna.

Councilmember Rasmussen stressed the importance of coordinating the individual projects through an overall construction manager and of appointing Mr. Spratlin as "Clerk of the Works" to oversee the projects.

Councilmember Taylor asked if the cost estimates included fees for a construction manager. Mr. Gibbs stated there is a 12% contingency in the figures, however this could be taken up with construction costs. The cost to hire a construction manager is roughly \$100,000.

Councilmember Taylor suggested having multiple contractors with the construction manager having the authority to manage the overall project as well as close the project down if specifications are not being met. Orion should serve as back-up to the construction manager. Councilmember Rasmussen reinforced Councilmember Taylor's statement.

Councilmember Gill stated the condition of the greens will eventually deteriorate if nothing is done.

Alternatives were discussed for staffing the golf course during closure. Mr. Spratlin stated areas of the course will still need maintenance during closure and several in-house projects could be done during this timeframe.

City Administrator Scott Lambers arrived at 6:35 P.M.

Mr. Spratlin estimated \$70,000-\$75,000 will be saved in maintenance/material costs during closure. He listed other projects requiring course closure in order to accomplish such as bridge improvements, cart repair, concrete repair, and concrete additions.

Regarding the proposed January 1st closure date, Shane Gardner, Orion Managing Officer, informed a number of passes/memberships have been sold committing the golf course to remain open until February 28, 2007. As Ironwoods Lodge is booked solid on weekends for the next 1½ years, there is potential to book the clubhouse for 5-6 events per month. Leaving the clubhouse open would gain approximately \$50,000 of net revenue. Mr. Gardner stated keeping the driving range open will provide customers the chance to “keep in touch” with the course from an activities standpoint. Although the driving range will not produce a lot of revenue (\$15,000-\$20,000), it will cover the expenses. City-led instructional programs can also continue until it is time to spread the reused material over the range in September or October.

Discussion took place regarding the list of estimated project costs compiled by Mr. Gibbs.

Councilmember Bussing summarized circumstances surrounding the Hole No. 8 channel change. A few years ago creek bank and erosion problems were addressed with Pay-As-You-Go funding on a hole-by-hole basis. It was determined that cumulative erosion problems would eventually destroy the golf course. The IRONHORSE Advisory Board recommended doing the improvements as a whole rather than in a piecemeal fashion, hence the consolidated creek bank stabilization project. Residents wrongly perceived erosion problems on their property being caused by the golf course. However, Mr. Lambers offered a possible solution to the residents by way of cost-sharing a channel change along Hole No. 8. The property owners are refusing the offer at this time. The problem with the greens was identified during the planning process of the other projects.

Public Works Director Joe Johnson confirmed funding is set in place for both the SMAC and creek bank stabilization projects. The Hole No. 8 channel change is pivotal to participation from the property owners; however, it can be included as part of the stabilization project with funding approved through a change order to the contract with Continental Engineers.

Councilmember Rasmussen reminded the City’s improvements efforts could be affected by Johnson County Wastewater District whose facilities on the golf course also have erosion problems. Councilmember Bussing stated there is a completely exposed manhole on Hole No. 18.

Mr. Gibbs informed there could be a 30% inflation rise by the time of construction in 2007. There are 16 holes encompassed in the creek bank stabilization project. Mr. Gibbs stressed the importance of timing the projects in a manner to alleviate unnecessary wear and tear caused by equipment.

Mr. Gibbs stated mitigation figures must be obtained from the Corps of Engineers before Mr. Lambers can continue negotiations with property owners regarding Hole No. 8 improvements.

Councilmember Filla questioned whether maintaining the golf course is an uphill battle. She suggesting Staff prepare a financial statement to look at the alternative of not investing the \$3.3 Million into the course. She estimated only 600 people utilized the facility and stated it is an activity of declining interest. Councilmember Filla stated she could not justify spending this amount of taxpayers' dollars when there are mill levies planned for the future.

Councilmember Bussing reminded the intent of the work session is not to discuss whether to do the improvements as it was scheduled predicated on the assumption of the work having to be done. He expressed support for repairing the greens as information given by Staff has provided him comfort that money is being spent wisely. Questions related to project management are now of concern.

Councilmember Peppes stated interest in the procedure of fitting the projects together. He voiced issues with the Hole No. 8 channel change, questioning the effectiveness of the realignment and stating he did not like the change of play it will produce or the fact the City is funding beneficial improvements to property owners who do not want to put forth efforts of their own.

Councilmember Rasmussen announced his intent to make a motion during the following Governing Body meeting to approve the recommendations of the IRONHORSE Advisory Board.

Discussion took place regarding the closure timeframe. As passes have been sold through February, Mr. Lambers listed the options of either shutting the course down on March 1st or closing on January 1st and providing a reasonable reimbursement to members for the two months of play. He recommended providing reimbursements. Mr. Lambers advised in addition to having Orion provide oversight for green reconstruction, there will also need to be a short-term contract to provide minimal maintenance for the golf course during construction. With a target opening of May 2008, contract management proposals of a 4-5 year period should be sought in 2007.

Councilmember Gullledge voiced support for the improvements.

Dick Fuller, IRONHORSE Advisory Board Chair, stated closure dates should be relative to the growth season. Dave Doherty, owner of ISTRC [International Sports Turf Research Center], advised it is optimal to give the grass as much time as possible to establish growth before beginning play. There will be long lasting problems if a course is opened too early after seeding. He recommended three seasons of growth (two springs and one fall). Mr. Doherty stated it would be ideal to plant the grass in middle-late March or April. He also stressed the importance of hiring only one contractor in order to coordinate equipment truck pathways.

Bob Oppold of ISTRC stated summer seeding should be avoided. He concurred with a mid-late Spring planting. Mr. Oppold informed at this time, sand meeting USGA specifications is not being produced in this area. He suggested stockpiling sand ahead of the project date.

Councilmember Bussing stated based upon ISTRC's recommendations, it would be beneficial to close the course on January 1st. Mr. Lambers agreed with this comment.

Discussion took place regarding mobilizing equipment and stockpiling sand in preparation to beginning construction.

Councilmember Rasmussen repeated the motion he intends to make at the following Governing Body meeting regarding accepting the recommendations of the IRONHORSE Advisory Board.

Councilmember Gill suggested stipulating approval rights to the City and Mr. Spratlin over the design architect and contractor who will perform work on the greens.

Mr. Gardner clarified for Mayor Dunn the design architect will reconstruct four greens in order to move them out of the floodplain. They will be raised by three feet.

There being no further business, Mayor Dunn adjourned the Work Session at 7:25 P.M.

Christy Wise, Recording Deputy City Clerk