

IRONHORSE
Golf Club



GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE
Minutes of April 27, 2006
5:30 – Leawood City Hall

Members in attendance were Dick Fuller (Chair), Bob Reid, Councilman Lou Rasmussen, Chuck Sipple, John Campbell, Councilman Gary Bussing, Mike O’Connell and Bobby Davidson. Shane Gardner, Matt Roberts, and Pete Spratlin of Orion and Parks and Recreation Director, Chris Claxton and Sara Dinkel were also in attendance.

Dick Fuller called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. Mike O’Connell moved to approve the minutes of the March 16th meeting. The group noted some changes to the minutes and then John Campbell seconded the motion for approval subject to the requested changes. Minutes were approved unanimously based on said changes.

I. General Operations Reports

Shane reported that at this time they have sold 96 Triple Crown memberships versus 99 at this time in 2005. Conductor club memberships are at 38 versus 35 last year. Junior triple crown membership are at 5 to date versus 25 this time last year but Shane said sign-ups will come later (the first week in May). Ten play cards are at 54 versus 80 at this time last year; tourney cards are at 54 versus 100; and March saw 2,500 rounds of golf played versus 1,400 last year. Shane said several high schools are practicing out at the course. Dick asked how many schools use the course and Shane said Blue Valley, Blue Valley Northwest, Blue Valley North, Olathe East, and Johnson County Community College. Dick asked if they pay a fee to play and Shane went on to tell the group that although the high schools use the course for practice they only pay a nominal fee for its use.

Chuck asked about event bookings and Shane said he has about 4,000 rounds scheduled for events and that number isn’t much different than last years.

Dick then asked if they were fielding lots of questions concerning the closing and should we start considering discounting the different memberships? Shane said they were considering these things and were still working on them.

Pete said that he was fielding lots of questions pertaining to the architectural aspect of the reconstruction.

Chris then passed out a Statement of Revenue and Expenses and a copy of a print screen from the Cresent system. Shane added that in the future he would show the rounds that people are playing and what they are paying (paid vs. non-paid rounds).

Lou asked Shane if we were still losing discounts because of the change in procedure when processing a bill and Shane and Chris explained that these discounts are set off by the savings realized in tax breaks – it’s a wash.

Dick said that although it is a wash weren't there other benefits to be recognized in paying the bills within the discount period?

Shane went on to explain the bill paying process and Chris said it usually takes two weeks to get a bill paid, but reminded the group that finance is always willing to cut a manual check if necessary. Chuck asked how many times do we want to take a discount but aren't able to and Shane said probably three or four times a week.

II. Course Maintenance/Project Report

Pete reported that the course is doing well and we just received three inches of rain with no flooding. He said the staff is busy mowing the grass.

Dick asked about the rough areas that were seeded and Pete reported that the seeding took real well.

Chuck suggested that Orion put into place a suggestion box to encourage patrons to give feedback concerning the course and the impending reconstruction project. If one is selected, we could reward them with a couple of free rounds of golf.

John Campbell pointed out that someone could suggest something we already had planned to do and we would be rewarding them unnecessarily.

Pete reported that there is a long list of in-house projects to complete during the closing of the course.

III. Discuss Course Closure Plans During 2007 Construction (Recommendation of City Administrator)

Dick Fuller noted that City's contract with Orion expires December 31, 2006. Dick then referred to an email from last November concerning the direction in changing the contract with Orion. Dick also said he understood that the contract with Orion was to be changed to read it expires December 31, 2008 but at that time no decision had been made on a course closing date.

Chris said what Scott will present to the council is that the course close for a year. Which facilities will close had yet to be determined and needs further discussion. Chris went on to say that what Scott will make a recommendation to the Council for their discussion and action.

Pete said closing for a year will give him two full growing seasons before the course reopens, which will provide less risk for the new grass coming in.

The group then discussed what Orion's roll would possibly be during the year of construction. The group thought an RFP for 2008 management should outline as to whether or not the pro shop would remain open, if Ironhorse would still provide food and beverage service, and whether the course maintenance would fall back to the City under a new contract.

Chris added that the closing of Ironhorse brings in a lot of variables. She said that Continental Engineering is serving as the overall construction manager and the general contractor will serve as the main contractor.

Dick said he feels continuity is key during this reconstruction project including the contract between the City and Orion to monitor the construction. He also stressed that he doesn't know where Orion stands in that and that we want this work done right.

Mike asked the group "whose idea was it to close January 1?" Dick said that ISTRC suggested three growing seasons for the grass would be best, or to at least have a spring to fall growing season. Mike also asked "Why close the clubhouse and practice facility?" Dick said at this time we anticipate the clubhouse and practice course will stay open.

Gary said closing for a year was never discussed at the work session or the Council meeting.

Lou then explained that he thought Orion should prepare for us a proposal for this two year time frame and outline exactly what they plan to do during this time.

Mike then asked the group if the City Administrator wants to bring the course management in-house? Chris said "no", this has not been discussed.

Dick said that the Orion proposal could aid us in making an educated recommendation.

Pete and Dick explained that the year for closing would run from January 1, 2007 to January 1, 2008 or maybe even March or April of 2008.

Chuck asked when does that closing date have to be in hand? And Pete said by August or September we will need to set that date.

Chuck also asked when's the best time to plant the grass seed? And would 60 days be enough to put in 20 greens?

Dick said we are looking at 6 months to get all the contracts in place.

Gary expressed his concern with this group being involved with the details of construction, when it should be handled by the contractor. Dick said we should be concerned with other things moving forward from this point.

Lou then brought up the subject of Orion's contract and said he thought a 2-year contract with Orion would provide continuity throughout the project and this is what he recalled the City Administrator was directed to do-negotiate a new two year agreement with Orion. Dick said that a 2-year contract with Orion was not the message he got from the email.

Mike said he thought the group should recommend that we have a course superintendent in place the day construction starts.

Chris said that Orion should put together specifically what it is going to cost to the City to have Orion involved at various levels during this time.

Lou said the following is what this committee needs to focus on:

- The City Council directs the City Administrator to work out an agreement for the “clerk of the works” with the general contractor.
- What operations at the golf course are we going to maintain during the construction?
- Of all these in-house projects, which ones are going to be handled by Orion?
- And Orion needs to spell out specifically the economics associated with these operations and in-house projects.
- And finally what is the proposed marketing effort for gearing back up the golf course for reopening in 2008.

Lou added that we need to see this from Orion in the form of an Operations Plan for 2007 and 2008 and when might we expect to see this from Orion. Shane said he could put something together and send it out before the next meeting.

Chris then asked the group if there was something in particular they wanted to see in this plan that they needed to say so. It is important to be specific so Orion can get everything into their presentation.

Gary added that he would also like to see Orion’s expertise reflected in the plan.

Lou asked if it feasible for Orion to come back with just an operations for 2007 and 2008 excluding the construction in the next 30 days. Mike asked will it also include marketing.

Gary also suggested that Continental Engineers make a new set of boards and display them out at the clubhouse and Dick added that this might also excite the membership.

IV. Miscellaneous

Council appointments were made by Mayor Dunn and Tom Davidson and Karl Howe will be joining the golf committee.

Chris also presented the group with a copy of the letter she wrote to a patron, Marilyn Lewis, in response to some concerns she had with the Women’s league. Mayor Dunn had asked that all committee members receive a copy of the correspondence.

John Campbell moved to adjourn the meeting and Chuck Sipple seconded the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director
Parks and Recreation