

IRONHORSE
Golf Club



GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE
Minutes of June 22, 2006
5:30 – Leawood City Hall

Members in attendance were Dick Fuller (Chair), Bob Reid, Councilman Lou Rasmussen, Chuck Sipple, John Campbell, Mike O’Connell, Carl Howell, Tom Davidson 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 5:55 p.m. John Campbell moved to approve the minutes of the May 17th meeting and Carl Howell seconded the motion. Minutes were approved unanimously based on noted changes.

I. General Operations Reports

Shane reported that they are experiencing a slow down in business because of the upcoming 4th of July week and area events. He reported that he expects membership type sales to start to drop because of the anticipated closing. At the end of June we will go into a lull for tournament events until September. So far, the 4800 event rounds projected in holding. Revenues from 05 to 06 are right on – within \$15,000 to \$18,000 of last year.

Merchandise is down but that’s an area to be down in if there is going to be one since you only make thirty-five cents on every dollar. He is encouraging patrons to use up their 10 play cards if they are buying one. Shane then went on to say that when he compares this year’s numbers they are in keeping with what they should be.

Chuck asked Shane “When will you put up a sign announcing the course closing?” Shane said he is fielding questions the best he can without specific information concerning the closure or a formal announcement. John Campbell said that he thought that was the right way to handle these questions until more is known.

Lou asked if all merchandise in the golf shop is bar coded and Shane said that “yes, it is”.

Lou said the cost margin title/column in the report seems to be incorrect. Lou said he would check with Finance to see if he can get a clarification on this.

II. Course Maintenance/Project Report

Pete reported that at this time there are no major projects in the works. He said he is spending most of his time preparing for next year. He also reported that the greens temperatures are registering at 80 degrees and they are full of water and he has been unable to cool them down. He said the grass could start to die at 92 degrees. Pete went on to say that when it rains, like it did today, the greens get water but the water already present doesn’t get flushed out – so you are not pushing out the hot water and replacing it with cool water. Dick

asked if aeration would help cool things down? Pete said it doesn't help much but we are putting down lots of watering agents on the greens right now.

Chuck asked about erosion on #5 and Pete said that at this time they are not doing anything about it. It is with the projects for 2007.

Dick said he played a couple of days ago and the course looks as nice as ever.

Bobby asked how the Ironhorse Business Center (i.e. Ironhorse Center) is doing and Pete said they are removing brush material and trimming so they can improve their view of the golf course. Lou asked if we have taken pictures documenting the site before the work and Pete said he would take some.

Bobby asked about the retaining wall on the site and Tom Davidson asked who would maintain the area? Pete said the wall will actually be on their property. Chuck added that we should get it in writing about who will maintain this area. Chris said stipulations were also including from the planning commission requiring them to maintain the walls over time. Pete also added that the wall starts 25' off their property. Chuck asked if this area will be involved during the course reconstruction and Pete said "No."

III. Discussion on the Golf Course Closure and Operations for 2007

Dick asked if there will be a mill levy increase for the reconstruction? Lou said the consensus is that the City will pay for it. Lou went on to say that the golf course was set up as an enterprise fund.

Lou said the consensus was to put the golf course in as part of the general fund accounting system and he wanted the group to understand that it wasn't a unanimous decision. Lou also added that there was talk of doing away with the golf course committee. Chuck asked what was the rationale in eliminating the committee?

Chris said there could possibly be a second Council work session in July and there could be more discussion about the course closure and Orion's agreement at that time. But Chris added that she wasn't clear that there would be another work session. Lou added that he wasn't aware of another work session but it could possibly be around the July 17, at the earliest.

Tom asked if the enterprise fund and the golf committee are tied together.

Chuck asked the group "Do you think there is talk of eliminating the committee because they think we handled the greens issue poorly?" Chris and Lou both replied "No."

John added that maybe they think because the course is shutting down there is no need for a golf committee. John also said that he is not in favor of shutting down the entire course.

Dick added that maybe there isn't a need for a golf committee anymore, at least one that meets every month. Perhaps only meet as needed.

Chris said there are two occurrences that need to happen in this order: 1) to get the potential realignment of #8 creek bank settled and 2) to what extent will the closure of the course be.

Matt added that what the group labels as being a “negotiation” is no longer a “negotiation”. Matt also said that it is clear to him that no one wants to negotiate with Orion and in turn this sends the message that no one wants Orion to be maintained. Matt said his understanding of negotiating is talking and there is no talking going on right now and now we sit here and hear that the golf committee is going away.

Chuck asked the Orion group if there was a point on the calendar when Orion needs to know what is going to happen. Matt said at this time he is worried for his employees, who do not know the status of their employment for 2007.

Chuck said “isn’t it the committee’s job to provide input as to what is best for the citizens of Leawood and provide the city with a really nice golf course?”

Dick added that he feels that in the last year more than ever the golf committee is very necessary and that maybe if there isn’t construction involved they may not need a committee.

Bobby asked what is the Mayor’s position on all this?

Lou said the real value of this committee is “they do the work” or “pull the plow” gathering facts and making recommendations. Then when the matter goes to the Council the work is done. Lou said the way the committee handled the matter of the greens is a great example of a committee doing the hard work.

Shane then asked the group “How do we convey this message?”

Chuck asked “Does the council even know this message?”

John added “The Council is likely concerned with the bottom line.”

Bobby shared his understanding that the City is committed to the development of the area around a golf course and that people are buying housing lots on a golf course resulting in a great tax base. He said you could have a lot of really upset people as a result of a course in poor condition and the impact that would have on property taxes.

Pete also added that if there is a downturn in the quality of the course there could be a lot of unhappy people. Bobby added “We could be messing with people’s backyards and their property values.”

Lou said that the council has no concept as to the important function of this committee.

Mike also added the Council could be left to deal with possible lawsuits, based on bad decisions.

Chris said a work session would be the place to discuss these things and the earliest this could happen may be July 17 or the 24. Chris said she will talk to Scott to see if and when a work session might take place.

Tom the asked the group about the proposal faxed to Orion at 5:45 on Friday.

Lou said the proposal wasn’t even addressed to Orion it was addressed to the City Council.

Lou suggested that Orion respond to this fax through Chris and maybe that will help get things moving.

Shane also added that the longer this goes on the more distracting this is to the staff at the course because at some point we need to be honest with the employees.

Lou said the reasons for going with a management company are just as valid today as they were they day we started this course.

IV. Status of Construction Project

Chris reported that the permits should move forward at a normal pace for the SMAC and Creekbank projects. The State approval should come back pretty quickly and Continental Engineers has already done some work assuming everything moves forward on the permitting.

Pete said he gave Chris a draft of the Scope of Work for the architect aspect of raising the greens that were identified in the plan and Lou asked if Pete put in the Scope that they would have the power to shut the project down if needed.

V. Miscellaneous

Chris said the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday July 27.

John Campbell moved to adjourn the meeting and Carl Howell seconded the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director
Parks and Recreation