

IRONHORSE
Golf Club



GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE
Minutes of September 28, 2006
5:30 – Leawood City Hall

Members in attendance were Dick Fuller (Chair), Councilmember Lou Rasmussen, Chuck Sipple, Carl Howell, John Campbell, Bob Reid, Bobby Davidson and Mike O'Connell. Matt Roberts, Shane Gardner and Pete Spratlin of Orion Golf Management Group and Parks and Recreation Director, Chris Claxton and Sara Dinkel were also in attendance.

Dick Fuller called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Chuck Sipple moved to approve the minutes of the August 24, 2006 meeting and John Campbell seconded the motion. Chuck Sipple asked if it was possible to summarize the information in the minutes instead of a complete transcription of the minutes. The Minutes were approved unanimously based on noted comments.

I. Course Maintenance/Project Report

Pete reported that not too much is going on concerning maintenance because he is preparing to shut down for winter and will be doing the last fertilization of the season. He did explain that because of a few cool spells and some weed control measures, the zoysia has already started to turn. Dick asked, from a public relations standpoint, does Pete foresee this as a problem; will the customers think there is a lack in maintenance efforts because the course will be closing in January? Dick wanted the group to be aware of the sensitivity surrounding our customers due to the impending closing. Dick asked if the fairways were shutting down as quickly as the rest of the zoysia grass, and Pete said "yes." Because of this they will mow only a few more times this year. Pete said they are going to do a lot of winter weed control at this time because the course closing and then next fall we can start to re-seed the course.

Pete said he is still getting lots of compliments on how nice the course looks.

Lou asked Pete if the list has been finalized concerning what Pete and his crew will be responsible for during the shut down period and have they determined whether they will be cleaning out under Mission Road. Pete said the cleaning out of Mission Road may be associated with the creek project so he could not answer on that. Chris said that Joe said that yes, the cleaning out under Mission was included in the plans and should be in the project.

Dick asked if one of the capital items budgeted is behind #5. Pete said yes, #5 and the cleanout under Mission Road had been put back into the main project.

Dick asked is there going to be anything done to stabilize the area in front of the #4 tee? Pete said yes that is a major area being addressed. Pete said maybe it will result in a new cart path through there. Dick then asked if the scope of the work being done in this area changed since a year ago when the original plan was drawn up and Pete said "yes." Pete said that a year ago

they planned on doing \$9,500 of work to this site and that has expanded to almost \$42,000 of work.

Chuck asked if we had any plans for tree planting this fall. Pete said “No.” Chuck then asked about next fall when the contractor is done. Pete said absolutely. Pete said the contract requires that the contractor replace any tree removed that is over three inches in diameter. Included in the contract is anything over three inches that the contractor need to remove to work on the creek, has to be replaced. Pete said conservatively that equals about 250 trees and it’s to our discretion where the replacement trees go. Pete also said as part of the mitigation with the Corps we agreed to plant quite a few trees, which were also added to the contract but he didn’t have a number on those trees. Pete also said we will have input on what type of replacement trees and plans on using trees native to the area.

Chuck asked if these trees are going to be transplanted and Pete said no but new trees will be planted. They will trash the existing trees and replace them and Pete will determine where the new trees go. Dick asked how big will the replacement trees be and Pete said we are asking for three inch trees minimum.

II. General Operations Report

Shane reported that we are finishing up the month of September with tournaments; one this Friday. There is a steady schedule of events through the first 9 days of October and we finish with events October 18.

The following are compared to last year’s figures at this time:

- Memberships are down.
- Fees, carts and rounds-played are up
- Merchandise sales are down \$60,000
- Range fees are down by about \$3,000
- Food and beverage is up by approximated \$8,000
- Expenses are pretty even compared to last year
- Practice tee expenses are down
- Maintenance expenses are slightly over
- Food and beverage expenses and general and administrative expenses are down from last year

Tournament rounds will finish in the area of 4,300 to 4,000 and Shane gave to Chris the Triple Crown refund list which is estimated at \$43,000.

Shane told the group that at this time he is focusing on relocating Triple Crown golfers for 2007 in the hopes that they’ll return when the course reopens. At this time we are trying to relocate three leagues and will do our best to get them back in 2008.

Lou asked if Shane had been able to straighten out the recording issue with the software. Shane said “yes”

Lou then asked if the issue of accommodating a customer, especially in the area of discounting, had been addressed. Dick said that it was his understanding two months ago that they could not take any discounts.

Lou said he was hoping they could accommodate a customer at the point of sale if they came in with a competitor's coupon and still determine the margin and how much profit we could make on the item.

Chris said she understood Scott's directive to be that we can only take discounts at the floor, not at the register/point of sale. Chris said she believed that those discounts were never identified or approved by the governing body or reflected in the business plan. Lou said we need to look for this to be presented in the next business plan because we need to provide the clubhouse this flexibility.

Shane said in the past they were able to make that decision by immediately determining the wholesale price and the margin and then deciding whether or not to sell the merchandise. This was also a discounting tool used to help sell events knowing they could recoup the difference in cart rentals, range fees, etc.

Shane said that the culture has changed at the course and the City wants it to be "black and white". Lou said the way he interprets this is if he comes up to the clubhouse cash register with a competitor's coupon can we go ahead and give the discount? Then could we provide receipts/coupons so we can track the discount? Shane said it is feasible but not something they are allowed to do at this time.

John asked Shane "So you can't negotiate when selling tournament?" Shane said "Not going forward, no". Chris said they are allowed some leeway with tournament pricing with the range that was identified in the approved fee schedule.

Matt said they won't let us discount items that have been purchased with City funds. We can have a table where everything is 40% off but the guy who walks in off the street wanting us to discount an item we can't accommodate him.

Chuck then asked if someone walks in with a competitor's advertisement wanting us to match that price we can't do that. Matt answered "yes, we can't do that."

Shane said going forward we can discount in advance a whole group of items, but he's not real sure if they will be able to continue those discounts, and they cannot discount a putter that has been sitting there for six months if we have customer walk in and asks us to.

Lou asked if this procedure was in writing or oral, right now. Chris said it is oral from Scott. Chris said she would encourage these recommendations to be included in any future business plan. This will allow for the governing body to be aware that these things can happen, either approve or disapprove of them, and still allow from an auditing stand point to account for those discounts.

Dick said that if you are in retail you have to have the flexibility to discount. Matt said they will have to be sure and address this in future business plans. Matt said when you are there everyday you know what merchandise is older and you want to try and move as much of the merchandise as you can; it's a shame to pass on that business.

Lou said we will have to make sure that future business plans has this flexibility built into them.

Dick then asked the group, since we are going into the winter months, do we have the ability to implement winter rates? Shane then passed out a sheet proposing what these rates should be. Shane said other courses are getting ready to go on winter rates November 1.

Lou asked “Can we get these in front of the council, because we will need council approval to lower the rates. Can we get it in on the October 16 agenda?”

John asked if we have done this in the past. Shane said we have done it, although unpublished. Shane added that we want to go through the proper procedures to get these rates lowered in the software system and provide us with proper tracking information.

Chuck asked what arrangements have been made to accommodate the core club members. Shane said he sent out an e-mail to the 350-400 core members asking what their top golf club choices were for 2007. He tallied the responses and made a list of the top six clubs and then contacted those clubs to tell them what was happening and to inquire what they might be able to offer our golfers. Three courses were public and three were private and Shane added that at this time he had heard back from 5 of the six courses. Shane said he would put his findings in a memo and share it with the core group so they can be aware of what options are available once Ironhorse is closed. The three private courses were Oakwood, Meadowbrook and Leawood South. The three public courses were Deer Creek, Sycamore Ridge and Prairie Highlands.

Chuck said he was surprised that Hillcrest didn't make the list. Shane said they probably didn't make the list because of they were currently undergoing a transition, they have a new owner.

III. Progress on the Construction Project

Lou said he had a meeting with the Mayor and Scott Lambers discussing the concerns surrounding the difficulty in getting the easements associated with the SMAC project on Hole #13. Lou added that, according to policy or resolution, when we go ahead with a SMAC project the people involved are to give us construction easements and permanent easements. Lou said the easement problem is a concern because when you go to the people, initially they are supportive, and then six months later you get all this opposition after the council has spent engineering time and money and legal time and money. Lou added that the acquisition of easements is 100% payable by Leawood residents, it is not shared. Lou said he explained to the Mayor and Scott that these easements should have already been acquired. Now some of these residents are threatening to take us to court over this easement matter. Lou then explained that the options discussed were to cancel the project or we can condemn everything and set up a special benefit district. If the condemnation choice is selected it won't stop the project. The city will set up a special district and bill it back to the people. Dick asked what people? And Lou said the people who wanted this project and now won't give us the easements.

Dick asked “how many homes are we talking about?” It was determined that there were 13 homes affected. Dick then asked “Of the 13, how many are objecting?” Chris answered “6-7”.

Dick then asked "if the City goes to condemnation will that be a resolution?"

Lou said the condemnation is the option the Mayor and Scott are recommending to go with.

Bobby said that he was not convinced that the Mayor and nor the City Administrator understand the scope of the construction project and what they are asking of the residents in the way of easements. They are asking the easements to extend from the street, between the houses, and back to the construction easement, and in some cases asking for easements all the way around as well as some permanent easements. Bobby said he disagrees with some of these requests and feels it is poor construction planning. He also questioned as to when these people were notified and told specifically how it was going to directly affect them. Bobby said one of his neighbors was just informed yesterday.

Mike asked "when do we think this will be resolved?" Lou said "that's up to the City Administrator." Chris said they are out talking to two of the residents tonight.

Mike asked if the SMAC project gets cancelled do we cancel our project. Lou said that's someone else's problem because if the project is cancelled it drops to the bottom of the priority list.

Dick said that someone in that area, and not necessarily Bobby, needs to get with these people and set something up with the City Administrator and Continental Engineering to get this resolved in the next couple of weeks.

Pete said they have two big routes for heavy equipment drawn up with three or four accesses between homes for small/light traffic and worker access.

Lou added that the Mayor and the City Administrator are very positive about this project continuing on as planned.

Dick asked Lou if the sewer district has signed off on the project. Pete said "yes". Dick asked if the Corps has signed off and was told yes. Chris said the state has given a verbal approval.

Pete told the group that the Council met and approved Todd Clark as the architect for the greens elevation project. Pete also added that he has already spent time with the architect including a full day together on the course. It was suggested that we invite Todd Clark to the October meeting.

Pete also told the group that Todd has all the plans of the course and there are no topographical drawings. We will need these topos so we can match this work to the contours of the golf course. Pete told the group that he got a quote of \$4,000 to develop the topos. The \$4,000 includes the rental of GPS equipment to gather the data and two weeks to complete the data gathering. Pete said his staff would probably do most of the data gathering with the rented GPS equipment. Pete also said that he could take these GPS findings and apply them to the development of irrigation systems.

Bobby Davidson made a motion recommending we establish winter rates, as recommended by Orion Management, for November and December. Mike O'Connell seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Another motion was made by Mike O'Connell to complete a GPS survey/mapping of the course for a cost not to exceed \$4,000. Bobby Davidson seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Lou asked if we have a scheduled RFP date. Both Chris and Pete replied "no."

Bobby asked if it is in the contract that we will be provided with electronic as-built drawings of the course and Pete said "yes."

Chuck asked about the status of the spray/fountain feature on the pond and Pete informed him that he thought that topic had been tabled.

IV. Course Management/Orion Agreement

Chris reported that we have a contract proposal to Orion Management and Orion has made some suggestions for a counter proposal. Where it lies now is with an executive session scheduled for Monday for final consideration.

Mike asked "can be notified of the findings from Monday's session?" Mike said he is not interested in the details of the negotiations just wants to be informed of the outcome.

Chris then told the group that Scott Lambers did want you to know that the January 1, 2007 close date is firm.

Dick asked how are we going to address this and Chris said through a press release and a letter to the core users. Chuck asked if it was just for the calendar year or does spill into 2008 and Chris said it goes into 2008. Scott has said May 23 or whenever Pete says the greens are good to go.

Dick asked about discounting in an effort to move the merchandise and Chris said Scott has some ideas as to how to move the merchandise once he knows what the inventory is on hand.

V. Fence Connections

Chris said that Patty wanted input/comments from the committee about fence connections, residents tying into the city fencing around the golf course. Patty wanted to know if the committee had a recommendation on whether a side lot fence could run through the buffered easement area and hooked into, or located adjacent to, the golf course fence. Chris went on to explain that the reason for this discussion is because a resident wants to tie into the existing fence. Pete said that there are nine houses in this area that have already tied into the fence; their fences are already welded to the property line fence. Pete added that all the houses from Ironhorse Estates, which is not necessarily the case with the other neighborhoods, have matched our existing ornamental wrought iron fence. Chris distributed to the group an excerpt from the fence stipulation guidelines. She explained that this concern stems from previous documentation specifying that fences are prohibited within 25 feet at the rear of the lots. Bobby added that he understood the intent of these guidelines, guidelines he wrote, were to keep residents from installing a variety of fencing types and maintain consistency. Bobby said it is a deed restriction and not an issue for this committee. Lou said that if a resident ties into our fence it should be compatible with the city's fence. The group agreed.

VI. Mesh Fencing for Errant Golf Balls

Pete reported he received two bids on the netting/fences that would be appropriate for a 25 foot fence and a 12 foot fence. The 12 foot fence would have black metal poles. KCPL got back with information concerning easements. Their easement extends 100 feet out in either direction and fencing cannot go any higher than 12 feet within the easement. They placed emphasis on the following two points: if they need to take the fencing down to access their lines, they will; and the fencing can't be higher than 12 feet.

Pete said the low bid on the 12 foot high and 500 feet long fence/netting was \$9,500 installed.

Bobby said he objects to the aesthetics of this netting and it being installed at the entrance to the golf course. Bobby also added that he walks by this range, sometimes twice a day, and has never had a ball come close to hitting him. He added that he seldom even sees a ball lying around in the vicinity. Pete said he expects a lot of complaints surrounding this netting.

Chris said Patty talked with Scott and they agree there is a liability associated with golf balls being hit in this direction.

Carl asked John about the Kansas Tort Immunity Act which supposedly protects a government agency such as the City from what is commonly known as "ordinary negligence."

John said he is a lot more familiar with the Missouri law. John said you are going to have an industry standard that will dictate in this situation what the burden is as far as to whether netting should be there. John also added that the course has been around for 10 years, as well as the driving range, and for ten years we've had no netting and no injuries.

Chris pointed out that cars have been hit with range balls and the owners of the cars are very adamant about the city paying for the damage. So far nothing has come of this.

Bobby asked "then are we responsible for the people and their houses next to the golf course too?" Carl said that's different because they knew prior to living in the house that the house was on a golf course.

Dick said that at the time they designed the range, they designed with this safety issue in mind.

Pete told the group that he did order four caution signs to post in the area.

Chris asked Scott if it was his intent to move forward with this fencing and he said if we do he wants to get into the 2008 budget.

Chris asked the group if they want to make a recommendation.

No motion was made to install 500 feet fencing along the sidewalk on Bell Drive by the driving range. The issue died for lack of a motion.

John Campbell made a motion to install 4 caution signs along the sidewalk on Bell Drive on existing light poles. Lou seconded the motion and the motion passed. Chuck proposed that Pete put up to 8 signs, a sign on each side of the light poles.

VII. Miscellaneous

Bobby Davidson moved to adjourn the meeting and Carl Howell seconded the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director
Parks and Recreation