

IRONHORSE
Golf Club



GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE

Minutes of March 27, 2008

5:30 P.M. – Main Conference Room, Leawood City Hall

Members in attendance were Dick Fuller (Chair), Leo Morton, Bob Reid, and council liaison Lou Rasmussen Shane Gardner of Orion Management Solutions, Inc., Pete Spratlin, and Tonia Morgan.

Dick Fuller called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m. Leo Morton moved to approve the minutes of the January 31, 2007 meeting and Bob Reid seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

There were four guests who are members of Ironhorse Golf Course: Tim Jackson, Richard Wills, Al Gorthy, Mark Griffith, and Steven Roth that also attended the meeting.

Committee Members Tom Davidson, Chuck Sipple, and Council Liaison Gary Bussing as well as Chris Claxton, Parks and Recreation Director were not present at the meeting.

I. Course Update

Pete Spratlin reported that things are going extremely well around the golf course. The air temperatures are finally above 50 degrees, and we've been thawed out for two and a half weeks that has allowed him to get projects moving.

He reported that the bunkers are half done, and they are being renovated in phases. One half of his crew is renovating and the other half is filling bunkers. The parking lot is full with approximately 900 tons of sand at the clubhouse, and another 500 tons will be added next week, which will be used for the first fills of the bunkers at the golf course.

Dick Fuller asked Pete to reiterate regarding the bunkers being half done. He asked if they were shelled out last fall, and are now being cleaned out. According to Pete they are cleaning them and doing the drainage that wasn't done before the winter. There are currently fifty eight bunkers and twenty four of them are done. The crew doing the renovations is literally two or three bunkers ahead of the people filling them.

Dick also asked how long the sand will need to settle. Pete reported that they are currently working on this and once it settles more will be added.

In regards to the filling, Dick asked how much settle time is needed before you can start playing. Pete reported that it depends, even during the season a bunker can be refilled. It also depends on the amount of rainfall we receive after they are filled.

Dick asked if any edge work was completed. Pete reported that they were all edged and cleaned and new drainage installed.

Leo Morton added that the problem they've had in the past with the bunkers is the sprinkler system. Pete reported the sprinklers will always hit the bunkers and this can't be changed. He can't keep water off the green to keep it out of the bunker. It will get in there at some point, but he tries to lesson it as much as possible.

Dick Fuller asked if the weather holds, when the bunkers will be complete. Pete reported that if the cold and rain stays away, it could possibly be complete in two weeks.

Pete also reported that the greens are really exceptional. If you haven't visited the golf course within the past two weeks, please do so. The greens have changed nearly fifty shades of green and are growing. There are some small areas on the greens that washed out during the winter and will have sod.

Dick asked how much green has to be sodded. Pete reported 1200 sq ft., and hopes to have the sod in next week.

Dick asked, making the assumption the sod is in within the next couple of weeks, how long it will take it to fill in. Pete reported that it should appear seamless by the end of May, and look like the original.

Dick also asked how the drains are working. Pete reported that they are working perfect. He also asked if we received any water out of the creek a few days ago when there was a substantial amount of rain. Leo Morton reported that he has been watching closely from his house, and it appears to be contained.

Shane reported that this is pretty significant because that was a really heavy rainfall and could have put the creek out of its banks.

Dick asked if the majority of the creeks problem comes from the west or the south, or a combination of both. And, if the renovations on 13 help create a situation where we didn't get as much rain or did it have any bearing at all.

Pete reported that he doesn't think the project on 13 had any bearings on it. The process of the creek renovation is so clean now; the majority of it has a hard surface compared to before when it was roots and clay, which is a huge impact.

Dick asked about erosion by any of the walls Pete reported that a survey was done yesterday with the contractor and everything is in place. A lot of the rock has filled in with silt, which it was supposed to do. In four to five years it will be covered in vegetation and you'll never see it.

Dick also asked what will be done on 13 between the rocks near the shelf area. Pete reported that they will plant grass there. He is trying to keep it as clean as he can without spending a lot of money. According to Dick, for those that haven't been there, you won't recognize it, there aren't any trees. You can only see houses.

Pete reported that the Corps is planting trees, actually more trees than he thought. There are sixteen trees going on the bank on golf course side.

Dick Fuller asked what type of trees will be planted. Pete reported that they will plant sycamore and green ash trees.

Lou Rasmussen reported that he believes the green ash trees are susceptible to a new disease coming in. Pete replied that he vaguely remembered hearing something about this, but will check with Brian to clarify.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if the final retention to the contractor has been paid. According to Pete it has not been paid and doesn't expect the final bill until April 20.

Pete also reported that he will begin cutting the greens Monday. They are beginning to move latterly and putting pressure on them to get thicker. The plant materials are also perfect and doing well.

Dick Fuller asked what height he is currently using while mowing. Pete reported that he is using point two, which is two tenths of an inch. Dick also asked what the final height will be, Pete reported that he typically mows at .12.

Dick Fuller asked if people will be able to tell the difference in the progression of the greens. According to Pete the back nine were built last and they are doing a little better than the front.

Committee guest Richard Wills asked if it will be more difficult to cut the greens with more undulation in them now.

Pete reported that maintenance wise, it will take a lot longer. But should not be very difficult, and there is a great deal more big grass. He also reported that the undulation shouldn't effect the equipment. He typically uses a triplex mower and makes sure it is mowed very well.

Pete also reported that he is going through the entire area with his assistant Eric. They are currently working on 42 projects and all are close to schedule.

Pete reported that everything should be wrapped up soon, weather permitting. He anticipates a completion date of Mid May, but keeps in mind, the majority of the work falls on the contractors and the spring weather.

He also reported that in regards to his "things to do" list, he believes we will meet the anticipated date. The biggest project is the bunkers and they will be done within a couple of weeks. The remaining projects are smaller ones.

Dick asked what has been done on the tees on 13. Pete reported that they are in the middle of raising the tee, and are still hauling dirt to the white tee. The blue tee down low has been capped and ready for sod that should arrive next week.

Dick Fuller asked if it was elevated any. Pete reported that it will be brought up two feet and the sod will be put down next week.

Pete reported that all the areas will not be perfect when we reopen, but will look good and be green and look like grass. Most of all, it will be playable and the areas should be very established and nice.

Dick Fuller asked if 11 is filled in, and seeded on the mounds. Pete reported that it is not at this time and this area will also need sod.

Dick reported that there are a lot of expectations when we open; the greens have to be perfect. This is rain season and the reality is if you plant seed there, it is a possibility to wash out.

Pete reported that we have to take into consideration that we are almost two full months behind than a normal winter. He also reported that he recently sprayed the round up on the fairways which are normally done the first week in February. There isn't any green in the zoysia; it is beginning to come out, which is amazing.

Dick's biggest question is 18 green. This course has to get opened up, but has to be right when it does. Everyone is anxious to get out there. He asked about cost to totally sod it. He believes this would be money well spent. There is the potential of losing \$10k a day in the month of May if it is not open or near opening.

Pete reported that money is not the issue. It is literally finding the sod.

Pete reported that the irrigation took a huge beating with this project. The pipe blew up underneath and washed it out again. He knows what it needs to make it look right when we open and has a good solution in progress.

Dick asked when the practice will range open. He had anticipated and hoped to be on the course in April for a number of reasons. 1. People are anxious to get back on the course. 2. It gives Orion a chance to continue. 3. This will get people back on the course.

Dick asked Pete, if he feels it is not ready to open, this is something the committee has no control over, but if the range could be open within the next couple of weeks, it certainly would be advantageous.

According to Dick, if it is May 1, he doesn't have a problem with this, but we need to set a date. He asked Pete for specific dates as to when it will be open. He would like to share these dates with the large number of people who are questioning him and he doesn't have a date to tell them. Everyone wants to know when it will be open. He also reported that this is why the guests came to the meeting. They want to know when it will re-open.

Councilman Rasmussen shared his concern for also wanting to know when it will re-open.

Pete reported that the artificial turf tee line had no effect on the range. They will build this up on the northwest corner and will not be a hold back. The price has doubled since it was budgeted. It was reconfigured and will now be done in two phases. It will be 10ft wide, the entire 310 ft of the tee line, and also 190x10 ft. This will not eat up any more zoysia. He will cut off twenty feet of the existing concrete pad which will allow you to put up mats during tournaments.

Dick understands Pete doesn't make this call. But asked the committees help with determining a recommendation date to get the range open.

Pete reported that when Orion gets to move in and manage it and be responsible for keeping people off the greens.

Shane reported that they will have to stake them to keep people off of them.

Pete reported that this is the only thing standing in the way.

Dick asked what the schedule is for the clubhouse to open and Orion to take possession.

Pete reported the carpet was put in today, and he is uncertain of any other holdups with the exception of putting the furniture back in.

Shane reported that if the carpet went in today, he doesn't see any reason why they can't be in there by the 7th or 8th of April.

Dick Fuller reported if everything goes well, by the middle of April we should be lobbying to have the range open.

Pete reported that he is trying to be careful of how much Dick is asking. Dick added that he understands Pete doesn't make this call; he only makes the calls regarding the physical plan.

Shane interjected and added that he feels what Pete is trying to say is as long as we can keep traffic off of the two practice greens, he doesn't see issues from his standpoint in opening the range, even if people have to hit off the mats or artificial mats.

Dick reported that he would like to have a date.

Richard Wills asked approximately when the practice greens will be open.

Pete reported that they are in really great shape and could push for early May.

Richard also asked if this will give regard to the chipping putting aspect.

Ironwoods Guest Steven Roth asked Shane how much money is made on a weekly basis when the range is open.

Shane reported that the range averages \$72k - \$80k yearly. This doesn't count Triple Crown money or any event money. This is people coming out and buying a basket of balls and going out to the range.

Leo Morton added that public relations play a big role.

Dick reported that we've already lost a lot of people who had to commit to other courses because we haven't been able to give the public a date and continue to move dates back.

Lou Rasmussen asked what is involved with establishing opening the practice range May 1. Why can't the practice facility open.

Lou asked Shane since he is in charge of staffing, what the problem with a May 1 is opening.

Shane reported that there isn't a problem. He'll have staff at the golf course if the range is open or not. They will field a lot of phone calls in the month of May and conduct tours.

Councilman Rasmussen requested a motion from the committee recommending opening the practice course May 1 to bring it to the council Monday night.

Leo Morton made a motion that the committee requests opening the driving range May 1. Bob Reid seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Dick shared with Pete that he as well as the committee understands that he is under a lot of physical and emotional pressure and he appreciates his work.

Leo asked if the par 3 area will be open the same time as the other practice greens. Pete reported that this is correct and may be the easiest out. Repairs were done on number 2 and it was piped and the creek was filled. This area also needs to be seeded which would allow the little children to play all the way across. Commercial Tractor is coming within the next week, and grass should be on this in a no time.

Dick Fuller asked if the drainage improved on P3 because it is always wet there. Pete reported that work was done last fall but it is so much water coming out of the hillside. To be honest another wet spot on the golf course was created and they are in the process of trying to repair it. Pete also reported that there is another huge wet spot behind 17, a green hit a spring and it is currently a river. He hopes to have this repaired soon.

Dick asked if 5 is handling all of the drainage. Pete reported that this is still an issue.

Leo reported that it appears 5 green is significantly larger than what it was. Pete reported that the collar space is quite bigger. They all have brand new collars and appear to look gigantic.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if we were looking at a potential lawsuit. Pete reported that he doesn't think so. He is concerned if the developer will get this sorted out soon. He thinks this should be brought to Patty Bennett's attention.

Pete does not feel there is a potential lawsuit. It is a member of the home association property that needs the repair. It is actually an overflow for the home association's lake running in front of 5. All of their storm drains are going to their lake. When it rains the lake catches a huge water shift. When the water swells up, it comes directly in front of number 5. It is actually 4-5 inches deep of water 30 ft wide.

Projects In Progress

Councilman Rasmussen reported that Pete was instructed at the last meeting to provide him with a schedule regarding fencing. Pete replied that the list is on his desk, but he'll provide this. Lou asked if anyone has alerted Chris that he'll ask the question in the budget process so she's aware of the fact that he wants to put money in the budget as we will have to phase it in.

Pete reported that we did phase in the rest of all the fencing at current and budgeted rates. Lou asked about the completion period for the entire fencing project. Pete reported that the last phase is 09/10 up to 2012 which will be the current budgeting period.

The next phase is in 2009. There is a \$50k which will basically cover two phases.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if Kathy Rogers has this in the budget. Pete reported that she has already given her approval and was in on the meeting.

Councilman Rasmussen asked Pete where he is in regards to staffing.

Pete reported that last season a stop gap solution was created to come up with contract laborers to fill in where he essentially couldn't get laborers to fill some positions. The contract was renewed this year so in the event a position becomes available and can't be filled, he can make a call and laborers will fill the positions and the money comes directly out of his payroll.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if he has interviewed for his current positions. According to Pete, the positions are filled. Pete reported that he is much better with staffing than he's been since 2006.

Councilman Rasmussen asked Pete where he is in terms of operating equipment such as mowers.

According to Pete, this is in progress. He tried to move some of the equipment around since a lot of it wasn't used in 2007. This allowed him to be able to spend money. A lot of pieces are scheduled to be replaced and are original to the golf course from 1999.

Councilman Rasmussen asked in terms of 2009, where are we. Pete reported that he is uncertain about 2009 as 2008 is not currently situated yet.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if the budget from 2008 is restraining him. Pete reported that he does not know what they will purchase this year or remove before he can settle on what is going to happen in 2009.

Pete reported that essentially it is best to simplify things and purchase everything that was scheduled in 2008. And, keep the schedule as it was. He tried to defer equipment that could be deferred initially and this complicated the issue. He was unable to ask Chris this question before she left this evening; he hopes she returns tomorrow to clarify this.

Councilman Rasmussen asked what shape the carts are in. Pete reported that they are in great shape and his mechanics have been keeping them updated. They keep the batteries charged and check the tire pressure monthly.

Shane reported that the carts are on a three year lease and it comes up at the end of this year. They have been used a year and a half to two years of the three year lease. They set idle for fourteen to sixteen months. Normally, he would say that new carts aren't needed, but even the people at Club Car have never been around a situation where the carts have sat idle. He would like to get them out of the garage and run them around the golf course to see if there are any issues with them before a determination is made to get new ones. If we don't need new ones, maybe there is a way to extend the contract a year and save money. Once they are operational, if they aren't running properly, they may opt to turn the lease over and get a new fleet of cars.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if this information will be available to present to the council by June 24.

Pete assumes we would have a good idea by then, but can't guarantee this. According to Shane feels it will be later than this, possibly into July or August.

Councilman Rasmussen's concern was getting it into the 2009 budget. According to Shane it could be in the budget but may have to be pushed back.

Pete feels the finance department may have an issue with this, because there is a big buyout at the end of the lease.

Leo Morton reported that the biggest problem might be with the fact that the batteries are designed to be overly depleted. He asked if there is an option to replace the batteries with the current lease.

Pete reported that it makes good sense and sounds practical but financially it could be easier to get a new fleet and stay on schedule.

Shane reported that you will not be able to detect if there is an issue until the heat warms up and they run constantly everyday.

II. Marketing Effort Update

Shane prepared a handout regarding merchandise inventory at the golf course. (Please see attached documents).

Shane reported directly from the handout. The committee followed along. He gave an overview of the inventory of merchandise.

They are in the process of ordering merchandise for the upcoming season and in doing so, they took inventory at City Hall of the items on hand. They looked at sizes, colors, etc.

The City will mark the items down to cost and return it to the golf course when it opens. They compiled a list.

Shane reported that there isn't a reason to mark certain items such as golf balls, shirts, shoes, clubs, and socks; there is no real technology for these items to change. These items can go back for sale at retail and they will sell.

The things that are listed on the handout are items he feels can be taken back to the golf course and sell at retail and be able to move them. This will offset some of the things that will have to be marked down to below cost such as ladies apparel. Most of these items are in collections and if you have little pieces here and there from a collection of three years old, that may not even sell at cost and may have to be marked down below cost.

Shane also reported that the goal to order items that could fill in and still take advantage of the items we have and look at the items that will probably not even sell at cost.

Councilman Rasmussen asked the value of the remaining inventory. Shane reported that the value is approx. \$33,000. Shane also reported that of the total inventory it could probably sell retail for \$10 - \$15,000. We will have to find a way to dump the other \$18,000. Trying to offset the fact that some can be sold for retail and some below cost and still get out of it o.k. Ultimately it is the cities decision but this is his recommendation.

Shane reported that in regards to advertising, they are working on a new website with a completion date of May 1. There will also be an online tee-time option and guests will be able to sign up for an e-mail club to receive blast e-mails.

Shane also reported that a separate site will be created for I.G.A. men's club. For print advertising, they are using The Kansas City Star as well as the Leawood and Blue Valley sport section of the newspaper.

There is enough money to set up advertising for a four – five week period of time. In trying to nail down an opening date it is best to advertise the three – four weeks leading up to that and then the opening as well as one – two weeks after.

Direct mail pieces will also be distributed to households in Leawood and some areas in south Overland Park. It will also be advertised on a sports radio station. A live remote will also be centered on the grand opening.

What will be the most beneficial to the golf course is when we decide on a date to have the grand opening events before that.

Shane also reported that Lamar Outdoor Advertising came up with a creative idea to have a billboard with a picture of the golf course that has a flag pole extending up waving the Ironhorse logo which will gain attention as well.

An idea Shane was approached with in regards to the radio advertising is when the live remote is done to advertise a skills challenge on the range. Attendees could participate in hitting wedges, irons, chips, drives, pitches etc. With this type of activity people will drive and come out and this could help support the build up of the opening.

Shane reported that they also discussed providing tours on the weekend during the month prior to the opening. Bringing more people to the course will help.

Lastly, Shane reported on the grand opening activities. In the past when the golf course opened one day was a V.I.P., City of Leawood and a media situation. All of the media was contacted, along with print, T.V. stations, and radio stations as well as publications and invited them to come out for the day. We provided them golf, golf car, range, lunch, and also a small gift that says Ironhorse on it. We also provide them a media packet to take with them that would talk about the changes, who was involved and what was done.

Shane is recommending doing this again and on the next day which would also be a grand opening celebration would be geared toward the people who have committed to memberships and golf outings. If we have the time to get in front of people and let them know if they sign up they will be invited to a grand opening celebration, this may have another appeal for people to sign up and stick with us.

The days would be similar and set for a 12:00 noon shotgun to allow Pete to get things done in the morning. Shane feels if the golf course is open in a grand opening format on a Friday these events would take place on a Wednesday or Thursday on the time period leading up to the grand opening. This would be best for publicity and get people excited and committed to the golf course.

Shane also reported that there are two outstanding issues he's currently working on. They will be reducing the number of weeks that the Tuesday senior group plays and the Wednesday ladies group plays. Previously, these groups were started in May and now they are starting the first week in June to make sure we are set so we don't have to go back and make changes.

Shane reported that the only other outstanding issue is the liquor license. Everything has been submitted to the state of Kansas but there is an issue with the way the contract is written between the City of Leawood and Orion. The attorney for Orion is looking it over and working with them. Patty Bennett will be involved as well.

Shane opened the floor for any suggestions, comments, questions or any criticism.

Dick Fuller asked when the grand celebration for the 60th anniversary was. He remembers Peggy commented at one of the meetings having the grand opening on the same date.

Shane reported that Chris talked about having a soft opening as well as grand opening activities but he doesn't feel you get the "pop" that's involved of having grand opening events unless you have them before the general public can get to it. Again, this is his opinion but it would be nice to say thank you to the people who have waited an extra four to five months and committed- whether it be in memberships, golf outings or leagues.

III. Projects In Progress

Pete reported on this in the course update. – Please see the Agenda Item I.

IV. Proposed Opening Schedule

Dick Fuller reported that the main goal tonight should be to secure an opening date. He continues to receive questions in regards to the opening date and he can't give an answer. He would like to have a date to start advertising and promoting it and getting events set up.

Dick suggested, if a June 1 date is what needs to be set, he would rather not wait this long, but would at least have a date to report and anticipate opening.

Pete reported that the contractors are the reason it has been pushed back, and he understands why, they are trying to work but weather has been a factor.

Leo Morton reported that you have to manage expectations. If you set a date and there is any way possible to open sooner, it is a plus. But, you have to keep in mind that you have to open correctly and it is not wise to put a date out there and miss it.

Richard Wills asked where the economics come into from the city standpoint.

Dick Fuller reported that the city has lost so much money over the last eighteen months and could potentially lose \$30k in June if we don't meet this opening date. Maybe not that much money in May, but these are expenses that obviously the city has to look at with the understanding that there are expenses and incomes to offset.

Richard Wills added that he couldn't agree more with the June 1 opening date in terms of managing the expectations and establishing a tentative date with the basis that if we are in position to open sooner. From the perspective of play and revenue opportunities does pushing it back a few more days to Memorial Day weekend make a difference.

Shane reported that if you consider opening June 1, you wouldn't actually open on the first, but more likely open Friday May 30th which would give you a Friday, Saturday, Sunday to open. The grand opening event would be the Wednesday the 28th and Thursday the 29th.

Councilman Rasmussen asked the committee to make a recommendation for opening. He asked Shane from the point of operations, what is his recommendation.

Shane reported that from the point of operations, he would recommend Friday, May 23 and hold the events on the 21, and 22nd.

Councilman Rasmussen asked the committee if they would consider contemplating a recommendation for opening the course for public use on the 23rd of May. He asked Pete his opinion regarding this opening date.

Pete reported that this is very doable.

Leo Morton made a motion to officially open the Ironhorse Golf Course May 23. Bob Reid seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that we would like to see the practice range open May 1 and the course May 23.

Dick Fuller asked if there is any reason the clubhouse couldn't be open May 1.

Pete reported that the clubhouse looks really nice, the carpet was put in today and the border is not up yet, but it looks fantastic and very updated, and he doesn't see any reason it could not open May 1.

A motion was made by Bob Reid to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Leo Morton seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned by a unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director
Parks and Recreation