

IRONHORSE
Golf Club



GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE
Minutes of May 22, 2008
5:30 P.M. – Ironhorse Golf Course Clubhouse

Members in attendance were Dick Fuller (Chair), Bob Reid, Leo Morton, Chuck Sipple, Tommy Davidson, and council liaisons Lou Rasmussen and James Azeltine. Shane Gardner, of Orion Management Solutions, Inc., Chris Claxton, Pete Spratlin, and Tonia Morgan.

Dan Frolic was also in attendance; he is an interested resident of Leawood and resides on the golf course.

Dick Fuller called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. Chuck Sipple moved to approve the minutes of the March 27, 2008 meeting and Bob Reid seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

I. Update Progress

Pete Spratlin reported that the first opening dates are June 5th and 6th. Both are closed openings. Saturday, June 7th is the opening for the general public.

Pete also reported that there is still a lot to do but a lot is happening everyday with the weather finally allowing it. The rain today allowed them to get a lot of projects done. He also reported that they weren't able to lay sod today because it was too wet.

Dick Fuller asked if Pete is laying the sod and where is it coming from. Pete reported that it is coming from Topeka, and the sub contractor is laying the sod and he expects two trucks tomorrow.

Pete also reported that they are running two eighteen-wheeler flatbed truckloads per day that average 800 – 1,000 yards per truck and they currently have 6,000 yards to finish. He usually sees 1,000 yards per truck but lately a lot are 800-900 and it depends on how thick they cut it and how long the rolls are.

Dick Fuller asked if they are cutting big rolls. Pete reported that they are all big rolls and they are laying it the same day they get it.

Chuck Sipple asked how many truckloads there are so far and how many more to go. Pete reported that there is currently 18,000 yards of sod, and he anticipates 24 – 25,000 total yards.

Dick asked if this is all fescue or zoysia. Pete reported that it's all fescue not including zoysia.

Pete also reported that Scott Lambers came out and authorized additional sod for the project so visually looking at it, it is green. Pete also reported that last week the soil temperatures

barely reached 60 degrees and it needs to be at 64 degrees. There is a lot of seed out there, but it probably won't show up until the temperature stays up on a consistent basis.

Pete also reported that he is happy the temperatures are finally reaching 80 degrees during the day but the night temperatures are still in the 50's, which keeps the soil temperatures down and nearly impossible for the seed to grow. The only place where there is consistent growth is the area receiving direct sunlight and constant water.

For example on number 10, the sod is in great shape, but you will notice brown sod due to the sunburned tips. Once the tips are mowed off, they should look great.

Pete also reported that there are two spots on five, one off of the deep rough that honestly shouldn't have been sod, and on the corner of the curve on the southeast corner of the cart path. The sod is stressed pretty hard, and the sod supplier is in the process of replacing it.

Chuck Sipple asked when the sod work would be complete in terms of the actual sod laying. Pete reported that if the weather allows it should be finished by the middle of next week. He is expecting six more truckloads. He is pushing this project and hopes to get some work in on Monday, Memorial Day if at all possible. This will give him time to tie it in and mow before opening day.

Councilman Azeltine asked Pete if we maintain our rough. According to Pete, we have two roughs, primary, which is basically the golf play rough and natural. He also reported that the natural rough is knocked down everywhere he is able to get equipment. The natural rough is knocked down at least two to four times a year.

Councilman Azeltine asked if this would be done prior to the opening. Pete reported that he is currently working on this.

Councilman Azeltine asked how the neighbors are doing whose yards back up to the golf course. Pete reported that most of them are great. There are a few who think, and were actually told that they bought a golf course lot and as soon as they move it will be mowed like Blue Hills which has never been a design or in the budget and is not going to happen. They try to keep the natural areas as pretty as they can but they are "natural".

Councilman Rasmussen asked Pete to explain to Councilman Azeltine that from day one we tried to make this an Audubon haven. Pete reported that we are a certified Audubon International golf course. Councilman Rasmussen thinks this is important to inform people when we receive complaints about dead limbs in the trees or grass growing etc.

Pete also reported that his staff is cognizant of storm water management and fertilizer management. Everything is watched and recorded. He reported that the only thing he doesn't do is nest egg counting. He doesn't have the manpower to do this. They watch the perimeters where chemicals are sprayed as far as water run offs, and barriers against the water bodies so it looks natural but it is actually a barrier to keep things from running off into the water and it also keeps down algae.

Leo Morton reported that he thinks Councilman Rasmussen made a good point. At the end of fifteen there is a sign that says you have to keep out because it is a wetland reserve. He would suggest putting signs at certain spots that we are an Audubon controlled to help people understand. Pete reported that he could also get the Audubon to provide signage.

Chris asked Pete to report what has been done to the rough previously and what if anything was the plan during construction, and what the intentions are till the end of the year.

Pete reported that they receive a lot of complaints that the rough is thin and clumpy. This is a result of some of the things that were done during the original construction. The rough is reseeded every year as best as they can. He reported that he is using a new seed this year to allow it to spread and thicken up, and also plans to have a seed researcher look at it.

Pete also reported that he has received a lot of comments from people who think the reason the course was closed down is because all new rough was put in. This would have been fantastic but this is not what happened. The rough looks similar to when we closed, and is still being worked on. This would be a nice project further down the road.

In regards to the current seed, he is hoping it looks a lot better but this can not be determined until it actually comes up. In certain areas, it is taking awhile. According to Pete there is an area on number one where the seed is growing very slowly- it has been there since April.

Chris asked Pete, depending on what the result is, would he consider over-seeding again. Pete reported that he plans on reseeding every fall and spring, and has contracted out to a professional seeder. This is one of his biggest goals, and he is constantly working on it but it needs to be stated clearly that unfortunately, it was not part of the project to get new rough and we did not undergo a complete golf course renovation as many think.

Pete also reported that there were certain areas that were done, such as rebuilding pockets, greens, and work to the creek but it was not a complete renovation. This could have been done for an additional amount but at this current time, this is not in the budget.

Leo reported that it is helpful to manage expectations and for example it would be nice to prepare something to state what was actually done. Most golfers will come to the course and think you replaced the rough. He suggested creating a list and distributing it that says exactly what was done, and what you can expect to see to let people know and to manage their expectations. It would also be helpful to inform them that it is still a little thin but it should thicken up with the weather.

Pete agreed with Leo and stated that he has received a lot of complaints and people have expressed what they thought happened. People think the entire golf course was rebuilt; so he agrees it would be a good idea to put something in print that can be given to the golfers.

Councilman Azeltine also agrees and thinks this should be prepared before we open. A flyer, handout or even a huge poster should developed and made visible for people to look at what we did and even state what we didn't do to help them understand.

Pete reported that what was done was really significant and should be displayed to ease the minds of the golfers.

He also reported that there wasn't anything done to the bunkers. They were shelled out and brand new sand was added, but this was the extent of the work.

Leo Morton added that this is good to know because there were complaints about the bunkers. It would be nice to note that they did work on the drainage issues and golfers can expect the bunkers to be better.

Shane added that part of this is a result to the irrigation system. Pete added that we did not add anything on to the irrigation system; the current system will not allow anymore irrigation to be added.

Chuck Sipple asked if they can keep the seed that is in the rough wet with sprinklers. Pete reported that they are doing this to the best of their ability but the fairways have to be watered to get the rough wet, which is a result of the design of the golf course and the piece of land we have.

Leo asked about the areas where the rough is lush. Pete reported that these areas are where there is soil. He also reported that the course has very little soil under it. Most areas where they can get water, is a dry wet cycle. Once it is wet, there isn't soil underneath to hold it.

Pete reported that the new seed they are putting out is a new variety and should be very playable. The seed researchers think it is going to be a good answer for the course.

Pete also reported that the other projects are going really well. He was able to move all of the sand out of the parking lot today. They are doing a lot of dress up with the mulch, more than what would normally be done but they are getting ready for the grand opening.

Pete reported that they also added new bag racks and cooler stands and are rebuilding the fans with a special material so they don't look like they are rotting by the end of the season. All of these projects were done today. Each day they are able to do a lot leading up to the opening.

Councilman Azeltine asked how long it takes depending on good weather for the sod to grab on. Pete reported that it is rooting in about ten days.

Dick Fuller asked what are the depths of the roots are on the greens. Pete reported that the great part is that the roots are doing great.

Shane asked if more sand was added to the blue tee on thirteen and if it will be filled up higher. Pete reported that it will hopefully get zoysia by Tuesday. They will build it up and re-establish it.

Shane asked if they people will play off of the gold tee and the black tee when we open. Pete reported that it depends on the zoysia he can get on top of it.

Dick Fuller asked how many people they expect to play at the grand openings. Pete reported that he believes eighty people have been invited to play on the 5th. Chris reported that it shouldn't be more than eighty but they will probably invite around one hundred people.

Chuck Sipple asked Chris if she knew how much the city has stepped up and put into the golf course. He assumes the sod was over and above the budget. He thinks the golf course committee should express its appreciation to the City Administrator for really stepping up and getting all of the sod at the last minute. This is something that may or may not have happened without their help. This is a nice thing they did for the golf course. It is much appreciated and a job well done.

Chuck Sipple made a motion that the golf course recognizes the amount of effort and expense, and making a substantial difference that will help us get off to a very successful grand opening. Leo Morton seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Leo Morton added that it is important to understand if the opening is late, they will forget it in a year, but if it opens badly, they will never forget it. This will also make a difference in the number of people you can attract long term. It will make a difference not only to the course but also to the neighbors because it will be an asset to them if we can maintain it.

Tommy Davidson reported that he agrees about the expectations of the golfers, especially the people who may come for their first time. He especially agrees with letting them know what was done because if they are expecting this to be all new, they are not going to see it.

Dick Fuller understands but agrees with Mr. Morton that if you play this course year after year, each year you expect the course to be better than the previous year as it matures. There are always expectations whether it is the first time or if you've been there numerous times. When it's closed down, the expectations only get greater. The other aspect you have to consider is we are charging \$70.00 per round and people that pay this price have certain expectations as well.

Councilman Rasmussen asked how much damage was done when the car ran off the cliff. Pete reported that there wasn't much damage at all, if any, to the golf course. The wall and fence were repaired but they haven't removed the debris from the actual golf course. In regards to opening day, he is concerned if they come on the course to remove the debris it may cause more damage to the course. Pete reported that according to the property line, they might be able to remove the debris without coming on to our property line.

Dick Fuller reported that most people don't know that the wall is not our property line; they see the wall and assume it is our property and if it looks bad, we will get blamed for it.

II. Update on Issue with #5/Drainage

Pete reported that the nice thing is it has been repaired and sodded. Councilman Rasmussen asked about the cost. Pete reported that it is 2,000 yards of sod in the front of it and cost \$3.15 per yard which averages out to approx. \$6,000 per truckload.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if we were sending them the bill. According to Pete, he believes they received a notice or citation but is uncertain as to what extent.

Chris reported that she doesn't know if they ever were cited and is uncertain if it was a citable offense.

Pete reported that the codes enforcement notified them to get a permit and to repair it. He hasn't seen any progress to do this and apparently they have a permit and plan to get this done.

Chris reported that they had a meeting Tuesday and Wade was there; she asked him to send her something to inform the city what was fixed.

Pete reported that in the event of a major rain, it is a good possibility it may happen again.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if the City Administrator is planning on sending them a bill. Chris reported that she is unaware of this, but will clarify this with Scott and inform him.

Chuck Sipple reported that he would like to let the homeowners association know that we fixed this for the last time and they will totally be responsible for damages going forward.

Dick Fuller reported that Chris has already advised them of this. Councilman Rasmussen reported that Chris does not have this authority and he would like to see something come from the City Administrator that addresses this because fixing the problem at our expense five times is too much.

Dick also reported that the reality is if you saw the extensive damage a month ago and look at it today it is hard to tell that it was a big problem.

Leo Morton asked the committee if they mind him giving the homes association a heads up that this is happening, as he is a homeowner there. The committee agreed and don't have a problem with this. They advised him to let them know it is coming.

Dick Fuller asked what will be done. Pete reported that when he spoke with the codes enforcement department from the city, they were going to clean out the hillside. Mr. Morton reported that he would find out and get back with the committee.

Pete reported that while general contractors were on the property he had them look at a longer solution of building up a small berm on our side of the fence and run it down the west side of the cart path. The contractor thought this would be really easy to do in case anything happened again.

Chris reported that a plan has not been submitted to the city yet but once it is, it will still need to be approved.

Councilman Azeltine asked if we haven't already done so, we should have Joe Johnson look at it. Pete reported that this has been done, it is just taking time.

III. Grand Opening Events and Public Opening Update

Shane reported that he obtained the liquor license and it's ready to go. They hosted a Chamber of Commerce event yesterday and it went very well. There were 100-200 hundred people there and they received some good comments. This is the perfect setting to reach a lot of business leaders in the community. Hosting events like this is a benefit to us and sends a positive message.

Shane reported that there are 2,100 tournament rounds currently booked but this should increase to about 2,500. Dick Fuller asked how many we lost. Shane reported that we lost 300-400, but it is not really that bad because we lost those in the month of May but will end up picking some of them up in September.

Dick Fuller asked in losing them were there a lot of hard feelings. Shane does not feel there were, because we did the best we could to help them find another golf course and to

reschedule a date with us. In some cases we were able to reschedule, but in some instances we had to find another suitable golf course for them.

Shane reported that the number in 2006 for tournament rounds was 4500, and we are down by 2,000 rounds from that. Councilman Rasmussen added that you have to remember we had a partial season this year.

Councilman Azeltine asked when we normally open. According to Shane we do a fair amount of tournament rounds in May, but feel confident that this will pick back up to 4500 in 2009.

Shane reported that it should go to 2,400-2,500 by year-end. He also reported that we ended the season with 120 – 150 triple crowns memberships.

Shane also reported that there are a lot of corporations that would like to advertise on the course via the hole monument signage sponsorship. His plans are to have the area by number one landscaped in the near future to be able to display a stone with their business logo.

Shane reported that there was a power problem last week, which resulted in data being lost. He was told it was caused by a power surge. This corruption lost twenty-eight transactions and they can't be found. Shane spoke with Crescent to find out where the problem is so it doesn't happen when we open and we are very busy.

He is working with Mark Andrasik from the city and they've created a new website. It will have the ability to make on line tee times when we are not open.

Shane also reported that the radio remote along with commercials are currently running.

Dick Fuller asked when we will announce the opening. Shane reported that these will be announced soon.

Leo Morton complimented the great billboard on Interstate 35. He asked if a date could be put on it. According to Shane they can't put a date on it because of the type of vinyl on the sign and there is only 3 more weeks left to display the sign. Shane agreed that it has attracted a lot of attention because of the flag; it really catches people's eye.

Shane reported that the opening event Thursday, June 5, is a 1:30 shotgun for city invited guests and council members. Friday, June 6th is for tournament coordinators and Triple Crown members.

Councilman Rasmussen would like to give his spot to a media person and feels it would be more beneficial to the course if media personnel are there rather than city personnel.

Shane reported that his thought initially was to have city officials there along with the media in case there were any interviews that needed to take place.

Councilman Rasmussen asked Chris why we would load up with city officials when it is more important for the media to be there. Chris reported that she received the list from Scott the other day and he mentioned inviting a variety of elected officials and county commissioners, including the Governor and Johnson County Mayors, but she is uncertain how many will actually attend until we receive the r.s.v.p's.

Chuck Sipple asked Shane if the KCGA came out as it was stated in his last handout.

Shane reported that they did not come because they were rained out. They are coming on the 29-30th to look at the course and do a preliminary rating. Once they play the golf course and confirm the rating they will get back with him. He will have to order score cards without ratings because they can not wait.

Dick Fuller asked about the Kansas City Amateur. Shane reported that they are still on the schedule. Pete reported that he has left messages but hasn't heard back from them.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if we are still involved with Kids Hooked on Golf. Shane reported that there are junior programs through The First Tee, and classes will be scheduled through the Parks and Recreation Department. Two more classes were added due to the popularity of the class and the large number of people on the waiting list.

IV. Marketing Effort Update

Shane reported that most of the marketing items will be wrapping up within the first couple of weeks in June. They have a few things that will continue but for the most part most of the money was spent leading up to the opening.

V. Hole Sponsorships

Shane reported that there are currently six hole sponsors that are ready to buy, but they would like to take a look at the hole markers first.

VI. Misc.

Dick Fuller asked if our guest had any input in regards to the meeting. Guest Dan Frolic added that he has really enjoyed the meeting and it was very enlightening because there are a lot of misconceptions about the golf course and what work has been going on.

Dan also asked what is happening with the driving range. Pete reported that they are allowing the grass to grow in and are working on controlling the weeds. They will spray the entire golf course next week and will take care of the range first.

Dan Frolic also complimented the practice green turf, it turned out really well and he's received a lot of compliments about it. It is really nice and is much better than the mats.

Dick Fuller reported that in defense of Pete, we were aware that the driving range was not ready to be open yet. But, a decision was made to open it in order to get people back out to the course. It would have been nice to wait longer but Pete was nice to say that he would hand pick if possible to get it open and he appreciates this.

Chris reported that there are additional monies in the budget next year to do the whole range in the turf.

Dick Fuller asked when the zoysia portion of the range will open. Pete reported that it opened yesterday.

Chuck Sipple asked if there were any neighborhood comments about the screen on the sidewalk of the driving range.

Pete reported that he received a phone call from a gentleman that lives on the south side who calls on a regular basis for different issues, usually good, and he is very happy about the net and thinks it was a very smart move. But, wanted to be the first to inform us that there were others who do not feel the same and they would be calling to voice their opinion.

Pete also reported that women walking have stopped him and his crew to express their thanks. He reported that it will be landscaped on the street side in the fall.

Shane asked Chris if there are still plans to add landscaping on the back of the range. Chris reported that they have talked about this. Pete reported that they are trying to make it look as nice as they possibly can.

Dick Fuller addressed Mr. Tally, a guest that arrived late and missed most of the meeting if he had any comments. Mr. Tally declined any comments at this time.

Dick Fuller reported that he was very pleased with what he saw on the tour before the meeting. But there is one area that concerns him behind number two where the springs have opened up.

Pete reported that there are several areas on the golf course that with construction and the heavy equipment resulted in them discovering new springs. Pete also reported that the course bleeds water. The entire hillside on the back of number two also runs water.

Dick Fuller reported that he can't remember it being this bad and it is unfortunate visually. The big problem is balls land there and he foresees a problem.

Councilman Azeltine asked when the golf course would be at its peak. Pete reported that it would probably be August before you aren't able to see any scars and a lot of this is due to the soil temperature.

Councilman Azeltine reported that if we do the communication that was previously discussed, the stormwater project should be mentioned. It is important for people to understand how that project affected the golf course project.

Mr. Tally asked where the sod is purchased for sod projects. Pete reported that it usually comes from Briggs on 159th Street. Mr. Tally reported that this is the only golf course he's seen without a nursery. He believes if sod was put on the driving range eight years ago, it would have been grown in by now and wonders why this wasn't done. Mr. Tally also asked if there is anyway to make the driving range Zoysia.

Pete reported that it would be another project but it is possible. Shane asked if this would be the best grass for the range. Pete reported that it is not. The problem he foresees is not being able to keep enough traffic on it during the winter. He also reported that during the winter, Zoysia goes dormant and you'll lose a significant part of your grass.

Mr. Tally reported that he doesn't understand why the range is different than fairways in the wintertime.

Pete reported that you have to run the pickers on it and the extra tracks from the pickers make a significant difference. It is a lot more aggressive than carts on them and is like a plow.

Shane added that the range wasn't irrigated at all when we first opened.

Chuck Sipple asked if a meeting would be scheduled in June.

Dick Fuller reported that he anticipates a meeting in June to discuss the two grand opening events and how things are shaping up.

Chuck Sipple asked if this will be the only meeting until fall. Dick Fuller reported that we should continue to schedule a meeting the fourth Thursday of each month and the committee will be advised if the meeting will be canceled.

The next meeting will be June 26, 2008 at 5:30p.m.

A motion was made by Leo Morton to adjourn the meeting at 7:29 p.m. Chuck Sipple seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned by a unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director
Parks and Recreation