

IRONHORSE  
Golf Club



**GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of August 27, 2009**

**5:30 P.M. – Ironhorse Golf Course – Clubhouse**

Members in attendance were Dick Fuller (Chair), Bob Reid, Tommy Davidson, Steve McCartan, Leo Morton, and Jud Alford. Council Liaisons James Azeltine and Lou Rasmussen were also present. Also present were Shane Gardner of Orion Management Solutions, Inc., and staff members Pete Spratlin, Chris Claxton, and Tonia Morgan.

Several Triple Crown members also attended the meeting. The members in attendance were George Waterman, Skip Talley, Tom Hoskins, Taylor McCann, Norman Capps, Jim Mills, Dan Froelich, Pete Schleicher, Tim Martley, David Neighbors, Bob Kirkland, Stan Koslowsky, Tony Castellanos and Bob Jacob.

Chairman Dick Fuller called the meeting to order at 5:49 p.m. Bob Reid moved to approve the minutes of the May 28, 2009 meeting and Tommy Davidson seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Chairman Fuller welcomed the guests and thanked them for their attendance. They will have the opportunity to speak and voice their opinion about the course, but please limit all comments to five minutes.

Chairman Fuller reported that he understands the reason why most guests have attended tonight's meeting. It is an open public forum. Guests are invited to stay for the entire meeting if they would like.

Chuck Sipple made a motion to approve the July 9 meeting minutes. Bob Reid seconded the motion. Tommy Davidson made one correction on page 9, it was reported that ESPN interviewed Skip; it should have read that they hired him.

Tonia Morgan, Administrative Assistant noted the correction. She will make the necessary adjustment to reflect the change.

The minutes were approved unanimously with correction as noted.

Chairman Fuller opened the floor for the guests to speak. He reported that they are welcome to speak openly but preferably to withstand from repetition of comments if at all possible.

Committee Members and staff introduced themselves to the guests.

Jim Mills reported that he is no longer a Leawood resident but resided in Leawood for seventeen years. A year ago, he, along with many others approached the City Council and reported that the course was in terrible shape and that they were very upset.

Jim reported that he remembers one Council member who basically stated that essentially they had the right to attend the meeting but didn't know what they were talking about. There were others who stated that they would take care of it and have Pete fix it.

Jim reported that immediately after that meeting he saw a flurry of activity with workers cutting weeds, working on the greens and laying sod.

Jim also reported that he recently received an e-mail from the City of Leawood asking for patience in relation to taking care of the course. The greens are terrible, the zoysia isn't great and the fringes have crab grass. How long should they be patient?

Skip Talley reported that he has been a Leawood resident for nineteen years. He doesn't want to speak on behalf of the Leawood community or as a Leawood patron; he is speaking as a Leawood resident.

Skip reported that he's never seen so much tax money wasted in his entire life. It is upsetting. Who is accountable? Ultimately, someone has to be accountable to the taxpayers.

Dan Froelich reported that he has resided in Leawood since 1980. He plays a lot of public courses in the Kansas City area. Most are in excellent shape in relation to the greens, the fairways and the tee boxes. It is a shame to pay for a Triple Crown membership and feel that you need to go to other courses to play golf.

Dan Froelich reported that it is incumbent upon the City of Leawood, for the \$2800 he paid this year to have the course in much better condition than it is right now.

Tony Castellanos reported that this is his fourth year as a Triple Crown member. It is not all about money but this is becoming a dollar and sense issue. It is a given that the course is in the condition it's in. All Triple Crown members went in good faith and gave the City \$2,800 up front, not in arrears. And now, incentives are being offered to play the course for half price.

Tony reported that he did not commit to Triple Crown last year because he was uncertain of how the condition of the course would be. Thirty dollars after 2:00 p.m. was a great deal. Tony reported that each Triple Crown member who paid \$2,800 - \$2,900 felt betrayed.

Tony reported that at thirty dollars a round, you can play 40-50 times and come out well ahead of the member who paid up front. Currently, many are in the same scenario only this time, they paid \$2,800. And, yet, if he wasn't a Triple Crown member, he could bring a friend and play after 4p.m for \$20.00, hit a bag of balls and enjoy a hot dog.

Tony asked at what point this becomes fair to someone like him who gave \$2,800 up front. It doesn't make sense. The Committee needs to consider the investment made and make it fair on a dollar and sense basis in terms of a rebate assuming that the cost to play the course has been cut in half.

Tony also reported that this isn't to say that all Triple Crown members will play 40, 50 or 60 times per year to dollar cost average our rounds. But now, if you are at Ironhorse near 3-4p.m., people are playing for \$20.00 and filling up the course. This is not fair. In his opinion, they are only playing for the cheap rate. But now you can play at any given time for \$40.00.

Tony reported that he would like to appeal to the Committee to work out an equitable trade off for those who paid \$2,800.

Chairman Fuller thanked everyone for their comments. The Committee as a group is obviously golfers and is also disappointed in the situation as each of the guests.

Chairman Fuller reported that over the last year and a half, a lot of promises were made that the course would be in a lot different condition. But, certain areas are also definitely improving.

Jim Mills asked Chairman Fuller where the improvements are.

Chairman Fuller reported that the rough may not be perfect but is a lot better than before. Certain areas of the fairways are also better than before. There have also been improvements to some of the tees. There are many things that are better than they were before.

Chairman Fuller reported that there are still problems and he isn't happy about this either. The City has put a lot of money into the course and a lot of work has gone into it as well. Chairman Fuller reported that the City is also upset that a lot of money has been spent and the results are not as expected or promised, especially with the greens. Triple Crown members have put a lot of money up front and subsequently we haven't delivered.

Chairman Fuller reported that the Committee feels badly and are trying to correct it. He is uncertain what will be done. As a Committee they can only make recommendations to the Council. At that point, the Council would act upon the recommendation.

Chairman Fuller thanked the guests for attending the meeting and sharing their comments.

## **I. Discuss Current Condition of Greens**

Pete reported that the greens have improved a great deal over the past several weeks. The cutting height has been raised. The fertility rate has also increased.

Pete reported that the sod arrived from New Jersey. The areas that were completely wiped out were sodded today. They will complete this project tomorrow.

Pete also reported that 100 percent of the greens surface will be seeded tomorrow morning. This was contracted out by another company. This will overall thicken them.

Some of the sod they received was cut long and too hairy due to a heat wave they recently had in New Jersey and is too long to put in putting areas. Pete reported that they will use some of the sod from the west chipper by the road.

Pete reported that the north area will be kept open for the kids for the First Tee Program. It won't interfere with play. His goal is to work with Shane in trying to have full turf everywhere for the big tournaments that are scheduled.

Pete also reported that for the past two weeks they sought temporary laborers to cut the crab grass from the collars. The current weather will also allow spot spraying in these areas. Typically this is not done in August.

Pete reported that the cool weather is causing zoysia to shut down. It is actually going dormant. The #1 Fairway has changed three shades lighter green this week. This is causing a lot of issues with the tee boxes. They simply can't recover.

Pete reported that zoysia likes 90-95 degree weather. There have been twelve days the entire summer with weather above 88 degrees. The sod from June is still sitting there. Fertilizing it tremendously doesn't help without temperatures to make it grow.

Councilman Azeltine reported that Mr. Lambers described an issue with lack of oxygen getting underneath the surface of the greens. Has this been addressed?

Pete reported that this has been addressed. He is uncertain if this addresses all the particular problems but it is certainly doesn't hurt anything to do it. Air was pumped under all the greens. The drainage outlets were stopped up to force air underneath so it goes up through the greens.

Councilman Azeltine reported that there was also an issue on the greens concerning ball marks. Lionsgate uses green colored sand. Are we planning on using this technique?

Pete reported that we are using colored sand as well. Since May there was a two week period when it didn't rain. The longest timeframe without rain has been four days. It is a challenge to keep the surface of the greens dry and firm.

Pete reported that the greens were extremely slimy on top and very soft during the last two weeks of July and he agrees that it looked horrible. A staff member is working every night on ball marks.

Councilman Azeltine asked Pete if he has all the help he needs at this point.

Pete reported that he can always use more. The list of things to do is extremely long and the workers are always limited.

Leo Morton asked how many courses in the area are using the same type of grass as Ironhorse.

Pete reported that there are currently five- Sycamore, Prairie Highlands, Winterstone, Lionsgate, Shoal Creek and Creekmore.

Chairman Fuller reported that he plays golf all over the Kansas City area. He doesn't understand why we don't have grass on our greens. The severity of ball marks is relevant to how good the condition of the grass is and subsequent ability to heal.

Chairman Fuller reported that he played St. Andrews a couple of months ago. They had six holes put in the same time we built our course. Their greens are perfect. They are phenomenal. We have 18 holes and have spent nearly a couple million dollars. The reality is we have dirt with a little grass in it. How can this be possible?

Chairman Fuller reported that people are wondering why we can't have good greens. He along with Councilman Rasmussen have been here since the course first started and the greens have never been good.

Chairman Fuller reported that the City recently spent a lot of money redoing the greens and getting rid of the problems that were there, which was a bad core base. All new drainage, green design, and new grass were put in and they still aren't good. The course layout and green configuration is great, they putt fairly decent but the greens are thin and haven't been good all year. By far, they are not worth \$70.00/round.

Chairman Fuller reported that the question concerning the greens has been asked several times. When you play the course, the greens are what people remember. 18 green has been a disaster from day one. This is the last green you remember when you walk off the course. There have been from day one and continue to be a lot of thin, and dead areas. It is an embarrassment and extremely frustrating.

Chairman Fuller reported that people were asked to put their money in up front and we promised that we would deliver. Again, we didn't. Reality is, they will get better, but will they be really good greens.

Chairman Fuller understands that on occasion, there has been too much rain or it's too cool, but if you visit other courses, the greens are in great shape. Everyone deserves an answer as to when it's going to change.

Pete reported that his goal is exactly as everyone else. He and his workers want the greens to be in better shape. The things that could be done different or better by some of the new crew members are significant.

Pete reported that he is here everyday, looking at them like you are. He is working on it. The sod work is an extraordinary measure. The seeding is a normal practice. He is taking advantage of the weather and trying to thicken the greens because there are thin areas that shouldn't be.

Pete reported that the high points were seeded this spring and they are still thin. The seeds take in some places and in other places, it does not. If he could start over and go back to construction in regards to the type of grass chosen, or the techniques used, he would. He would definitely change things.

Chairman Fuller reported that unfortunately there were expensive mistakes.

Pete reported that he agrees. He is currently waiting on letters to answer his inquiries of why the recommended seed type has not performed.

Chairman Fuller reported that there are several other courses that have perfect greens. Why us? The responsibility of the committee is to monitor the maintenance and operations of the course for the benefit of the Council, taxpayers, and the Mayor. Obviously we are a recommending body but it is an embarrassment. It is unfortunate when people have spent the money they have and feel the need to apologize in advance when bringing a guest to play the course.

Chairman Fuller reported that recently, there was an email circulating from an individual who has been one of the top amateur players for 30-40 years and also rates golf courses for Golf Digest. He has strong credibility and his comments were also very negative.

Chairman Fuller reported that Ironhorse should be comparable to other courses in town. It would be extremely nice to have someone comment positively about the greens at Ironhorse.

All we hear is negative comments. Not making excuses for Shane but he is the person who sits at the front desk. When people come off the course, they don't see Pete; they see whoever is at the desk. This person gets the blunt of complaints.

Chairman Fuller reported that we owe the City, taxpayers and the players a course they can be proud of.

Tommy Davidson asked when we can expect good greens.

Pete reported that he would love to have an answer for this question. He expects good greens each day he reports to work. The condition has improved and we received a lot of compliments during the spring. We would be looking great if it weren't for the damage created the end of July.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that he heard that there was a change in the sand that went into surfaces of our greens. Is it correct that this happened during construction? Is this a true statement?

Pete reported that a lab test was performed on all the material going into the greens.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if they changed the character of the sand going into the greens.

Pete reported that they did.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if the change in sand was according to the specifications for the construction of our greens.

Pete reported that it was not.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if this was communicated to Patty, the City Attorney as a violation of the construction contract.

Pete reported that it was not.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if we use the same seeds as other courses and ours is "slimy", wouldn't theirs be the same.

Pete reported that it coincides; the sand is what locks up the surface on the greens.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if sod is layed on top of the existing surface.

Pete reported that this is correct.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that if this is done, it will fail because of the sub structure.

Pete reported that the silt is sitting on top of the surface. It shouldn't be a problem if it is placed below the top surface. If he can continue to break the surface up, it should improve. The greens need a full aerification. The current material needs to be replaced with new material with core aerification. Continuing to do this will improve the top quarter inch that had the problem.

Pete reported that since July he has spiked the greens every week to bust the top silt layer. He experimented with the greens on the chipper and the chipping block and a new material was put in. This was an 80/20 soil amendment mixture. Hopefully this will improve any long situation. It won't do anything this season, but next season we won't have the irregular soil moisture that causes so many issues in dry and wet areas.

Pete reported that this is not a normal practice but should benefit the course.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if the contour of the greens was designed to take care of the drainage.

Pete reported that it isn't a drainage design problem. It is the material on the surface of the greens that floated up. There is one source of sand in the area. It comes from the Missouri River.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if the same sand was used on the bunkers.

Pete reported that it is the same source but a different grade.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that he would like to clarify that the contractor building the greens changed what he put in contrary to our specifications.

Pete reported that this is correct. The lab caught this after the fact, after the greens were installed.

Pete Schleicher, Triple Crown member, reported that he was a Class A, PGA professional for nine years in Louisburg. He doesn't understand how the City of Leawood spent a tremendous amount of money putting in new greens and they are in horrible condition. The problems Pete discussed are problems with greens that are twenty years old, not two. Someone has to be accountable for this. Obviously someone messed up the process of the construction, and the maintenance of the greens. Someone is at fault here. He plays everywhere in town. Supposedly Ironhorse put in the same type of seed as Lionsgate and The Golf Club of Kansas. These courses don't have the problems we have. Someone, somewhere along the line messed up.

Councilman Rasmussen asked Pete if Mr. Schleicher's comment is true about using the same grass seed as the above mentioned courses.

Pete reported that this is correct.

Pete Schleicher asked how two year old greens look like twenty year old greens. Hydrophobic soil is usually on twenty years old greens. It shouldn't be on the greens at Ironhorse.

Pete Schleicher reported that in his humble opinion the greens need to be gassed and re-done. They are that bad.

Councilman Azeltine asked Pete Spratlin what the soil specialist from Kansas State reported in terms of why Ironhorse is different than other courses that used the same seed.

Pete Spratlin reported that profile testing was done. Everything through the bottom of the green tested great with the exception of the quarter inch on the top.

Pete Spratlin reported that all records indicate that he is doing everything he can.

Pete Spratlin reported that Pete Schleicher is correct. The greens were treated for problems typically seen in twenty year old greens. He deals with this everyday.

Skip Talley reported that he visits every golf course in town and has seen the Greens Superintendent at 2p.m. syringing the greens. He has never seen this happen at Ironhorse. We experienced hot weather earlier in the year. In his opinion, the entire golf course is overwatered. He hasn't noticed anyone working at Ironhorse during the day like most courses.

Skip asked Pete is this valid.

Pete reported that it is not.

Chairman Fuller reported we all recognize that Ironhorse doesn't have good greens. The main question is what can be done about it.

Councilman Azeltine reported that when going through the same problems before, he reported that cities, especially the size of Leawood, don't own, much less operate golf courses. In any business, you have customers, and at a certain point, the customers don't care "why".

Councilman Azeltine reported that he too, sees the e-mails, and he appreciates the customers patience. A year ago, when the maintenance operations were brought in house, he opposed it and still does. He will be urging going forward to reverse that decision. Simply for the reason, if contracted out, and things aren't satisfactory, the contract is not renewed. It is more complicated when it's in house.

Councilman Azeltine encouraged those present tonight to attend the next Council meeting and express their concerns on record.

**II. Discuss Financials through July**

**III. Discuss Upcoming Events/Marketing Efforts (Shane) (II and III discussed simultaneously.)**

Shane reported that he included in the golf course Committee, a progress report reflecting August 1 – 23. The report is based on 2006 vs. 2009 and also a 2006 vs. 2009 year to date.

Shane reported that within the first twenty three days of August, 2006, the revenue is approximately \$138,000. In 2009, the total so far is \$98,000. We are behind in this area.

Shane also reported that we are \$300,000 behind in revenue in 2006 vs. 2009 YTD.

Shane reported that in relation to the tournaments, there are nine events remaining in September and three in October. Four events have canceled since the July 9 Golf Course Committee meeting.

Chairman Fuller asked the reason canceling.

Shane reported that two were weather related and two were due to the course conditions.

Shane reported that all leagues have wrapped up for the year. The Tuesday morning Senior League and the Wednesday morning Ladies League will continue through October.

Shane also reported that from a marketing standpoint, there were two club sponsored events in August. The Couples Mixer had 28 players. They received dinner and dessert. The Parent Child Tournament had 52 players. There were actually more request for this event than room to accommodate them. Trophies were given to all participants. Both events were well received.

Shane reported that an Overland Park Business to Business Expo is scheduled in November. There is also an Appreciation Day tentatively scheduled for October 9. He is currently working with Chris in regards to the details for this event.

Shane reported that they ran a Play 18 holes for the price of 9 promotion during the month of August. It ends today.

Shane reported that the liquidation of the 2009 merchandise will be complete by Labor Day weekend. He received approval today to liquidate some of the merchandise and get it off the table.

Chuck Sipple asked if this was approval for further markdown.

Shane reported that this is correct.

Lastly, Shane reported that they were asked by the City to obtain bids for golf cars and prepare a comparison of new golf cars versus the cost of repairing the current cars.

Shane reported that it is always more cost effective to keep the current fleet. It is in fairly good condition. The cars sat for a year and don't have a lot of wear and tear on them, which is good but there will be a few necessary repairs and normal maintenance items that will arise that could possibly cost \$15,000 - \$20,000.

Shane reported that the main repairs/replacements will be to the windshields, tires, and batteries.

Leo Morton added that it should also cover brakes.

Shane agreed.

Chairman Fuller asked Shane if the carts will last through 2011.

Shane reported that he recommends spending the money to get them in good condition to make it through next year, and re-evaluate them again going into 2011. It is hard to say if they will last until 2011 but he is confident they will make it through 2010.

Chuck Sipple asked Shane if the customers generally like the golf cars.

Shane reported that overall they do. The only negative about the cars is if you hit a curb, the tie rod on the end bends easily which will effect the steering. Club Cars corrected this

problem moving forward but if the City Council decides to keep them, it will be beneficial to have a representative from M&M to go through the fleet over the winter to make sure the front ends are OK.

Chairman Fuller reported that there is obviously a precipitous drop in the income. He asked Shane what the rounds are to date and to annualize it in relation to two years ago.

Shane reported that he doesn't know this information off hand but would estimate being down 4-5,000 rounds for the year.

Steve McCartan asked the percentage basis of the decrease.

Shane reported that it is roughly 16-18%.

Chairman Fuller reported that his intent isn't to make excuses for the golf course. He questioned what is happening in general to other public golf courses as far as rounds.

Shane reported that of the courses he's involved with, Swope is down 3-4%. Minor Park is flat, and Shoal Creek up North is down 10%.

Chairman Fuller asked about other public courses relative to Ironhorse.

Shane reported that Shoal Creek is comparable to Ironhorse. He doesn't receive figures from Deer Creek, Sycamore Ridge, Prairie Highlands or Falcon Ridge.

Chuck Sipple asked Shane what he attributes to Minor and Swope being relatively flat. Is it a better value. Are the prices more competitive. Or do they have a better core group of customers.

Shane reported that there are two factors. It is a lower price point which appeals to a broader audience. The average cost is \$40.00 including a cart.

Shane also reported that he's worked hard over the past three years to build a core clientele. When this is done, the clientele will bring other people.

Chairman Fuller reported that Shane has done an excellent job at Ironhorse in spite of our lack of ability to deliver a quality golf venue. Orion's group has developed the core groups of Triple Crown members as well as The Men's Club, etc.

Chairman Fuller reported that these are the most important groups. They have been very patient. It is unfortunate that we continue to create a situation for them where it is difficult to be supportive. There continues to be a drop in these groups' enrollment and participation. He is very concerned about losing them

Chairman Fuller reported that there have been a lot of e-mails from members stating that they are embarrassed and ashamed of the course.

Chairman Fuller reported that he loves the golf course but changes need to be made. It is great layout. If we can get the condition of the greens where they need to be, we will be able to deliver one of the top public facilities in the area, but a bad reputation is hard to overcome.

Chairman Fuller reported that there are a lot of continuing problems with the course and we have to share some of the responsibility. The City is also very concerned and they want to deliver a quality facility to the residents and tax payers of Leawood. They have been very willing to provide funds for the course.

Chris Claxton reported that she spoke with Scott, the City Administrator today. It was tentatively scheduled for Shane to make his golf cart presentation at the Council meeting scheduled the second week in September.

Shane reported that customer surveys were done over the period of a month from June 15 – July 12. The surveys incorporated Weekend Play, some Triple Crown members, IGA, and The Kansas City Amateur Tournament that was held. It also took care of the Senior League that play on Tuesday and Wednesday and also some normal traffic during the week.

Shane reported that the survey comments are listed on a separate sheet.

Councilman Azeltine asked Shane about the survey results he reported earlier that were listed separately. He did not receive a copy. Are they available.

Shane reported that he has the survey results.

Chris said that Shane and she, along with Pete discussed the survey about 2 weeks ago at the biweekly meeting.

Chairman Fuller reported that it is also not listed on the agenda. Tonia met with him before the meeting and said that she brought copies in case they were needed. He will have her hand them out later in the meeting.

Councilman Azeltine asked why it isn't on the agenda. And, why it hasn't been presented to the Committee as well as the Council. The customer surveys were a directive from the Council. It appears that the information was available before the last meeting.

Councilman Azeltine reported that there was a similar uprising a year ago. It was decided at that time to do the maintenance report hole by hole and it appeared everything was on track. Obviously they are not, especially in terms of the greens.

Councilman Azeltine reported that there are probably a lot of pertinent comments that would have tipped us off earlier than two weeks ago if the surveys were distributed. There were obviously problems going on. He is extremely concerned about this, as it was a directive.

Councilman Azeltine also reported that if the results were complete, the committee should have received them before now. If they weren't brought tonight, when would they receive them.

Chairman Fuller reported that he agrees. The surveys need to be reviewed by everyone. It would be advantageous for Chris and Shane to work together to prepare an analysis and compare the percentages of the current survey to the previous one done a year ago. It would be very beneficial to have this information.

Chris reported that if this was a directive, she apologizes. She doesn't recall receiving a specific date to present the surveys to the Committee.

#### **IV. Misc.**

Chairman Fuller reported that as a committee they can only make recommendations. Orion's contract for operations of the golf course expires December 31, 2009. He is assuming progress is in place to address the expiration as time is very short to process an RFP and bring in a potential change in management by year end.

Chairman Fuller asked if Orion's contract will be extended. There are only four months remaining this year and this needs to be addressed. What direction are we headed?

Councilman Rasmussen reported that it is in the best interest of the committee to make a recommendation to the Council to either renew the contract or not.

Chairman Fuller made a motion to recommend extending Orion's contract for a minimum of two years. A one year extension with or without maintenance won't achieve what we need to achieve. He would also recommend bringing maintenance back under the control of the management company.

Chuck Sipple moved to accept the recommendation and Leo Morton seconded the recommendation. The motion was carried unanimously.

Chris Claxton reported that Mr. Azeltine makes a good point how those come together but questions if there are other reasons that the recommendation was made.

Chairman Fuller reported that there shouldn't be any other reasons. The conditions of the greens, after all of the money spent should be reason enough. Secondly, there are restrictions placed on O'Rion as to how they manage the course.

Stan Koslowsky reported that he was the fourth person to join at Ironhorse. He remembers when Shane and his staff were in Leawood City Hall. He's been here since day one. If it weren't for Shane's staff, he would have left long ago. He isn't coming to play the course because it's in such good shape. Shane's staff treats people professionally. He doesn't like for Shane to hear the negative comments when he doesn't have any direct responsibility of the condition of the course. They have weathered the storm and have done well.

Stan reported that he's never heard Shane say that it isn't his responsibility. Shane takes the bullets daily. The main focus should be on who will take over in the future. As long as Shane and his staff are here, he will come back. It is a Country Club without the dues.

Jud Alford asked what the advantages are to put it all under one roof.

Chairman Fuller reported that it is accountability. Shane would have the authority to see what's going on everyday and have the ability to function. With a City operation it is much more beaurocratic, more meetings and control. The maintenance expense has increased tremendously under the City.

Chairman Fuller reported that he doesn't know of an upscale public golf facility with maintenance ran separately that is successful. Orion is a professional golf course management group. The city is paying them to run the course and they should listen to their expertise.

Jud Alford asked if there is currently any accountability.

Chairman Fuller reported that the problem is maintenance is under the cities control and the operation of the golf course and the clubhouse under a separate group. There have been two Superintendants, also under Shane but with different firms that were removed due to problems. If Orion isn't doing a good job, get rid of them.

Councilman Azeltine reported that he wanted to clarify that this has nothing to do with the Parks Dept. or its staff. Although we've been opened since 1995, we had no expertise in running a golf course. It didn't make sense when it was brought in to the City. Hopefully this can be reversed.

Chris reported that when Pete was part of Orion, and working with Shane, he was still the Superintendant. When you are a Superintendant, you don't forget how to do your job.

Chris asked the Committee members specifically, what they thought was different, or would be different. She would like concrete facts. She listens to everyone, good bad or indifferent, and forms her opinion at that time. She too, hears it from all sides.

Chris reported that her frustration in terms of the greens is that there isn't a concrete handle of one thing wrong. This is also frustrating for Pete from a standpoint in getting this problem corrected.

Chris reported that she is working with Scott to make recommendations to the Council and to figure out what changed between then and now in caring for the golf course.

Chairman Azeltine reported that the Council is the policy making body for the City of Leawood. We are not here to manage. It would be easier for the City of Leawood to have accountability if the maintenance and marketing is farmed out.

Chairman Fuller asked Pete how many employees have remained in the past year and a half.

Pete reported that there are three, not including Jeff and Eric. When someone is partially trained, they leave. The turnover is extremely high.

Chairman Fuller reported that this is part of the problem.

Councilman Azeltine reported that this is the cities problem, not Shane's problem.

Chairman Sipple reported there is a consistent staff at Blue Hills and it makes all the difference in the world. The staff knows how to take care of the greens. Golfers want consistency. The main focus should be to do whatever it takes to get more consistency at Ironhorse and to get the greens back.

Steve McCartan asked Shane, of the courses he manages in the Kansas City area, how many is he not in charge of maintenance.

Shane replied that Ironhorse is the only one.

George Waterman reported that he was second to sign up at Ironhorse. He is disappointed in the committee. He paid \$2800.00 three years in a row and received bad product. The year before the course closed it was bad. Last year, it was really bad and this year it is worse. The City should issue refunds. This needs to be discussed. If not, you will lose a big core of your customer base.

George shared that he is very loyal but you will not get his money next year. The city hasn't proven that they can produce a decent product to play on.

Chairman Fuller assured him that this will be discussed.

A motion was made by Tommy Davidson made to adjourn the meeting at 7:29 pm. The motion was seconded by Leo Morton. The meeting was adjourned by a unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director  
Parks and Recreation

DRAFT