

IRONHORSE
Golf Club



GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE

Minutes of October 22, 2009

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

Members in attendance were Dick Fuller (Chair), Bob Reid, Tommy Davidson, Jud Alford, and Chuck Sipple. Council Liaisons James Azeltine and Lou Rasmussen also attended.

Also present were Shane Gardner of Orion Management Solutions, Inc., and staff members Pete Spratlin, Chris Claxton, and Tonia Morgan.

Dick Fuller called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m. He reported that there wasn't a quorum at the September meeting. The August minutes weren't approved at that time.

Chuck Sipple moved to approve August 27, 2009 meeting minutes and Tommy Davidson seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

I. Decision to Bid Out Course Operations & Maintenance and Subsequent Timeline

Chris reported that the bids are due back tomorrow. They will meet early next week to plan the interview process. The interviews will be November 3, 4 and 5th in the Main Conference Room at approximately 5:30p.m. or 6:00 p.m. Presentations will last an hour with a 30 minute question and answer period.

Chris reported that fifteen were sent out and currently 4-5 have been returned. A recommendation will be made and presented to the Council on November 16.

Chairman Fuller asked if Chris will review them first for to determine if they meet the compliances required.

Chairman Fuller also asked if all companies who submitted an RFP have toured the golf course. If not, is it anticipated they will do so before the presentation process begins.

Chris reported that several of the RFP's she's received so far have not toured the course.

Tommy reported that Colbert toured last week.

Councilman Azeltine asked when the review process will begin.

Chris reported that it will start next week. The RFP's will be available in the library (located on the main floor of City Hall) for the selected Committee members to review.

Councilman Azeltine asked if the committee will meet to review the RFP's together before the interview sessions.

Chris reported that this will possibly happen. She is waiting on direction from Scott. He has been extremely busy with the Gezer dedication and visit.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if the presentation times and dates will be posted on the website.

Chris reported that they may be posted once a definite decision is made.

Chairman Fuller clarified that the committee will definitely meet prior to the interviews.

Chris reiterated that they will but she can't move forward with this because she hasn't received direction from Scott to do so. Her preference and assumption is that the sub-committee will make the necessary cuts. She spoke with Mike Gill and this is also his preference.

Councilman Azeltine reported that he is very sensitive with the Ironhorse Advisory Committee remotely being cut out of the process.

Tommy asked Chris to clarify what she means by "the committee".

Chris replied that it is an appointed committee that is to oversee the RFP submittal and evaluation process. The entire golf committee will not participating.

Chairman Fuller reported that his understanding is that the interviews will be an open public forum. The Ironhorse Advisory Committee members can sit in at that time and watch.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if the RFP's will be available soon for review in the library.

Chris reported that they will be available as soon as it is certain that they are compliant.

Councilman Azeltine asked if and when the Ironhorse Advisory Committee will be notified.

Chairman Fuller reported that he is uncertain. The committee has been appointed, but the grounds rules haven't been set at this time.

Councilman Azeltine asked who appointed the committee.

Chairman Fuller reported that there was a group selected to be on the Committee.

Chris reported that they were appointed by the Mayor.

James asked who is on this committee.

Chris reported that the members are Councilman Rasmussen, Mike Gill, and Dick Fuller. Dick was asked to select someone from the golf committee. He selected Chuck Sipple. Additional members are Scott Lambers, Chris Claxton, and City Attorney, Patty Bennett.

Chuck reported that it would be helpful to evaluate each presenter on the same factors and devise a common evaluation grid to score each presenter. He would suggest scoring them on their reputation, fees, presentation, references and background education.

Chris reported that she is working on this.

Chuck asked if all companies who submitted an RFP will have the opportunity to make a presentation.

Chris reported that she is certain they understand that it is a selection process for interviews.

Chairman Fuller asked when the appointed committee will meet to discuss the specifics of the interview process. We are out of time. This should happen quickly.

Chris speculates they will meet no later than Friday of next week.

Chris reported that Scott didn't want to wait until the December Council meeting. The agenda was already full. It is best to have a decision made by the November 16th meeting. Essentially, it may be a situation where the chosen company will only have 30 days to assume management.

Jud asked if the respondents of the RFP's are aware of the quick turnaround.

Chris reported that for the most part they do. Most are aware that they will assume management January 1, 2010.

Chuck asked if it is possible to meet later next week to review the proposals and establish the evaluations.

Chris reported that there is a conflict Monday due to the work session and Council meeting.

Councilman Rasmussen asked when they will receive a copy of the RFP.

Chris reported that she brought copies for the appointed committee members to distribute tonight.

Councilman Azeltine questioned Councilman Rasmussen if the Council assigned any process or was it referred to the committee when they passed the resolution in regards to the RFP, and was there a discussion on how the RFP would be handled.

Councilman Rasmussen responded that they were only instructed to set up a committee to review the RFP's., and asked by Mayor Dunn to review the resolution and make suggestions.

Councilman Azeltine asked Councilman Rasmussen to provide him with a copy of the resolution passed by the Council. He is interested in the wording pertaining to how this was handled.

Chairman Fuller asked what the process is as far as determining a recommendation. Is it the intention that he and Chuck will represent the golf committee and make a recommendation on behalf of the entire committee.

Chris reported that this is correct. Chuck and Dick will represent the golf committee.

Councilman Azeltine is especially concerned for the volunteers who were asked to serve on the golf committee. There isn't anything more important to the mission of the golf committee in regards to what will be done in the next couple of weeks. The fact that this wasn't brought before this committee in advance of referring it to the Council doesn't sit well with him.

Chuck asked James if he feels the entire committee should have access to reading the proposals. He is fine with this and suggests the non-voting members read along with them and share their feedback/input into the final decision. The only thing they would not participate in would be the verbal presentation.

Councilman Azeltine reported that his major concern is a golf committee has already been established. He understands having a smaller group for the interviews, but questions why the Mayor and the City Administrator want to supplement the committee in any way for the purpose of reviewing the RFP's.

One of the reasons he ran for Council four years ago was he noticed that people were being asked to volunteer on committees and maneuvers like this would happen. As a result, the volunteers would be cut out of the mission of the committee they were serving on.

Jud reported that he is also concerned. It appears that they won't have any input in the recommendation either. He is fairly new to the committee and also doesn't agree with how this was handled.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that they can be observers. This can not be a closed door session. It will run like any other committee. Anyone from the committee or the public is welcome review the RFP's at City Hall. They can also observe during the presentations.

Councilman Azeltine asked if the other members of the committee are being relegated as another citizen. If so, this is a really poor practice.

Councilman Azeltine asked Councilman Rasmussen if he agrees with the Administration doing an end run around this committee. And, setting up a special committee which in his opinion should only go through the existing golf committee.

Councilman Rasmussen replied that this battle was lost.

Jud asked who developed the RFP.

Chris reported that primarily she and the City Attorney developed it with overview and approval of the City Administrator.

Chuck asked how many years they are bidding on. Is it a fixed fee or will it be left open.

Chris reported that it is three with three one year extensions. This would take us to the end of our bond payments which will be paid off in 2015. The City Administrator would like the flexibility to negotiate the contract if needed.

Chuck asked if all of the companies are local.

Chris reported that they are not.

Chris reported that she will meet with Scott, the City Administrator tomorrow for further direction on how to proceed. She will get back with the committee as soon as possible.

Chuck reported that he would like to meet with the committee members as soon as possible to discuss the process, and how to evaluate each company.

Dick agrees. A matrix should be established as quickly as possible.

Councilman Azeltine asked if RFP's will come before the golf committee before presented to the Council.

Council Rasmussen and Chris Claxton reported that they will not but suggestions and input are welcome.

Chairman Fuller reported that committee members are also welcome to attend the interviews.

Councilman Azeltine reported that he has spent a lot of skin defending committee members from these instances.

Jud reported that he appreciates Councilman Azeltine for doing so. He is uncertain about the function of the golf committee. The biggest thing to happen to the golf course in awhile, and moving forward, they are not a part of.

They haven't been involved with the RFP for the golf course contract. They will not be involved in the recommendation process, as only two members of the golf committee will be allowed to give input during the interviews. And, this recommendation will not come back to the golf committee before being presented to the City Council.

He would like to go on record to express his concern about the process. Many of the answers to the questions directed to Chris tonight are responded that "she doesn't know" or "it hasn't been determined", "or it has to be figured out".

We are two weeks from making a recommendation from the other committee and there is a lot of process that remains fluid.

Councilman Azeltine asked Dick if he has discussed this with the Mayor, and as leader of this committee if he is o.k. with this how this was handled.

Chairman Fuller reported that he has not spoken with her about it. He was appointed by her and advised that he had one selection process from the existing committee. He was told that there would be a committee of seven people.

Chairman Fuller reported that the Mayor appointed everyone. He has always been an advocate of more input by the committee but whether or not he is happy, the directive was sent.

Councilman Azeltine reported that he will speak to the City Administrator and Mayor first thing tomorrow on behalf of all the volunteers.

Chris distributed copies of the RFP for those serving on the committee.

Councilman Rasmussen asked Tonia how quickly she can reproduce copies for all committee members to have tonight.

Jud asked if an electronic version can be sent to the committee.

Chris replied that she needs a directive from Scott to distribute this to anyone other than those appointed to the committee. She will speak with him regarding this. She doesn't think it is an issue but she doesn't know if she should do this tonight without a directive from him.

Chairman Fuller reported that at the last meeting Mr. Rasmussen requested that the RFP be available to all the committee members to review in advance to be able to come back to whoever was appointed with suggestions or questions. We still don't have the RFP because Chris wasn't authorized to release it.

Tommy reported that it is hard to believe that the appointed group will make a recommendation and present it to the City Council and members of the Ironhorse Advisory Committee won't know what the decision is until after it's approved. They are not advised as a committee and don't have a vote.

Chris reported they will know before then.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that as long as he's been a Councilman, the City doesn't have any secrets. If you want to know anything, it has to be public record.

Councilman Azeltine reported that this RFP process is a very poor practice. A lot of discussion tonight has been about process. He is a Professional Portfolio Manager, and his entire day is process. There is already a process in place, called the committee. The fact that a parallel process is being set up, is wrong. It sends the wrong message to the volunteers on this committee as well as all volunteers for the City of Leawood.

Jud asked for clarification regarding the financial aspect of how the new company will be paid.

Chris reported the company interviewed will need to make this clear during their presentation on what their pay structure is. They have all the information needed. They received copies of the rounds and the financials.

Chairman Fuller reported that basically, they will have to prepare a business plan and budget that's approved by the Council.

Chris reported that this was previously discussed. There is already a budget in place for next year. Whether it gets augmented or changed is uncertain. This would be a Council decision.

Chuck Sipple reported and Chairman Fuller agreed that there should be a format in place as to when, and how the interview process will be handled. Questions asked should be reviewed prior to the actual interviews. Everything should be lined up the same. Identical evaluation mechanisms should be used on all bidders to make it fair across the board.

Councilman Azeltine asked if there will be notifications prior to the meetings.

Chris reported that it may be on the website but we usually do not provide notice on these types of meetings.

Councilman Azeltine reported that it is his opinion that the reason we are in this position is because maintenance of the course was brought in house without the involvement of this committee. Currently, RFP's are being sent and we are going through a process to hire the

next management company to run the course without the input of this committee. He is concerned that this will backfire again.

Chairman Fuller reported that he appreciates Councilman Azeltine's efforts. This was also his belief all along as well, but a decision was made.

Councilman Azeltine reported that with all due respect, he understands where Chairman Fuller's concerns are politically but if you are volunteering on this committee because you care about the golf course, this is a public course and committee members are citizens and Council works for the citizens. If you don't agree with this process, you have an obligation to speak up.

II. Discuss Current Course Conditions

Pete reported that the course has been mostly wet and cold but the conditions are doing well.

Pete reported that we are ahead of schedule. Normally, these would be November conditions. The weather has advanced quite a bit further than it normally would have at this time.

Pete also reported that the greens are doing extremely good. The issues have totally recovered from the summer. He's received a lot of compliments. For the first time in over eleven years,

Pete reported that the zoysia is almost fully dormant. It took a huge beating this summer. It never got hot enough to grow and reoperate from play. Depending on the play level at other courses, most zoysia didn't put any roots down at all this summer.

Pete reported that depending on the type of winter we have, it could be an issue in the spring when it comes out of dormancy. Zoysia is a warm season grass that puts down roots all summer long. The hotter the better. It builds up carbohydrates down the root system and lives on them during the winter. The zoysia didn't have a chance this to do that this year.

Pete reported that the overall temperature in July was 74 degrees. It is normally in the 80's.

Chuck Sipple asked Pete to clarify that at the last meeting it was discussed that turf patches were put in some of the bare spots on the greens. It was also stated some grass was transplanted from the practice greens onto the main greens. Is it taking hold and level now or is the ground under repair.

Chuck asked if existing sod was used to patch the dead spots. Or, if new seed was used with dirt in some of the bare spots.

Pete reported that it was a combination of both.

Chuck asked if going into the cold months with ice and snow, are there any bare spots on the greens.

Pete reported that there aren't any bare areas. There are a few thin areas that he continues to work on but you have to search for them, they aren't easily visible.

Pete also reported that all the greens are full turf coverage. Everything is completely healthy and shooting roots down.

Councilman Rasmussen asked the result of the sand issue.

Pete reported that he hasn't had a chance to meet with Scott. The company who completed the quality testing on the sand resubmitted another copy of their report.

Pete explained that the USGA specifications, on the sand required for the greens, come in four different size variances. There is a percentage of each grade of sand for the groups allowed. One of the four groups was out of spec by two thousandths of a millimeter. According to the report, as long as normal practices are carried on the greens, this will never be a factor.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if Scott or Patty decided if there is a cause of action against the contractor.

Chris reported that Pete and Scott haven't had a chance to discuss in detail yet for any potential action.

Councilman Rasmussen asked about the outcome of the suggestion to add green sand in relation to the ball marks on the greens.

Pete reported that they immediately began fixing the ball mark issues in August. Green sand was used to make it more aesthetically pleasing. Ball mark repair tools were given to the patrons to use if needed.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if all legal issues have been addressed regarding hole #5. Has the money been received.

Pete reported that they have and he thought that the money was received up front.

Councilman Rasmussen asked, if, as of January 1, will there be any lingering problems on the golf course. He would like to make sure that the new contractor doesn't inherit anything.

Pete reported that they are still in the process of working on the pipe on #8.

Councilman Azeltine suggested completing an audit before the reigns are handed over to another company.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if the accelerated maintenance plan is complete, and if the trees are in.

Pete reported that the trees are in and everything in the report is complete.

Chris suggested reviewing each project to make sure everything has been taken care of.

Councilman Azeltine suggested that the new company should be allowed to complete a walk thru before taking over the course. This will allow them to ask any questions regarding any pre-existing problems so they aren't able to come back later.

III. Discuss Irrigation Pipe on #8 Bridge

Pete reported that it is leaking and has moved. Money will need to be appropriated to fix the problem. Continental is in charge of the engineering and will complete an engineering design to apply to each bridge.

Pete also reported he made this a phased project in regards to capital expenses. Construction will be done on #8 this fall and the other issues will be a phased accordingly.

Chuck Sipple asked if the pipes have been drained.

Pete reported that the pipes have temporarily been drained. This project should be completed in December.

Chairman Fuller asked the average cost per bridge.

Pete reported that he estimates the average cost will be a big variance. The two crossings with ten inch pipe are going to be expensive. As the pipe gets smaller, so does the price. It is hard to report an average.

Pete guessed that #8 will cost about \$15,000.

Chairman Fuller asked how many crossing bridges there are. How will this affect long term.

Pete reported that there are nine irrigation crossings to complete over a three year phase.

IV. Financials through September (Please see attached report)

V. Discuss Upcoming Events/Marketing Efforts (Shane)

Shane reported that the report compares Oct. 1-18, 2006 thru 2009. The weather was significantly different in 2006, which had a tremendous impact on the numbers.

Shane reported that there is approximately a \$400,000 difference in YTD06 and YTD09 in total revenue. Memberships declined \$100,000, which is a big share of the difference. Also, a significant drop in food and beverage has a factor in this.

Jud asked if the cart fees were raised a lot.

Shane reported that the finance department changed the amount of money they allocate towards golf cars and away from green fees. As of the 8th of October there were 20,577 rounds of golf which is down. When the golf rounds decrease, food and beverage and also merchandise will go down. It is one of the reasons to try to keep the golf course as full as you can. If the course is full, money can be made at the other profit centers.

Shane reported that there has been a tremendous increase in people using the range. He attributes some of this to the economy. People may not spend as much to play golf but are hitting balls, putting and chipping.

Shane reported that in relation to rounds of golf, there is a trend with people playing during times when the rates are less expensive.

Shane reported that he addressed this in his RFP that he submitted to Chris today.

Shane also reported that the breakdown of promotional rounds (1,778) doesn't indicate that people played for free. This number represents different promotions ran throughout the year where the price was lowered in certain segments and categorized as a promotion category.

Shane reported that a tournament scheduled for today cancelled.

Chairman Fuller asked if they will reschedule.

Shane reported that he has discussed different dates with them, but the weather has been so poor, he doesn't anticipate them rescheduling.

Shane reported that the membership numbers haven't changed much.

Shane also reported that from a marketing and advertising standpoint, they held an appreciation day October 9. Of the 140 people invited, 110 scheduled to play, but many dropped out due to the weather. Prizes were given away. This was a fun day of golf.

Shane also reported that they will host a booth at the Overland Park Business-to-Business Expo at the Overland Park Convention Center on October 28. In years past, they were the only golf course to participate. It is a good way to network. A putting green will be set up next to the booth for a chance to win an Ironhorse cap. Business cards are required to putt in order to market to them at a later date.

Jud asked the cost is to participate in this type of event.

Shane reported that it is \$450.00. It is money well spent to introduce people to Ironhorse.

Shane reported that they hosted a Couples Mixer on the 16th. The weather caused several late cancellations, due to the cold weather.

Shane reported that there is a Two Person Horse and Rider tournament scheduled for Saturday, November 7. It's easier for someone to find one person to play with in November. There are fourteen teams registered so far. He is hoping to have 50 players. Hopefully the weather will be nice.

Shane also reported that they researched individual Triple Crown Members through the 10th of October regarding what they played and how many prime rounds/non prime rounds and evening rounds of golf played per person. (*Please see the detailed analysis on the attached report.*)

Shane reported there were 35 of the 80 people who played during the Appreciation Day event completed the customer survey. A brief synopsis is also located on the attached report.

Shane also reported that this is a small sampling but does show that patrons appreciate the significant improvements made to the condition of the golf course.

Shane reported that Chris registered the City for a program called Survey Monkey that can be completed online. Moving forward, it will be important for the golf course to utilize this on a regular basis. It would also be nice to send something to members of all groups or individuals on a mailing list to see if they will respond.

Shane suggests that whoever takes over the operation of the golf course should do paper surveys as well as some survey monkeys.

Jud suggests offering an incentive to get people to complete the survey such as a drawing or a coupon.

VI. 2010 Fees

Chairman Fuller reported that play is down everywhere. He is concerned that if we don't drop rates \$15 - \$20 dollars, we are whistling in the dark. People aren't going to pay \$70 on a consistent basis to play golf. We need to be competitive but our prices are too high. The prime rate in the summer time on the weekend in regards to the economy and speaking with avid golf players should be an average of \$50-\$55.00

Tommy agreed but it can't be too cheap either. We need to consider that our course can not physically handle the traffic of many golfers in one day like Overland Park or St. Andrews.

Jud reported that he totally agrees with Chairman Fuller. If we expect to increase numbers in other areas, such as the pro shop, and food and beverage, you have to get people to the course. If we have to deal with excess traffic, this would be a good thing.

In relevance to the surveys from this summer and the most recent survey, the course is not the issue as much as getting people out there. A marketing program should be built around this, and the rates lowered as Dick suggested. It would also be beneficial to offer merchandise, and food/beverage specials as part of the affects of the recession.

Jud asked who makes the fee recommendation.

Chris reported that the management company makes a recommendation of fees. The Ironhorse Golf Committee reviews them and makes a recommendation to the Council. At that point, they are approved by the Council.

Tommy reported that he doesn't recall the committee recommending \$70.00 last year.

Chris reported that her approach would be to move forward with some sort of fee structure instead of waiting until someone new arrives- understanding that you can change the decision in the future.

Chairman Fuller reported that it is hard for the committee to make a recommendation when we are uncertain what the fee recommendations are. Once the fees are proposed, they can move forward at that time.

Chris made a recommendation to move forward with the fees. She asked Shane to propose his fee recommendations and present them at the November meeting. At that time, a recommendation can be made on behalf of the committee.

VII. Misc.

Chris reported that the next meeting will be moved up a week and back one day due to the Thanksgiving Holiday. The meeting will be Wednesday, November 18, 2009 at 5:30p.m

A motion was made by Chuck Sipple to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 pm. The motion was seconded by Tommy Davidson. The meeting was adjourned by a unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director
Parks and Recreation