

IRONHORSE  
Golf Club



**GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of July 22, 2010**  
**5:30 P.M. – Leawood City Hall – Maple Room**

Members in attendance were Dick Fuller (Chair), Bob Reid, Jud Alford, Chuck Sipple, Steve McCartan, Tommy Davidson, Leo Morton and new committee member Shawn Hickey.

Staff member also attending was Tonia Morgan.

Ironhorse Intern Dan Cutler also attended. He is an Agronomist intern and near completion of the turf program at the University of Nebraska.

Jeff invited him to observe the meeting to help him better understand the business. Jeff hopes Dan will be a well rounded Superintendant with Troon in the future.

Chris Claxton, Parks & Recreation Director was absent. Committee member David Brucker was also absent.

Dick Fuller called the meeting to order at 6:05p.m.

Chuck Sipple made a motion to approve the May 20, 2010, meeting minutes. Leo Morton seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Due to lack of a quorum there wasn't a June meeting.

**I. Welcome New Committee Members**

Chairman Fuller welcomed new Committee member Shawn Hickey. Shawn reported that he works at Prospective Software in Shawnee, Kansas. He moved from Prairie Village two years ago. Shawn was involved on the Park & Rec. Committee in Prairie Village.

He contacted City Hall regarding volunteer opportunities on a Committee with the City of Leawood. He is excited about being active on the Committee.

Committee members introduced themselves and welcomed him aboard.

**Presentation by Bob Reid to Chairman Fuller and Jeff Thomasson**

Bob thanked Chairman Fuller for doing a wonderful job as Chairman of the Golf Advisory Committee for more than twenty years. Bob expressed that he and the Committee are deeply indebted to him. Bob thanked Dick for doing a wonderful. He knows it's a lot of work.

Bob presented Dick with a painting of *The Open* in 1991. The painting is from England.

Chairman Fuller thanked Bob for the nice gesture. He is truly appreciative of the painting.

Bob also thanked Jeff Thomason for doing a great job. Bob presented him with a painting of *Royal Troon*. He personally made eighteen trips to Europe and has also played there.

Jeff Thomason was also very appreciative of the painting. It is very impressive.

The committee shared with Bob that they too, appreciate this very nice gesture.

A group photo was taken with both paintings. (Please see attached)

## II. Course Maintenance/Project Report

James reported that he has been busy working on the fairways. He has completed #4, #6, #7, and #9. The remaining fairways will require drainage work. After it's complete, the sod work will be done.

James also reported that they began aerification on the fairways. The driving range tees and a few of the fairway are complete. They will continue working as quickly as possible. The weather and amount of play will determine how quickly this can be done. He hopes to complete this within two-three weeks. The current equipment will play a huge factor in completing the work relatively quickly.

Councilman Azeltine asked if we lost any golf course equipment in the flood.

James reported that none of our equipment was lost.

James reported that he is also working on weed control. This should be complete soon.

James reported that we didn't suffer any flooding with the last rain we experienced which produced an inch and a half of rain. The creeks stayed in its banks. A small portion of the bunkers were washed away but the staff did a great job getting this taken care of.

James reported that the fairways have been fertilized. This will be done on a monthly basis weather depending.

James also reported that fans were added on #15 and #17 to create more air movement. The greens in the pockets are struggling, but the front greens are doing really well.

James reported that some of the drains are holding significant amounts of water. A camera was used to snake out a couple of greens. They are trying to determine why the water is holding algae and building in the line. Most of this is attributed to the heavy rains.

They are concerned about what can be done and why some areas don't dry as fast or produce healthy turf. They will continue to work on this until the problem is resolved.

James added that they rebuilt the back side of #15. Roughly 60 feet was removed. A lot of clay and rock were found in the area. They removed three to four inches of top soil that was holding extra moisture. They re-leveled and sodded the area.

James reported that they will aggressively work on the collars in the fall to aerate and top dress them. They've also held more moisture due to all of the rain.

Chairman Fuller reported that when the design on the greens was done with the architect Todd Clark, it was his understanding that the collars were to have new soil. When problems arose last year, Pete Spratlin, former Superintendent, commented that some of the collars weren't re-done as originally planned and the top soil expected wasn't used.

Chairman Fuller added that he isn't pointing fingers, but this may be why we are having trouble.

James reported that you can get away with it if all of the variables are there. For example, hole #1 would be the last to show any symptoms of the problems we are having with the area on the back of #13, 17 and 18. It wouldn't appear that a lot of excavation and fresh materials were put in on every collar with all of the coring that has been done.

James reported that the sand on the back of the collar on #15 appears to be old greens mix. It is similar to the practice course.

Tommy reported that the USGA and a lot of agronomist from all over the area were here when the greens were done, why they weren't done right is hard to accept. They were supposed to be done right.

James reported that in his opinion, the greens were done correctly. It appears that the collars weren't. If the zoysia collars and the fill materials are there, it should be fine. Zoysia loves the heat and drives in these conditions. The bent doesn't like heat or the humidity. When combined, the two can't weather the storm.

If zoysia collars were on the edge of the greens prior to the reconstruction, you will be fine. The problem arises when bent is on top of the rock and clay. If you factor in the heavy rains, the humidity and the heat, more problems arise.

Councilman Rasmussen asked James if the City cooperated in regards to prosecuting those who are vandalizing the course.

James reported that he is uncertain where we stand on this issue.

Jeff reported that the person who clear cut the brush and cut down 1300 sq ft. of trees has been issued a citation. They will appear before the judge the second week of August and pay a \$700 fine.

### **III. Operations Report/YTD Financial**

Jeff passed out a summary report.

Jeff reported that June was an unusual month due to receiving almost twelve inches of rain. Although we lost a lot of key days, we surpassed the budgeted numbers. It was a good month.

Jeff reported that revenues were ahead of budget. Costs of sales were in line, but timing is a little awkward because you don't know which month the expense will hit.

Jeff reported that the insurance premium is annualized in the budget but the way the City computes its finances, it takes the hit in one month. The total insurance premiums reported in

the G&A category as well as the expense to repair the walk in freezer and a few additional unexpected building repairs increased the numbers.

Jeff reported that they also experienced air conditioning problems that added an additional \$5,000 of unexpected expenses.

Jeff also reported that the actual expenses reported include \$84,000 of 2009 expenses as related to payroll and severance packages that were paid to employees at the end of 2009. This is included in the total operating expense.

Jeff also reported that they didn't ring the register for the first seventy-five days this year.

Councilman Rasmussen asked Jeff to clarify the totals listed regarding the golf shop. The report stated \$27K in revenues and \$44K in expenses.

Jeff reported that the \$44K is inclusive of three departments represented in three different line items in last year's budget in P&L.; the golf shop, cart department, and the driving range. It is also adjusted for cost of sales.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that there have been prior allegations made that the accounting allocation of the golf shop has been inaccurate.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if it is possible to look at the golf shop revenues and expenses to determine if they are being processed and accounted for accurately.

Jeff reported that it would take a significantly long process other than the time allotted in the meeting to determine the accurate numbers for this information.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if food and beverage is clear.

Jeff reported that it is with the exception of the changes in the liquor lease. The contract is set up with a 10/2 skip to pay it off in 10 months with no proceeds to pay from.

Jud asked if the green fees and golf cart fees are lumped into a number to be broken out with fees in the budget.

Jeff reported that cart fees and green fees are not broken out. Everything is inclusive within his budget. The City separates the fees.

Jeff also reported that in some instances Triple Crown Fees were lowered 20% and some were lowered as little as 7%. Rack rate prime and non-prime fees were lowered 10%, and some as low as 7%. When factoring these numbers you will gain a better understanding for a comparative analysis year over year.

Jud asked if we are \$140K behind last year's revenue.

Jeff reported that it appears this way but he isn't 100 percent sure that the numbers are accurate. He will research this information to gain better knowledge to assure accuracy.

Jud reported that there is a contradiction when looking at the numbers.

Jeff reported that the City generates half of this document. He generates the other half.

Chuck asked if the Triple Crown and memberships are spread throughout the year or when the fee is paid.

Jeff reported that the budget presented and the budget he is currently working on is annualized. It is the same number for twelve months. When the revenue is taken in, it is booked in one month. It is confusing until the month of December.

Leo reported that it appears that we aren't accounting for anything differently this year than last year. The actual year to year comparison is valid.

Jeff reported that this is accurate.

Jud reported that everything looked gloomy when he joined the Committee last year. He is curious and skeptical how we made \$36,000 last year at this point and we are currently down.

Leo reported that this can be attributed to the fact that as Jeff stated earlier in the meeting that a round wasn't booked the first 75 days of the year. It is hard to know what was being counted. It is uncertain if all who played a few rounds were accounted for last year.

Leo added that he remembers there was an aggressive push last year to start counting them. This may be why the numbers are up.

Chairman Fuller stated that he is interested in actual rounds. We are running around 31 of the 70 rounds for a maximum capacity.

Jeff reported that the winter months are the problem. There is capacity but there isn't any use.

Jeff reported that he predicted two months ago that Ironhorse would capture business from Deer Creek but they have decided to operate on temporaries. We will capture partial business and a lot of their event rounds but not what we initially anticipated.

Jeff added that we are 150% of the budgeted event rounds for the month of August and 400% for the month of September. We should make up a lot of ground by the end of September.

Chairman Fuller reported that the tee sheet should be easily accessible at all times to signify how many slots were played on a daily basis. This was the process in the past. The City generated a report that showed the weather and number of paid rounds, comp rounds, etc.

Therefore, if the numbers were down and the weather was bad, you knew why. He is unsure why they stopped receiving them. It was very nice to have the reports. He wonders if this was a City decision.

Chairman Fuller clarified that he is not asking Jeff to provide this, but wonders if there is a way to generate this report again. He would like to know what the tee sheet shows without contacting Jeff to find out.

Jeff reported that the POS system used in Crescent has some limitations.

Jeff added that a proposal has been made to the Owners Representative for the City of Leawood. He and the Senior V.P. of Operations for Troon would like to be added to the September Council agenda requesting a conversion in January 2011.

At that point a full year of accounting will be completed. This will be simpler, instead of doing a stub year and co- mingling financials. The report generated will offer greater detail with regard to utilization and round types as well as the information Dick would like to see.

Chairman Fuller added that he understands Jeff and his staff are swamped. He isn't requesting a special report.

Chairman Fuller reported that when the report was provided in previous years, and they had questions, they never receive a clear answer. This has gone on for years.

Jeff reported that everyone in the golf industry does it differently. There are no hard and fast accounting benchmarks or guidelines on how golf course accounting should be done. Most courses chart rounds completely different.

Chairman Fuller reported that it would be nice to have consistency with the City to understand what is going on.

Council Rasmussen reported that this is why he and Councilman Azeltine are in agreement that Troon should run the course. But, until Committee members show up at Council meetings and express their concerns, this isn't going to happen. We will suffer with the City and staff interfering with the operations in relations to the accounting.

Leo added that he agrees. It will be extremely important to review the mission for the Committee to understand what we need to see and what is not needed.

Councilman Azeltine reported that once we get through this year we should get on the right track and the confusion should be over.

Chuck asked the estimated rounds budgeted for this calendar year.

Jeff reported that it was approximately 25,500.

Chairman Fuller asked if this was from Orion's budget.

Jeff reported that Troon took a 2009 budget that was already submitted and approved. They mirrored the budget as best they could. They did the best to transcribe the numbers into their format.

Jeff added that they are working under a budget with a 20 percent increase of total revenues from the prior year's actual. Their goal for 2010 is to make as much money as they can and to possibly break even.

Jeff reported that the 2011 budget has already been approved and adopted. They are doing their best to bring the numbers around.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that this is inaccurate. They had a thorough discussion but they have not been adopted. Things were promised to the Council that haven't been received.

Jeff added that the reporting system is done by two software programs that do not interface whatsoever. Fifty percent of the report is a manual compilation.

Chairman Fuller questioned if other departments within the City have the same problem.

Jeff reported that in Chris's absence, he is uncertain if other departments have the same issues. It is his understanding that the Parks and Recreation Department is the only department that generates

"day of" revenue. The accounting software they use is a project accounting software that isn't designed to generate day of revenue.

Jeff reported that the 2011 budget was submitted before the season started. He comes to work daily to put as much money in the profit loss segment as possible. If we aren't making it, we don't spend it.

Chuck reported that we are trying to build a business for the long term. We are not trying to maximize profits right now. It takes awhile to get back on track.

Jeff reported that this is important to understand. Everything won't be turned around in one year.

Jeff reported that Matt Shrum will be joining the staff August 2, as an Associate Golf Professional. He comes from another facility in town. He was born and raised in Kansas City.

Jeff reported that more than 600 people have taken advantage of the Troon Rewards Program.

Jeff also reported that there is a lot of activity with the on-line E-Club. This is a vehicle for free advertising. They also do a lot of free web based marketing.

#### **IV. Discuss Course Use by High School/Colleges**

Jeff reported that a document has been created that allows access but still limits the use to some degree. There are two high schools that serve Leawood children. They will be allowed the right to first access; all others will have limited access with a reduced fee.

Jeff met with area coaches to arrange the schedule so it doesn't create a hardship for the schools. The money saved can be taken and used at another facility that will allow them practice times.

Jeff added that the biggest problem is the months of September and October when we don't have space. We can't accommodate every group that would like to practice at Ironhorse.

Jeff reported that he spoke with the coaches and they don't foresee a problem.

Jeff also reported that this will be the same for college students. Avila will be added to the colleges that practice in the fall. This will be the first year they've used Ironhorse. The new Blue Valley high school will also utilize our facilities in the fall.

Chairman Fuller asked Jeff to make a draft to be presented to the Council on behalf of the Committee to make the recommendation.

Jeff reported that there aren't any changes and it is in the fee schedule. There isn't a need for a recommendation.

Chairman Fuller reported that this is fine, if there aren't any changes.

Jeff reported that they will try their best to accommodate as many students as they can.

#### **V. Discuss Triple Crown Play**

Jeff reported that he is uncertain why Chris added this to the agenda.

Chairman Fuller reported that this will be tabled for the September meeting.

#### **VI. Discuss Recommendation for Parking Lot/Drive Ingress/Egress Improvements**

Jeff reported that the project is moving forward in August. The only change from the original plan is the work will need to be completed at night.

Jeff reported that Council must approve the additional \$2500.00 from the parking lot improvement fund due to Union wages. Working at night will alleviate any unforeseen possible damage to vehicles parked during the day.

Chuck asked if the egress/ingress will change.

Jeff reported that it will not change. The original plan was to have ingress at the front of the clubhouse to tie it to the backdrop and have everything from an operator's perspective.

Jeff reported that the City Engineer didn't approve the two lanes of car traffic in front due to the high volume of pedestrian traffic.

Jeff added that they proposed moving it half way up the curb near the driving range.

Jeff reported that there isn't value as operators to cut the curb and close off the existing area. They decided to leave it the same. It will feature new, comprehensive signage package and be more uniform from the time you enter and when you leave the course.

Jeff added that all information signs will blend and direct traffic accordingly.

#### **VII. Misc. – Mission Statement**

Councilman Rasmussen reported that the current language of the suggested mission statement states that the purpose of this Committee is to provide an oversight to the course and make recommendations to the City Council with reference to Capital and Operations and Maintenance for the golf course.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that Councilman Gary Bussing, with all due right, has questioned the purpose of the Golf Course Advisory Committee and why it exists.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that there was a long discussion at a recent Council work session regarding the role of the committee historically. The question was addressed regarding what should be done moving forward.

Councilman Rasmussen asked Committee members how they see the mission of the Golf Course Advisory Committee. Although some members haven't been on the Committee long, all input is important.

Chairman Fuller reported that an Advisory Committee whether for golf, or any other Committee in the City, advises and make recommendations. How is this Committee different than any other Committee.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that he and Councilman Azeltine agree that Troon should run the golf course.

Councilman Rasmussen also reported that Councilman Bussing questioned the purpose for an Advisory Committee if Troon reports directly to Chris Claxton, Director of Parks & Rec.

Jud asked if there is the feeling that the Committee is in the way between direct communication.

Councilman Azeltine reported that this is a concern of the Councilman who questioned the importance of the Committee. Any concerns could be brought to the local Council members.

Chairman Fuller reported that there are people and situations within the City, Administration and Council who feel that the Advisory Committee is an obstacle to basically take over.

Councilman Azeltine reported that the value of the Committee is to serve as a conduit for communication. The main value is to keep the lines of communication open.

Chairman Fuller reported that the reality is there are people who would like to do away with the Golf Committee because we have been very vocal at times.

Chairman Fuller added that the value of the Committee was proven a year ago when many Committee members and players were present at the Council meeting. Negative e-mails and comments were being made. The residents of Leawood and the golf players with Ironhorse's best interest at heart went before the Council and felt they weren't treated fairly.

Chairman Fuller reported that the community can talk to Committee members without going to the Council directly. It is important that they feel comfortable where they play golf.

Leo reported that he agrees; living and playing on the course, he can be the person to listen to what golfers have to say. It is important that he can be a conduit and an ambassador for the Committee and for Troon. Committee members should be the sounding board and an advocate for patrons to hear positive feedback about the course.

Leo added that he is unsure how recommendations are made about capital expenditures except to hear from golfers and for them to be able to express what they feel is not right. If we can identify the capital required to correct this, it will be beneficial.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that he agrees with Leo. It would be nice to have the air conditioner repair in a capital expenditure. Capital items should be separate. The Committee will not substitute Troon's judgment if they need a blower etc., but, there are capital issues that arise such as fencing that should be treated as such.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that the Committee made a recommendation to the Council regarding how many rounds of golf. These are recommendations that can be made by the Committee. If the Council wants to spend their time discussing those items, this is fine. Some Council members think they should be more involved.

Leo reported that there's an inscribable linkage between the condition of the course and the rounds.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that this is correct.

Chuck reported that the Committee should work to be a liaison between the golfing community and the city in terms of what the priorities are, from the prospective of a golfer and what we should be focusing on.

The Committee was established for feedback and establishment of priorities. Committee members can help Troon with ideas and be a sounding board for the operator in terms of business ideas.

Chuck reported that the Committee adds to the course and Troon, rather than take away. If James and Jeff of Troon report to Chris directly and the loop was smaller and/or possibly closed, this wouldn't be good.

Shawn reported that although this is his first meeting, there is a common theme; the Council may or may not be golfers or care about golf as much as the volunteers on the Golf Committee. You never want to turn volunteers away.

Shawn added that feedback from the Committee is always very beneficial. Looking ahead, it may not be in Troons best interest to present something to the Council that the Committee hasn't approved. There may be a conflict of interest that this Committee can keep a checks and balance in place going both ways.

Leo reported that he understands schedules are busy but it would be beneficial to attend Council meetings and represent the voice of the golfers. This is important.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that in his experience the City Council doesn't have the inclination or the time to spend on the smaller issues. They are consumed with big problems without worrying about what is going on with hole #5.

Chairman Fuller reported that as a Committee they are overseeing and recommending only. They are not telling the City how to advise Troon to run the course. The City makes the final determination.

The City doesn't have the time to drive to the course for minor details. If concerns are brought to a Committee member, it will be addressed accordingly.

Jud reported that he has been curious about the mission of the group since he was appointed. It is interesting that any Council member would want to or have the time to discuss the golf agenda on a monthly basis with all the bigger issues they have to deal with.

Jud reported that there is a lot of depth of discussion that comes out of the Committee meetings that are very valuable. This has been proven over time. Each individual brings a

different viewpoint, experience and history that would never be a part of the discussion if it were only with the Council.

Councilman Azeltine reported that if there is a concern while a golfer is on the course, they generally know someone on the Committee who they can contact to express their concern.

Councilman Azeltine added that Councilman Bussing would like Troon to interact with Chris and City staff only. If there is a concern from the golfer, they can speak to their Councilman.

Councilman Azeltine reported that the main value of the Committee is to keep the lines of communication open between the golfers and the City so we don't have a problem brewing for months before we find out about it.

Tommy asked if Councilman Bussing was a liaison on the Golf Committee.

Chairman Fuller reported that he was on the Committee for a short period of time.

Tommy added that having firsthand experience, he should understand the value of the Committee.

Councilman Rasmussen added that everyone who volunteers on the Committee has a very busy schedule. They are appreciated for volunteering. He told the Mayor and Council members to inform him if he and the Committee members are not needed.

Chuck asked what additional Committees exist that deal with a large capital asset of the City. Obviously there are large capital assets in terms of streets and storm water etc, but this is a living organism that gets a lot of usage and publicity for the City.

Chuck added that the interaction of the citizens Committee is to act as an interface, a buffer and sounding board for the golfing community. Are there other Committees for the City and if so, how many are on the list to be disbanded.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that there is an Amphitheatre Committee, a Steering Committee, a Stormwater Committee, a Public Works Committee, a Parks and Recreation Committee, and an Arts Council. He is uncertain if any are in the same situation.

Jeff reported that he understands the Councilman's concern but wonders if other committees are privately managed by a conduit between the City and the asset, or are they actively managed by the City.

Councilman Azeltine reported that the Golf Committee is the only one privately managed.

Jeff reported that this could be some of the concern. Some may feel if a professional management team is on board, why a citizens committee is needed. Other committees are involved directly with City staff, but Troon is the conduit between the committee and City staff.

Steve reported that the biggest concern and frustration he had is when the City switched to Troon and the entire Advisory Committee had very little involvement, if any, on a major decision in relation to the golf course.

Steve added that there is a need for the Committee to be a sounding board for players and the first to listen to concerns before they are taken to the Council.

Jud asked Jeff his opinion. Councilman Azeltine also asked Jeff his thoughts on how the Committee should be interacting with Troon.

Jeff reported that this is his fourth meeting in his five months here. He's never viewed the Committee as an impediment for Troon being able to do what is needed. He agrees with all who have said that as a Council member, it would be nice to have someone with the capabilities to filter ideas and suggestions from the community beforehand rather than Council dealing with a lot of unfiltered information. It is a huge benefit to have citizens group to help.

Jeff added that in his opinion, he would be opposed to eliminating any Committee unless they became counterproductive or an impediment to serving its constituents.

Jeff reported that time is very valuable and volunteers are important. A benefit of having the Committee is to be able to discuss items and digest them before going to Council because their time is also valuable.

Jeff also reported that everyone has the good of the golf course in mind. He appreciates the Committee and its hard work. As a golf professional and a General Manager who has served on numerous Committees, Ironhorse is ranked in the top in regards to productivity.

Chuck asked Councilman Rasmussen if the feedback from tonight's meeting tonight will be forwarded to the Mayor.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that he will provide the feedback to the Mayor but he was informed that Scott Lambers will be writing a mission statement for the Golf Committee.

Several Committee members questioned why, how and who made this decision.

Jud asked what the information structure would have been if the Parks and Recreation Director was the sole basis of information.

Chuck asked when a final decision will be made. Will it be before the end of the year?

Councilman Rasmussen reported that he will find out the exact date and forward the information to Chairman Fuller.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that without the input of the people utilizing the course as represented by the Advisory Committee, he would have a tough time responding if a group showed up as they have historically.

Jeff asked if he would go directly to the Council once a month to make a report in the absence of this Committee.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that he is unsure how this will be handled if the Committee is disbanded.

Leo asked if the final decision will be made by the Mayor or if the Council will vote.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that the Council will vote and make the final decision if the Committee will continue.

### **VIII. Date/Topics for August Meeting**

The next meeting will be August 26, 2010 at City Hall in the Main Conference Room.

Chairman Fuller thanked everyone for attending the meeting tonight. He appreciates their efforts.

A motion was made by Tommy Davidson to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 pm. The motion was seconded by Chuck Sipple. The meeting was adjourned by a unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Tonia Morgan, Administrative Assistant  
Leawood Parks and Recreation Department