

IRONHORSE
Golf Club



GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE

Minutes of July 24, 2013
5:30 P.M. – Leawood City Hall – Main Conference Room

Members attending: Dick Fuller (Chair), Tommy Davidson, George Waterman, Bob Reid, and Chuck Sipple

Members absent: Leo Morton and Steve McCartan.

Council Liaison attending: Jim Rawlings, James Azeltine and Lou Rasmussen.

Staff attending: Chris Claxton and Tonia Morgan.

Chair Fuller called the meeting to order at 5:55 p.m.

Guest Attending: Mitch Harrell of Troon Golf.

George Waterman made a motion to approve the May 2, 2013 meeting minutes. Chuck Sipple seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

I. Introduction of Jamie West (New GM)

Mitch reported that Jamie has been with Troon Golf thirteen years. He began in Savannah Harbor with a fabulous team to learn under. He has been at the Diplomat in Miami, Fl.

Committee members welcomed Jamie to Ironhorse.

II. Operations Report

Jeff passed out the Summary P&L Report for review.

Jeff reported that it has been a challenging year financially due to unusual weather, such as snow in May and two events of measurable rain since the end of June. The golf course is doing very well but it has been hard to gain momentum. If we experience bad weather through May, the entire year is gone. Last year's numbers should be surpassed significantly; profitability will be good due to a lot of scheduled events. He suspects the golf course will financially perform significantly higher than recent years.

Jeff reported that the month ending June 30, realized revenues of \$234,056 vs. \$300,092.00 the same period in June 2012. Monthly revenue was skewed in the amount of \$42,000.00 due to the reporting procedural change implemented this year for booking annual pass sales. All member revenue is booked in one month versus splitting it out over two months. Adjusted for that fact, operating income for the month was \$42,345.00. This compares to a budget of \$44,590.00. Total facility revenue rests at \$736,436.00 year to date through June 30, vs. \$861,359.00 in 2012. The variance is due to the lower number of annual passes sold (12 fewer than in 2012), as well as the prolonged inclement weather earlier in the year. Operating days equaling \$60,000.00 in gross revenues were lost in June alone.

Jeff added that total paid rounds for six months ending in June 2013 are \$10,213 vs. \$12,485 in 2012. We are showing a better operating income \$(34,250) than a budget of \$(97,877.00) year to date and have managed to keep operating costs lower than budget. Through June, we are under budget for expenses by \$45,338.00. Nearly \$10,000 was encumbered in unusual maintenance expenses due to flood cleanup for

materials, replacement and additional temporary labor used to help recover from the storm. A significant amount of debris was removed; nearly three dumpsters were full. We are still recovering.

George reported that it is the highest water mark he's ever seen.

Tommy agreed. He's played Ironhorse since 1995 and has never seen it that bad.

Jeff added that Joe Johnson, Public Works Director recently reported that they recorded the highest water levels they've ever seen. . James staff put together a short video of the damage and emailed it to the Golf Committee for review. Water has to find somewhere to go. We bare the brunt the more developments are added to the south and west of 151st Street, or a parking lot or field is developed.

Chuck asked how the enhancements made with the rip rap in the creek bed are holding.

Jeff reported that it is holding for the most part. He and Chris toured it recently and there are areas that will need to be addressed. There is a lot of undercutting going on with the rip rap and rock work on #8. When the improvement was done based on the hydrology test the rock size and particle size were adequate but due to the discharge of water through the water shed a lot of the rock is being moved because the volume of water is great. Some of this area needs to be refaced and maintained. Each time, it may require going in with rock size larger rock than what was originally specked.

Chris added that the improvements from #12 green to #13 green definitely made a difference during the event. Those homes would have definitely flooded.

Jeff reported that we have been able to keep operating costs lower than budget and are showing a better Net Operating Income \$(34,250) than budget \$(97,877.00). Through June, we are under budgeted expenses by \$45,338.00.

Jeff added that in regards to marketing we are at our mid-summer hiatus and aren't doing much advertising because most people are already doing things outside so it isn't as effective. The television campaign will start in August when school is back in session. Radio advertising will also increase as the football training camp is here which should help push for late summer and fall business when our season is slow.

Jeff reported that we have four unique large outings new to Ironhorse in August that we haven't had before. We continue hosting leagues with Fishnet Security, Honeywell, and the Leawood Rotary Club. The, Leawood City Employees will have a golf league, the Ironhorse Senior Men's league meet Tuesdays, and a Wednesday morning Ladies League is also going. We also host a Thursday afternoon Men's League with a lot of the IGA players.

Jeff also reported that we are actively utilizing Golf Now. We are not doing any deep discounting trying to maintain pricing integrity. We resisted the offer to participate in a program as a revenue sharing component with the purchase of a golf card and offering golf for \$20 per round. The deep discount programs are not a good strategy; many courses who participated are struggling.

Jeff added that they are finishing the last junior golf camps this week. Each week was at capacity. We hosted 120 junior golfers in 4 camps. The First Tee program was taken in house this year for our staff to administer. The program is very successful. The fall after school program will begin in several weeks.

Chuck asked if Jeff is satisfied with the number of booked events for summer and early fall. Do we have a lot of empty dates.

Jeff reported that we can always be busier but he is satisfied for the most part. We've had really good, high profile events this year we've never been able to attract. He is certain more will continue to come. May and September are usually busy event months. Deer Creek is our primary competitor but they made a conscious decision for 2013 to sell fewer annual passes and focus on events.

Jeff reported that they hosted the State Line Amateur this week. They provided positive feedback about the golf course. . They sold \$10,000 worth of golf passes at the golf show this year as opposed to \$3500 prior

year and thirty rounds the year before. It is evident that as the reputation improves we will gain more events.

Chair Fuller asked George Waterman who plays a lot of tournament golf all over town what feedback is being said about Ironhorse.

George reported that all the feedback is positive. There obviously the issues with the tees and sand traps but for the most part everyone he's spoken with is happy. He recently played three Country Clubs and Ironhorse has a faster green speed than all three.

Jeff asked Committee members for their feedback. He asked Tommy what the Senior players are saying.

Chuck reported that it is great. He played recently and it is an improvement from a year ago.

Tommy replied that the Seniors are pleased. . He agrees with George the biggest gripe is the bunkers are not consistent.

Jeff reported that the beauty of Ironhorse is it's consistent. People are comfortable entertaining guests there which impacts the property in a meaningful way. They bunkers have been beat to death. The solution would be to totally reconstruct them. The flood situation will never change.

George reported that we should consider adding liners in the traps to keep the clay from mixing with the sand in our Capital Improvement in the future. Would it be conscious to avoid mowing around the edges as a reduce maintenance.

Jeff reported that there is new technology that involves many different synthetic applications; a couple he thinks would be good solutions. One in particular uses recycled rubber and you paint that into the interior of the bunker, similar to a truck bed liner and is impervious to those that create the inconsistently. Once a bunker is contaminated, it's contaminated and this is a problem. It doesn't make sense to spend money on a product that might be in there and good for six weeks or sixteen months. There are no guarantees if a white sand or premier sand is installed if we experience the rains we did recently.

James reported that it makes sense to do a liner, a rubberized product or something similar. Fresh sand should be put in the ones in the flood plains and replaced if damaged. It isn't worth the expensive cost for some of the lower holes.

III. Course Maintenance/Projects Report

James reported that the sod work is complete around the driving range and path. Temporary fans were set up on 4, 5, 6, and 10 and power installed on the practice field fan. In June they completed significant flood clean up. They installed new conduit on #9 due to losing power from debris hitting it. The bunkers were redone on #13 that was completely washed away. They are working on #10 and ran into issues; they are trying to figure out how to handle it due to damage from flood waters. They completed tee aerification this past week. Planned projects are fairway aerifications in August, install drain and sod on the hillside of #10 and #14. Seed and fertilizer in the roughs will be coming soon as well as sod work patching fairway areas around the driving range tee.

George reported that the stand of trees on the back of the blue tees on #2 are becoming a problem. It is difficult for the older golfers with a lower lofted club.

James reported that a certain amount of trees can be removed each winter. They are considering shifting it over when it is redone. .

Jeff reported that #12 is similar due to the amount of trees in the area. There is a lot of space to use on the opposite side closer to the cart path that allows for more tee placement on particular tees. The problem on #2 is the slope is so dramatic it is hard to do any work for fear of putting someone in danger of falling down the cliff. Trimming the limbs and keep it cut back is all that can be done.

George agreed. The smaller trees received a lot of rain in June and grew rapidly.

James reported that some of the larger oak trees down the hill also spread and are hanging at that tee location. They trimmed a few back which is all they can do without moving the tee over or removing trees. This is difficult with the hillside and terrain. They are also holding the bank up.

Chair Fuller asked if we received more play on our driving range than anywhere else in town.

Jeff replied that we have the busiest driving range and practice area of any place he's ever seen for an on course practice facility. The range has inadequate irrigation and the range tee needs to be regrassed.

George asked if they've considered alternating with the back tee that no one uses anymore.

Jeff replied that the only problem is access. The problem is getting someone down there safely without driving into a full tee line hitting balls. It isn't accessible from the street due to the fence. They couldn't drive down Bell drive in a cart without entering through the gate. They also can't run down the construction road adjacent to the range due to being so dangerous and on the slice side from the tee range. The best thing to do is move forward from the existing tee line. The driving range is deep enough that if an additional twenty five yards is added on the front and managed based on wind.

Chuck asked how far out is it irrigated to manage the growth of the turf.

James and Jeff replied that the irrigation is there. There is a spaced out stretching, wind will affect it. A tighter spacing would be more helpful. The front of the range tee where the mat is located so many people step off it has worn a trough in there that holds water.

Jeff added that it stays wet due to holding water. It needs to be regraded and regrassed.

George asked is it possible to ask Skip's program to use the back tee on the other end.

Jeff replied that this could be an option if we are able to figure out a way to get them down there safely.

George asked if they could go down the #1 cart path by the maintenance barn and enter to the right.

Jeff replied that this could be an option but it is still in the zone and where the road enters in by the high lines is nearly 190 yards. . They have worked on it for a couple years to get it mowed down. It was used as a zoysia nursery for a long time and the grass was cut but wasn't repped. It is very uneven. Four to five people may be able to hit balls but it needs a lot of work beyond that. It would be a project.

James added that he thinks it's worth considering. It could be done in conjunction with the other tee work.

Council Liaison Rawlings asked if we've received additional complaints about the noise from the fan on #12.

Jeff reported that the homeowner residing back and to the north on #12 continues to complain but others have not.

James reported that he ordered a mobile mountable fan trailer that can be moved around before a permanent location is determined to see if this changes the noise for the complaining homeowner.

Chris reported that if the trailer doesn't get used in this location permanently it is fine. It can be used elsewhere so it won't be a waste of money.

Jeff agreed. A fan can be mounted on it and made available to use at any hot spot on the greens.

James also agrees. It can be set up on different locations. It will also be a way to get them in safely if pulled in for the winter.

James added that #6 and #10 run off generators that are fairly noisy and they've never received a complaint from the adjacent homeowners.

Jeff asked if the homeowner had his own noise study done to prove the vibration was causing the problem.

Chris reported that he has not but did make a complaint to the Johnson County Health Department.

Chris added that they requested access to his home. It is hard to determine from the property line. The complaint now is the low frequency that he has said the fan is putting out.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked what low frequency is defined as.

Chris reported that this wasn't identified.

Mitch reported that at first it was the high frequency causing the problem, and James geared the fan down and now he's complaining that it is the low frequency. They researched options. It was determined that if something is wound between the trees with a fabric used at interstate and overpass construction sites that's an acoustic fabric that can be used exactly for this application. It can be put on a fence and wound through the trees to completely silence the fan. It wouldn't be seen from anyone other than possibly the homeowners.

Jeff reported that there is enough space to weave a lattice fence through the trees and plant vegetation on it to cover it to determine a ten or twelve inch barrier of vegetation that would break the direct line cycle. This could possibly be an economical solution.

Chuck asked the fans hours of operation.

James replied that the fan on #12 is operable between the hours of 10 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. On cooler weather days the hours are shortened to 11a.m. – 5:00p.m. It is managed on an as needed basis. It wasn't running at all on the 4th of July.

George asked what happened regarding moving the power line for the homeowner who attended a previous meeting requesting doing so to build a pool.

Jeff reported that this has been taken care of and the pool is installed.

IV. Update – Clubhouse Expansion.

Jeff reported that they met with the engineer yesterday to discuss the plan and bid process and defining the scope of work, researched the basic foot print regarding design features they would want to impress upon the architect, audio visual needs, lighting, mill work, fireplace feature, windows, doors, HVAC requirement, restrooms, mechanical requirements, and storage. They also discussed a changing area for women and those in the bridal party for a wedding rental. All should be able to be incorporated in the original amount discussed.

Jeff added that the more this is discussed everyone is excited that it is going to be great revenue for the City.

Chris reported that she learned last week that Terrace on the Green event space in Ironhorse Center is closing at the end of the year.

Jeff reported that he will visit them soon to get a better understanding on where the booked parties go.

Chris added that once closed that is final. Events are displaced. Many have contacted us regarding the Lodge. This is how we learned of the closing.

Mitch reported that something similar happened in Phoenix.

Chris reported that Council approved the contract with Continental at the last meeting. Brett is in the process of putting together the time line.

Jeff reported that the timeline will be critical in regards to how it affects existing operations and when a substantial date of completion will be.

Chair Fuller agreed. Timing is extremely important. Hopefully it will be open next Spring.

George asked if he could add to the wish list. The regular players will be displaced by more banquets and events and would love to get rid of the two window approach and put a nice stone or wood area to order food/drinks without trying to decide which window to order from. He would suggest making the area in front of the grill a rectangular compact bar area that opens up where staff can grill and put a façade to hide the grill. Lionsgate has the same thing. The doors are made of nice wood and fold in with touches of stone and frosted glass. It feels like somewhere you would like to sit and have drinks. If the clubhouse is updated it may attract neighborhood traffic from those not playing golf. The expansion is going to be nice but this should be considered instead of spending all of the money on the expansion alone. A professional space planner should be consulted.

Tommy agreed. It should be opened up.

Chris reported that she doesn't disagree but the reason this was done from the beginning was people who came in, especially women, didn't want to look at the grill during their rental event.. A decision will need to be made regarding a compromise and balance. The architects may be able to look at this and make it a part of the scope but that is not on the table right now..

Jeff reported that although he isn't visibly here, he is still on the City e-mail, involved with purchases, on the roster and in constant contact with Chris, Dick, James, Mitch, and Jamie, and his vision and the footprint of the clubhouse and the environment that it exists in and as time goes on there is so much we can do with it in and around the expansion and around the putting green. He's watched things unfold in the four seasons there and seeing how business is in the market and what are hungry for regarding events. There is so much we can do this is the tip of the iceberg with outdoor space use and incorporating landscaping and using it for real effective useable space. This is what people want. In his opinion people in Kansas City are interested in the patio concept. If you are a restaurant without a patio it's hard to stay in business. . The club has the ability with the # 2 green, and the open space around it, if effectively used a footprint could be created that would not exist in the City. This needs to be in the thought process moving forward.

Chair Fuller reported that when someone is interested in reserving a space for 150-200 people, they will be shown the banquet area. This will be ideal for this type of event. A golf outing will be different.

Chris reported that she will e-mail the timeline to the Committee once received from Brett. Essentially it goes to Council to approve the contract and then through the planning process and back to the Council to approve the final plan. Brett is aware and is working it into his timeline.

V. Misc.

Chris asked if James has received a bid on #18.

James reported that the contractor is coming out again tomorrow to rebid the area. Originally it was discussed to move the cart path but the cost was too high.

Tommy asked if they are thinking about a switch back.

James replied that it will have concrete stairs at the back that slopes more gradually. It will be one large tee.

Tommy asked how it fits with the American Disability Act.

James reported that it can be accessed with a cart from the front.

George asked if monies were approved for some tees.

Jeff reported that Council gave instruction to determine how to rectify the immediate needs. The first priority is to meet the ADA safety issues.

The next meeting will be held October 24, 2013, 5:30p.m. in the Main Conference Room.

Chuck reported that he is unable to attend.

Tonia was notified by Steve that he too is unable to attend.

Chair Fuller reported that Dr. Peppes has been appointed to the Committee. He will attend the October meeting.

A motion was made by Chuck Sipple to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by George Waterman. The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director
Leawood Parks and Recreation Department

DRAFT