

IRONHORSE
Golf Club



GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE

Minutes of February 24, 2014

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

Members attending: Dick Fuller (Chair), Leo Morton, Dr. Greg Peppers, Bob Reed, Chuck Sipple

Troon Management Staff: Jamie West, James Kennedy, and Jason Robert

Members absent: Steve McCartan, Tommy Davidson and George Waterman.

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

Staff attending: Chris Claxton and Tonia Morgan

Guest Attending: Janet Kozier (Request for Pool – Homeowner #11)

Chair Fuller called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m.

Chuck Sipple made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 25, 2013 meeting. Leo Morton seconded the motion. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Chair Fuller announced that Bob Reed was elected into the Kansas Golf Hall of Fame. He and Tom Watson were inducted at the same time.

I. Operations Report

Jamie reported that unfortunately the weather played a factor in being down \$124,000 as of June, but we experienced a good third quarter with an increase of \$14,000, versus the previous quarter of 2012. \$134,000 was lost by year end 2012. The budget was diminished as it was impossible to achieve. A significant amount of money was saved on expenses due to staff being cognizant of spending. A portion of the savings is attributed to waiting to hire the right person at the end of the year. Jamie introduced Jason Roberts; he replaced Dan Cutler, and has an agronomy background from Colorado, State.

Jamie added that the 2012 cost recovery was at 89%, which was only off 5% due to the cost savings we were able to do and a slight increase of the third quarter revenue.

Jamie reported that they are working hard to generate as much revenue as possible in an area generally overlooked. Enhancements are being made to the practice range and the yellow balls will be replaced with white Callaway Diablo balls. They will also get away from the greenish municipal look where the bag stands with the ball washers are and gravitate more towards the black/wood look to feel more like a club atmosphere instead of a city course. He recently visited many courses in the area and our course is the best. We could easily make \$250 per round if Ironhorse were in the Diplomat area in Ft. Lauderdale. They purchased a yardage sign to determine exact yardage when setting up for events and also two nice benches to allow people to relax.

Jamie added that they continue to struggle with the marketing to gain large tournaments; even booked events have discussed moving to another venue that can better accommodate their needs due to space. He negotiated rate with some to keep their business and expressed with them that we are working towards a larger banquet area for them. They are excited about this and chose to remain at Ironhorse for another year or so.

Jamie also reported that staff has been working hard contacting businesses to drum out tournaments. They were able to gain a few smaller ones from Deer Creek who had been with us before. He is glad they chose to return.

Chuck asked what size is too large for Ironhorse to handle.

Jamie replied that one hundred players is the maximum but when staff and volunteers are incorporated it's not comfortable.

Dick asked how many we lose.

Jamie reported that we lost five definite with an additional ten – fifteen if we had the space. It is a detractor. We utilized Sports talk radio announcing to help with getting the word out. This has generated many calls inquiring what we have to offer. The advertisement was worth it. We also continue to utilize Golf Channel, ESPN, and all Time Warner sports channels they offer. Jeff Thomason began this and it works.

Leo asked a profitability regarding a round number on a large tournament.

Jamie replied that it could be \$10 - \$25,000 depending on how elaborate the banquet size is. This is based on a full field player tournament.

II. Course Maintenance/Projects Report

James reported that he and Jason have achieved full Autobahn Certification. He passed around the Press Release from Autobahn showing their announcement. He is excited.

Chuck asked how long the process took.

James reported that they met the first three categories in a year and continued until final completion.

Chuck asked if any of our competitors are Autobahn certified in the metropolitan area.

James replied that there are nine in the State of Kansas. They will continue to document work done until the recertification is due. They need to continue on outreach and will involve local Boy Scout troops and community involvement.

Jamie reported that this is huge with Troon. They highly encourage obtaining this.

James reported that Troon has incorporated a new online environmental system which creates documents and standard training operating procedures to provide to staff which lists environmental risk in order to get ahead of any liabilities that may occur.

Committee members expressed their appreciation.

James reported in sequential months what was done at the course as follows: November - they worked on leaf repair cleanup and winterized the irrigation system. Bids were received for the tee box and cart path repair on #15 for the tee box and cart path. They were also training new staff member Jason and getting him acclimated to Ironhorse. December - dead trees were removed from 10, 13, 14, and 18.

Council Liaison Azeltine asked if Dustin is consulted when this work is done.

James reported that Dustin is consulted and comes out four times per year, helps trim when needed and trains staff on the proper way to trim a tree. He has been very helpful. The month of January was spent mostly covered in snow which allowed them to catch up on the environmental programs.

Leo asked if they anticipate a problem with turf freezing and losing certain sections of fairways as in years past.

James reported that he won't know until the weather comes. A little snow cover provides protection. They hand watered greens during December and January during the very cold winter when the course was very dry. They completed landscape work that consisted of removing junipers in the parking lot. A landscape plan is in place moving forward. A heater was also repaired. They also touched up paint preparing for the weather break.

Chuck asked when the irrigation system will be turned on.

James reported that it will wait due to exposed line and the bridge crossing. It is better when the weather is above 30 degrees.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked what comments have been received in regards to course maintenance.

Jamie reported that they receive many compliments. James and his staff are phenomenal. He hasn't received any negative comments.

Leo reported the course looks great. His house backs to hole #4.

Chair Fuller reported that he also receives a lot of compliments. He has never seen crews that work so hard as James staff. He has never seen this consistency before. Their hard work shows.

James reported that he has a good staff returning this year.

III. Request for Pool (Homeowner #11)

Chair Fuller introduced Janet Koziel. She would like to add a 14x29 pool at her home.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked the condition of the fence in the area.

Chris reported that she, Dick Jamie and James visited the area today. She doesn't anticipate a problem.

Chair Fuller reported that the pool will encroach into the twenty-five feet setback.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked if there is a possibility of balls getting in the area.

Chair Fuller reported that this is uncertain. There is always a possibility. The likelihood is slim. The installation of the pool will not impact the course in noise, view or being hit. Their house is hidden by trees.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked if the applicant is willing to comply with restrictions if the variance is granted.

Ms. Koziel asked if he is referring to signing off if a golf ball is on their property and leaving Leawood free of responsibility. She knows someone sitting on his porch who was hit in the head with a golf ball, but gets balls in his yard often.

Council Liaison Rasmussen replied that he is uncertain of the details, but Chair Fuller commented that a similar situation happened via another request.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked if she has seen previous granting and variances in terms of utilization of the easement and is she willing to accept them.

Chair Fuller reported that he is certain she hasn't seen them but they can be made available to her. The Advisory Board only has the power to recommend either yes or no as to the effect on the golf course but the Board of Zoning makes the final decision.

Dr. Peppes asked how far the pool encroaches on the twenty-five feet setback.

Ms. Koziel replied that it is nearly ten feet.

Dr. Peppes asked if it is a hardship to come closer to the house.

Ms. Koziel replied that it is a narrow arrow with minimal room between the fence and the house. They originally considered the other side of the house but it is more likely to get balls. They have lived there three years and have never received a ball. Her husband golfs on the course often and they wouldn't spend a great deal of money if they thought it was a problem.

Dr. Peppes reported that the BZA has gone through intense training in the last few months as far as when a variance comes before them. They must follow the guidelines and ordinances as written years ago for specific reasons. A ten foot encroachment will be a tough sell.

Ms. Koziel reported that Hole #6 is also in the setback with the exact same set up. Why was the ordinance written.

Dr. Peppes advised her to bring all information possible when this is discussed further. The ordinance was written in terms of property lines and encroachment. He is open minded but she needs to do her homework to convince all before moving forward. It has to be a unanimous decision. This is how a variance works. All five categories must be satisfied.

Jim Rawlings reported that we've already approved one pool. Is there a possibility to face the same issue again in the future regarding the set back.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked Jamie if it will have any adverse effect on the maintenance or playability of the course.

Jamie reported that he doesn't foresee any problems.

Leo made a motion to recommend the approval of the Golf Course Committee to move forward to the Board of Zoning Review, based on the pool having no effect on the golf course. Chuck Sipple seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously carried.

Ms. Koziel thanked the Committee for their time.

IV. 2015 Budget

GM Jamie West distributed copies of the Troon recommended budget for 2015.

James summarized the high points of the agronomy report that was distributed.

Jamie reported that he didn't vary from Jeff's previous pattern on the budget, citing that Jeff did a good job.

Jamie reported that the two biggest changes were the golf cart fee increased \$2.00, which will result in a huge difference over the years to come; equating to \$40,000 - \$60,000. This should increase revenues with minimal extra labor and a pass holder increase of \$100.00 in hopes to gain 125 Triple Crown Members.

Jamie reported that when Jeff was here there were a lot of Marshalls, although Jeff had trimmed it back from the previous operator. Jamie said that he released a lot of them. They were consuming a great deal of payroll and it was unnecessary to have as many as we had. He agrees with Jeff and comes from a "do more with less" mentality. His previous staff consisted of twenty. Upon arriving at Ironhorse there were thirty-five on staff, ten were Marshalls. He advised staff upon arrival that he was going to watch without changes. He recently met with staff and it was determined that the Marshalls, with the exception of a few, will not be returning. His staff will take on their duties, which will result in a reduction of expenses moving forward. The fastest way to increase revenue, to meet the break even mark and hopefully surpass this, is increasing rates. This hasn't been done in a while.

Leo Morton made a motion to accept the 2015 budget. Bob Reid seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

V. Update on Proposed Clubhouse Expansion

Chair Fuller passed out the newest schematic and foot print and explained the details. A memo was sent recently to explain the situation. There is a consensus from the Council that the expansion will be done. The question is the final cost. If plans are approved it may begin in October or November of 2014 with a May, 2014 opening. Marketing could begin in the fall.

Chris reported that they will get the plans complete with final numbers for the April 21 work session. This will give us plenty of time to get through the process. The long side of completion is four-six months, which gives Jamie time to get in front of the busy season.

Jamie reported that the lack of space is resulting in an estimated \$236,000 annual loss of potential revenue.

Dr. Peppes asked what will make up that type of volume.

Jamie reported that it depends on the event. The gross on \$500,000 in revenue was nearly \$180,000.

Council Chair Fuller asked if pricing will be similar to the Lodge.

Jamie replied that it will. He is also receiving information from similar facilities.

Chris reported that a consensus is needed from the Council before it goes to the Planning Commission.

Leo added that a Grand Opening should be marketed heavily. A great Open House is needed. The view will sell itself.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked who is in charge of handling the facility as well as marketing.

Chris reported that the marketing and operation will be done by staff at the clubhouse.

Chair Fuller reported that both will cross-sell themselves. Vickie turns a lot of revenue away at the Lodge because of filled dates.

Chris reported that an online virtual tour (similar to the Lodge) can also be created.

Chris added that she will report additional information at the next meeting.

VI. Misc.

No misc. items were brought forth for discussion.

Chair Fuller thanked all for attending the meeting tonight on a different day and date.

A motion was made by Dr. Peppes to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Chuck Sipple. The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director
Leawood Parks and Recreation Department