

IRONHORSE  
Golf Club



**GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of July 24, 2014**  
**5:30 P.M. – Leawood City Hall – Main Conference Room**

Members attending: Dick Fuller (Chair), Leo Morton, Tommy Davidson, Chuck Sipple, Alec Weinberg, Mark Bodine and George Waterman.

Troon Management Staff: Jamie West, and James Kennedy

Council Liaisons attending: Jim Rawlings and Lou Rasmussen.

Staff attending: Chris Claxton and Tonia Morgan

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

Chuck Sipple made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 24, 2014 meeting. Tommy Davidson seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**I. Welcome New Committee Members**

Chair Fuller welcomed two new Committee members, Mark Bodine and Alec Weinberg.

*Current Committee members introduced themselves to the new Committee members.*

Mark Bodine reported that he has resided on hole #12 for twenty years. He watched the course being built and played it the day it opened. He has always had an interest in keeping abreast of what's going on and has read the minutes since the course opened. He expressed an interest to James Azeltine about joining the Committee and asked him to notify him if an opportunity to serve became available. He is excited to take advantage of the opportunity and be a voice from the perspective of the homeowners surrounding the course. He is very pleased with the course. Troon has done an awesome job.

Alec Weinberg reported that he has lived in Leawood since 1989. He served on the Stormwater Committee for the last fourteen years. He has a genuine interest in the golf course and asked the Mayor if a position ever became available, he would love to serve. He has played Ironhorse since it opened. He owned a golf course equipment business for fifteen years but sold it a few years back. He is knowledgeable about the golf business and hopes to use his knowledge serving on the Committee.

Chair Fuller thanked them for serving. It is nice to have those who not only play golf, but are involved in the City.

**II. Operations Report**

Jamie reported that the course struggled during the winter months but was able to make up the loss during January, February and March. The second quarter during the beginning of June finished flat to prior year resulting in close to 1100 rounds (\$44,000) being lost due to many heavy rainfalls; but is currently close to breaking even compared to last year, which is good considering the winter we had.

Jamie added that the \$2.00 golf cart increase has been profitable and resulted in \$12,000 from prior year. It should be more significant as the year progresses. The Food and beverage ADR is \$5.61 per golfer, which is a good amount but income is usually generated on busy weekends and sales were down due to the slow period experienced in June.

Jamie added that all departments are fully staffed until the end of August when most return to school. Members of the management team will step in to fill their positions. The extra help will be missed but eliminating staff attributes to a payroll savings.

Jamie reported that expenses increased compared to prior year due to replacement of the range balls and needed repairs to the golf carts to keep them functional.

Chair Fuller asked if the new carts have been received.

Jamie replied that all have been delivered with the exception of the range picker. It will arrive once the contract for the GPS cart control passes. Troon partnered with Digital Caddies and set up a program allowing us to have the GPS service for free. Troon understands that there will be issues in the beginning phases but is excited to have them. They will be a great addition to the course.

Mark Bodine reported that he played the course yesterday and the GPS is terrific.

Jamie reported that a lot of people have expressed positive feedback.

George added that he likes the system but would prefer if it were located in the middle of the cart.

Chair Fuller reported that several people have questioned why it is on the side.

Jamie added that these are very basic models; the system featuring the cart control in the middle will arrive soon. There will be a total of two screens.

George reported that he's played courses that offer a feature that plots out tall native grass and requires you to back up once you get too close. Will Ironhorse offer this feature.

Jamie replied that this will be available once the new cars are tested. They will maneuver better once this process is complete. We will have total control of the carts at that time and will also offer an option to slow the carts down on the danger areas. A new bag drop area will be added. This should be a great addition.

George added that boundaries should be established. It should be set by the green.

Mark asked if there is a possibility to offer a feature displaying the grill menu on the screen with a reminder to visit the snack bar allowing players to use their cell phone to pre-order when they reach hole #9.

Jamie added that this will be installed soon. A feature allowing golfers to talk directly to clubhouse staff will also be added. The system is set up on the internet, which requires someone constantly checking it to make it effective. He is currently training his staff how to respond.

Chair Fuller asked if there is an option to show the location of the beverage cart . People have expressed that it would be nice to know.

Jamie reported that the location won't be available on the actual screen but he is certain he can add a service allowing golfers to call inside and inquire.

Jamie added that many tournaments are scheduled during September but he continues his search for large tournaments to bring back to Ironhorse. The biggest setback is the lack of space to host large events. The new trend is after hours events once a tournament ends. We can't accommodate them. The expansion would make a huge difference in bookings.

Jamie reported that they recently advertised on Sports 810 radio as well as hosted an "Inside the Caddy Shack" event with Mark Nigro & Randy Miller. Both were well received and attracted many new players to the course.

### III. Course Maintenance/Project Report

James reported that his staff has been busy with the following:

- The irrigation system had several leaks, which contributed significantly to recent water loss. Sod was replaced on green surrounds due to winter kill. Holes 18, 17, 15, 14, 9 and 2 were completed.
- Sod work was also complete on #4, 7 and the practice course last week. A few smaller areas will be complete soon.
- The fairways were fertilized in conjunction with the grub control application.
- Mowing the native areas around the course was done. They began with those that affect the pace of play.
- Aerification of the tees will begin soon.
- They continue to verticut and top dress aerification the greens.
- Lightning struck a tree on #14 causing significant damage to the irrigation system resulting in seven surge boards on the satellite boxes needing repair.

Chuck asked if an insurance claim was submitted or if the City paid for the damages out of pocket.

James replied that the replacement cost was paid for out of the budget.

Jamie added that he is pleased with the condition of the course. It's dry and the greens are rolling well. The roughs are the greenest he's seen this late in July. It is holding up very well.

Chair Fuller asked who repaired the fence on #10.

Chris replied that the homeowner repaired it.

Alec asked the condition of the bunker on #5. Is the problem related to sand or drainage.

James reported that he will completely clean the area and check the drainage flow once he is able to locate better sand. He hopes to complete this project soon.

George added that the right hand bunker on #5 is always the worst bunker on the course and has been a problem since it opened. It may be time to revisit its shape and make it smaller, especially if it will be redone soon. Hopefully James can work the same magic he did on #14. He is the first person to fix this problem.

Chuck suggested changing it to a grass bunker.

James added that he hasn't investigated this bunker thoroughly but will do so soon.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked if comments, good or bad, have been received from players regarding the course condition.

Jamie replied that he's received a lot of very positive feedback.

Alec reported that the course is in the best shapes it's ever been.

George reported he agrees.

*Committee members expressed that they are also very pleased with course condition.*

### IV. Discuss Proposed 2015 CIP Project List

Chris reported that they may be able to work the ADA issues into the master plan number for parks, even if the top number increased ten percent. She thinks they could come in under the budgeted

\$200,000. The work on 18 needs to be rebid and revisited at that time. Her concern is whether or not the ADA work can be done without doing the tee leveling or would it be best to complete all the work at once.

James reported that the work could be staged. It would depend on the time of year the work is done.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked why can't the steps be replaced on #18 if they are a safety concern. It is a lot of work to accommodate rotting railroad ties.

James added that replacement concrete steps are an option and would cost nearly \$10,000. The original idea was to improve the quality of the tees at the same time, both are crowned and not very big.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked if players complain about the area.

Tommy reported that people complain.

James reported that he receives complaints often.

Alec reported that it limits the area you can play from , which results in more wear and tear on the turf.

Jamie added that eliminating the steps all together will make it more safe and will be better for handicap players who are unable to walk down the steps. They get out of the cart move to the tee, swing, and get back in their cart.

James reported that the idea was to add a cart path at tee level and have a one tee surface. This would meet ADA compliance.

Chuck asked when construction will begin if the proposed project list is approved by Council. Will it be the summer of 2015 or fall of 2014. It would be nice to be ready when the 2015 season begins.

Chris replied that it is important to establish how much of the \$55,000 is related to the steps and ADA safety issues. The City Administrator may want to separate the cost of the ADA/ safety issues first, similar to what's being done in other projects. He is watching every project closely. Ideally it would be nice to begin the work in the fall of 2014 but it will depend on funding.

Chair Fuller reported that it is important this gets addressed soon.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked for clarification regarding item #2 that states "leveling and realigning the tees will assist Ironhorse in gaining a competitive advantage against other golf courses in the metro."

Chair Fuller added that other than the condition of the course the two major things players investigate when playing golf are the tees and greens. Bad tees will cause loss of the competitive advantage. This is important. The current tees are the best they've ever been.

George suggested rather than continue the tee battle move them out of play and add a larger tee box to accommodate both gold and red, and an area to drive over this would benefit going down the hill on the cart part because the hill is traditionally soft and people drive their carts down the hill on #18. This would reduce wear and get them to the fairway safely by going up the zoysia. Adding an entry cart path would be a huge benefit.

Chair Fuller reported that moving it may eliminate the ADA problem and safety issue with the steps. He is uncertain the cost of a path or turnaround but this could work in our favor.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that a rough guestimate is \$50 per foot. This is the cost when doing sidewalks.

Jamie reported that they will definitely take this into consideration to determine if it would indeed be a cheaper solution.

Chair Fuller suggested the white tee box on #16 be lengthened with an “L” shape to the back; #18 needs immediate attention. He hopes to be able to move forward with the clubhouse expansion.

George agreed. He has a similar priority list.

Chris added that this is a good point. Most should understand that a twenty year old golf course will have settling problems. It is important for management staff to justify extra expenses and proposed revenue. She would feel more comfortable if proposed over a three year period. This would be more palpable and better from a staff perspective.

*After a brief discussion regarding the improvement list, Committee members determined that Jamie and James will provide Chris with a prioritized list.*

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that he appreciates them doing this. It will be beneficial moving forward. When is the recommendation needed to forward the information to Scott.

Chris added that it would be needed by the first of October. The next Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for October 23; this is too late.

Chair Fuller asked Jamie if he and James can compile the list soon in order to schedule a special breakfast or luncheon meeting. Tonia can poll the Committee once numbers are received.

Jamie asked a timeframe when the list is needed.

Chris reported that it would be nice to receive this no later than the third week of August.

Council Liaison Rasmussen added that it would be advantageous to lock in a number for planning purposes regarding tees to avoid this fight every year and alleviate it being an issue.

Jamie reported that he will take care of this and notify Chris once complete to move forward with a special meeting.

## **V. Recommendation for Contract Extension (Troon Golf)**

Chris reported that their contract expires December 31, 2014. Her preference is a recommendation from the Committee to move forward to the Council for approval. She received information from Mitch recently with no changes. The contract would extend through 2017.

Chuck made a recommendation to extend the Troon contract an additional three years; 2015 to 2017.

Tommy seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

## **VI. Discuss Setback Violation – Hole #4**

Chris reported that the Codes Department visited the area to verify that their lot reflects the setback. The back of the house is at the edge of the setback.

Jamie added that the homeowners installed a large play structure in the setback area.

Chris added that they also installed a gate on their fence.

Chris reported that we don't want children getting hurt. The City deals directly with the homeowner and not the HOA. The homeowner has received a courtesy notice, but a recommendation isn't needed unless the homeowner decides to go to the BZA and request a variance.

Jamie reported that there are four houses along the same road with issues in the setback. This will need to be addressed.

Chuck reported that in his HOA there is a committee that approves or disapproves if a homeowner requests installing any architectural items such as a backyard fireplace, fence, backyard patio etc. He suggests including the HOA in any information sent to the homeowner to keep them informed. They may not be aware of what is going on. The HOA should know the rules.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that we as a City and the County as a whole suffer from constituents engaging contractors in some cases who aren't licensed and could care less and don't obtain a permit; and when Code Enforcement notifies them, there is a problem. This may not be the situation in this case but it happens a lot.

Mark reported that the homeowner probably legitimately thought he was o.k. by contacting his HOA and being told that this was fine to do but may not have realized that it wasn't fully approved. He is the President of his HOA and a Real Estate Lawyer and understands; but nine out of ten homeowners don't understand their declaration and their question is how they can be subject to something they didn't sign. They take a deed, which has restrictions. Some HOA's think everything is fine as long as they keep their neighbors happy but don't realize that there is a plat that outlines what can and cannot be done. The homeowner may have seen it on their deed or insurance policy for title insurance but never paid much attention to it. It is hard to think every HOA will educate the entire HOA volunteer Board on a golf course even if the Board is unaware.

## **VII. Misc.**

Chair Fuller asked the next step regarding the clubhouse expansion. It is important to get this done. It can generate a lot of revenue and is truly needed for the benefit of increasing golf outings at the course.

Chris reported that at the end of last week Richard Coleman (Planning & Development Director) wrote a letter of the plan review and sent it to Matt with Fritzel Construction. Staff is also working on a Parks and Recreation master plan, which has a multitude of projects that include repair/replace and new projects. The City Administrator requested adding the clubhouse expansion in with these projects and let Park Board rank all of them. The clubhouse was ranked a 5.1 on the new project list. The Council will look at the CIP list in January, but she plans to ask for a work session to review the Park Board prioritization of the list as soon as a date is available.

Chris added that she will give everything to Scott Lambers for direction moving forward.

Chair Fuller thanked the new members for attending tonight's meeting..

A motion was made by Alec Weinberg to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Chuck Sipple. The meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director  
Leawood Parks and Recreation Department