

IRONHORSE  
Golf Club



**GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of October 23, 2014**

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

Members attending: Dick Fuller (Chair), Mark Bodine, Alec Weinberg, and Greg Peppes.

Members absent: Leo Morton, Bob Reid, and Tommy Davidson.

Troon Management Staff: Mitch Harrell, Jamie West, and James Kennedy, Dolf May (Regional Sales & Marketing Manager)

Council Liaisons attending: Jim Rawlings and Lou Rasmussen.

Staff attending: Chris Claxton and Tonia Morgan.

Chair Fuller called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Alec Weinberg made a motion to approve the July 24, 2014 meeting minutes. Greg Peppes seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**I. General Operations Report**

*James gave a slideshow presentation regarding the possibility of implementing new sand to the course. He showed pictures of recent bunker work completed and also displayed sand and liner samples to discuss the best bunker options.*

James reported that this has been on the C.I.P. for a while; they are trying to determine the right sand and liner system to defend the bunkers against rainstorms while providing the best quality. He prefers waterproof, durable material due to flooding and overflow issues we often encounter. Angular sand will pack tighter and hold firm but the current local sand doesn't provide the same option; it doesn't rake well and isn't firm. He is confident the new sand will provide better playable conditions long term. The liner and seams are glued to the entire perimeter of the bunker and is made of heavy material. .

James added that the right bunker on #5 is by far the worst; it is low on sand, has drainage issues and retains water on the lower end. It was used as a tester for the new angular sand. He was pleased with the outcome of the new sand. All of the work was done in house.

Alec asked the general cost to renovate each bunker if outsourced.

James replied that a bunker, same size was completed last year and cost \$2,000 for the labor only, liners weren't included.

Mitch added that the cost would average \$150,000 - \$300,000 to re-do all of the bunkers.

James agreed. It would cost at minimum close to \$200,000 to complete all of them.

Council Liaison Rawlings reported that the bunkers look nice.

Chair Fuller asked if public response has been received.

Jamie reported that he recently played with a group who liked it so well, they purposely dropped the ball in to be able to hit out of it.

Chair Fuller asked the depth of the sand.

James reported that it is 6 inches.

Council Liaison Rawlings asked where the sand originates from.

James added that the sand is from Arkansas; others offer comparable sand but none are located in Kansas. The cost is significantly higher but will be a drastic improvement and offer better protection overall. It will be beneficial to install liners if done; he wouldn't want to incur the cost without them. The cost of local sand is \$32.00 per ton, the new sand is \$27.00; the white sand is \$40 per ton, shipping costs \$60.00 per ton. A distributor in Ohio offers comparable sand but has a one hundred ton minimum; it is delivered by railcar.

Chair Fuller asked if it can be purchased in bulk for a better cost.

James reported that it is expensive. He hopes to receive a better pricing option if a complete project is done.

Mitch suggested the next meeting being held at the golf course to tour and hit some shots off the new sand.

Chair Fuller asked what the typical bunker size is at Ironhorse.

James reported that an average bunker is nearly 1,000 sq. feet; but #12 and #13 are smaller.

Mitch suggested using the newer sand on the worst bunkers to protect from silt and washing out, and the original sand on the bunkers higher up out of the flood zone.

James added that a combination of the two can also be done; especially on the larger bunkers.

Chair Fuller asked how many of the 52 bunkers can the course can do without.

James added that the large bunker on #14 is 5,000-6,000 square feet alone and needs to be scaled down. It would require 100 tons of sand to fill. It would be safer if graded out resulting in a flat exit.

Chair Fuller agrees. The exit on that hole isn't good.

Council Liaison Azeltine asked how many bunkers are in poor condition. Have they been inventoried and ranked.

James reported that he has a detailed list. They take a hard hit during storms. The sand washes down and as a result mud mixes in. This is inevitable when a storm occurs. Bunkers on #4 and #5 were completely washed out and re-done last year but weren't lined due to budget and time constraints trying to get the course put back together.

Council Liaison Azeltine asked if they are worked into the Capital budget.

James reported that they are in the C.I.P. for proposal.

Jamie added that some bunkers could be removed. They discussed removing unnecessary bunkers located in the flood plain to avoid continuous repair.

Mitch suggests keeping the key bunkers and shore them up as best you can.

Council Liaison Rawlings thanked James for a good report.

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## **II. Additional Course Maintenance Report**

James reported that his staff finished sodding the collars on green #18. A few more areas will be done next spring. Aeration on all fairways is complete. The lower tee on #13 was lowered, re-leveled, stripped, and re-sodded. All greens were aerated at the end of August. The P2 area has grown significantly in the past few years and is stressed, it will require clearing soon. Staff also smoothed the surface through the top dress aerification program, completed touch up work, as well as spot seeded the roughs. All is attributed to the year we've experienced.

The landscape beds and parking lot entrance were planted with mums. The fence line along the property was cleaned and volunteer trees cleared. They also completed repairs along the roadway on #11. The Public Works Department repaired the sunken sidewalk along the drainage area along the crossover from hole #11 to cart path and the Parks and Recreation staff re-landscaped the beds. His staff spread top soil and filled in the unevenness from the trees that were removed and also reseeded curb repairs.

Chris reported that it looks nice. Has staff received any feedback from Mr. Rochelle.

James reported that the grass in the bed will always be a challenge without irrigation but agrees it looks good but may suffer in years that we experience a warm season. He hasn't received any feedback

James added leaf cleanup will be done soon. They have also been busy repairing unclogged drains and working on irrigation and drainage additions and repairs. The aerification system will be winterized in late November. All final equipment has been ordered.

Chair Fuller thanked James for a good report.

## **III. Discuss proposed 2015 Fees & Charges**

Jamie reported that the third quarter finished up \$5,000 to prior year mainly due to the increase in tournaments with a few tournaments rescheduling from the May timeframe to September, this helped a lot. There were twenty plus tournaments held in the month of September alone, which is substantial. The rainfall during the first part of the quarter in July and August was more than five inches, which resulted in a shortage on revenue of 769 rounds over the quarter with one tournament rescheduling for October. Rounds through September are down 1,179 to prior year, but an increase in golf fees have been realized due to the \$2.00 increase in cart fees. As a result \$22,000 has been received in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter versus prior year.

Jamie added that the food and beverage revenues are down \$4,000 to prior year mainly due to loss of rounds during two weekends the first part of June resulting in a loss of \$50,000. Staffing levels have been reduced in all departments as the fall season approaches. Expenses

are slightly up to prior year due to golf cart repairs to keep them functioning. Range ball replacement was due this year. They switched to a newer, better ball.

The new Club Car golf carts are now in service with an enhanced GPS feature for yardage to greens. The service is offered at no cost as Troon has signed a deal with Digital Caddies to provide their service to participating Troon facilities. Initiated cart control with on course barrier zones will keep carts from driving into non-cart areas.

Mitch reported that historically GPS is expensive and can pose problems at times, and the technology isn't something a golf course will ever own. He recently researched options and found that Visage is a preferred car GPS program but costs \$1,000 per month; the question becomes if this will be a determining factor for golfers to play at Ironhorse, or will golfers pay an additional cost to use it. It will drive more revenue to make it "cost neutral" and is well received but is it a good fit for Ironhorse.

Chair Fuller and other Committee members are certain golfers won't favor the extra cost or make the decision to play at Ironhorse based on this feature.

Alec reported that that the biggest concern is if it speeds up play.

Jamie reported that the play pace has increased since GPS was installed.

Council Liaison Azeltine reported that a way to justify it may be to calculate how many extra rounds this would add over the course of the year rather than automatically raising the green fee.

Chair Fuller reported that the feature would be nice for those playing for the first time but most golfers he plays with have a GPS watch or Bushnell; he doesn't think golfers will pay an extra fee.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that years ago rental car companies offered GPS systems in their cars for a cost but it wasn't well received.

Mitch reported that most have partnered with a GPS company at one time or another but it isn't well received when the cart lease is increased.

Alec asked if the free option or the expensive cart option be chosen. What is the ultimate plan.

Jamie reported that feedback will be received from golfers. He agrees with Dick, most use a Garmin device when they play. The best option will be determined over time

Mitch reported that it is worth keeping the more expensive version if the \$12,000 could be pre-booked with marketing.

Alec added that he recently played a course and the GPS displayed a large amount of advertising, which was irritating to scroll through every five minutes when trying to figure out where you are going.

Jamie reported that he has heard this complaint before.

Council Liaison Rawlings asked is there a demand for the product.

Jamie replied that it speeds up play but it is more of a nicety feature.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked if the operating income is in the positive or negative at the end of the nine month period.

Jamie reported that it is in the negative roughly \$140,000, which is slightly more than last year mainly due to the weather we've experienced.

Alec added that it would be helpful to receive a detailed quarterly report regarding revenue, how the course is doing, budget, rounds played, etc. A lot of the minutia isn't needed but more detailed information would be appreciated.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked Chris to clarify that this type of report is generally given out on a quarterly basis.

Chris agreed that the new Committee members haven't received this yet, but they are provided to the Council and the information could certainly be shared with the committee.

Jamie reported that he will provide this reporting format moving forward. He appreciates the feedback.

Jamie added that marketing advertisements were on 810 Radio during the Chiefs and Royals games.

Jamie reported that the monthly internet and long distance service averaged \$1200.00, but thanks to James researching options, they contacted Mark and Karl of the I.T. Department and they were able to work with A.T.&T. to receive a \$600.00 monthly savings cutting the bill in half.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked if new members have moved to Ironhorse since several courses recently closed. Are player residency/non-residency statistics kept; he remembers roughly 20% are residents but wonders will this increase or remain the same due to the courses closing.

Jamie added that he has received a lot of calls and visits but none have actually joined. Most are trying to figure out where they will go. He imagines more interest next year when golfers realize they can save by playing at Ironhorse rather than joining another private club. He will gather residency statistics soon.

Jamie reported that the golf cart revenue is substantially lower than most courses. We currently charge \$12.00; others charge \$20.00 or more. Our cost will increase \$1.00 resulting in a \$13.00 cart fee.

Chair Fuller reported most people are only concerned with the fee rate to play and don't focus on the actual cost breakdown.

Alec asked if a walking rate will be incorporated. He walks the course and others may do the same.

Jamie reported that a walking rate hasn't been established because most players at Ironhorse don't walk but he isn't opposed to incorporating one if needed. Troon offers a program called *Troon Fit* that encourages golfers to walk more. If so, they receive a reduced fee.

Chair Fuller asked if it is time oriented. He isn't implying that walkers are slow but they shouldn't do so at 9a.m. on a Saturday.

Alec reported that walkers don't slow golfers down, there are a few tough transitions at Ironhorse but it averages close to the same.

Jamie reported that the distance between tees is where a group on a cart will catch up to the walkers.

Jamie added that the Triple Crown rate increased \$75 to gain a little more out of the membership.

Chair Fuller asked Jamie to confirm if Triple Crown memberships were down this year.

Jamie added that they were down due to the timeframe of the winter and when signups were supposed to happen.

Greg Peppes made a motion to approve the cart and Triple Crown fee increase. Mark Bodine seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

#### **IV. Discuss Proposed 2015 CIP ADA/CIP Project List**

*Chris passed around the outline of the project list for review.*

Chris reported that there is a lot of competition for dollars regarding projects. For example, where do the bunkers fall, priority wise, with the tee leveling and how do we determine recommending phasing. It is important that this is discussed tonight as the Committee won't meet again before Council discusses the C.I.P. for the next four year period.

Jamie added that initially he and James discussed that tee leveling was the priority but this has changed due to the bunkers. They are now the priority in regards to playability and a visual aspect of the golf course. He is often questioned about them. The cost will average \$130,000-\$200,000 if the bunker/liner system is used with the current square footage. If it is determined that a few bunkers can be eliminated the cost will decrease. The priority is safety, ADA, bunkers and tees.

Chris asked if the price reported is based on the work being done in house.

Mitch reported that material cost will be the same; the question becomes if the labor is outsourced or not. It could be done in house if they are not all done at one time due to other projects James and his staff are responsible for, but it may be best to outsource the work if a large quantity is done during a season. It isn't feasible for staff to devote the entire time on this and neglect other responsibilities. It should be bid out to hopefully acquire an experienced contractor.

Alec asked if highly skill leveled additional help can be hired to complete the work in the off season.

Mitch reported that this is a good thought but would require a lot of time and management. This would be hard to prioritize due to winter projects. It won't save money if pulled from those projects. He is certain many contractors will bid on it if given the opportunity.

Chris reported that there is a \$100,000 minimum to be categorized as a Capital Project. She has to make sure this is doable.

Alec added that there is no cash out of hand if done in house; it is reallocated to a different cost center and would be a capital expense instead of an operating expense. The cash number doesn't change.

Mitch added that there are costs either way; this can be done however it works best. It makes more sense financially if the key ones are completed in a year. Staff will have additional

projects if not working on the bunkers. A project this big will require adding staff, so the expense becomes the same.

Dr. Peppes added that he agrees; the golf course staff is busy. Is it possible to complete half one year and the others the next year to meet the \$100,000 requirement. This would provide plenty of time to ramp up at the end of the season to keep workers on board to complete the project as opposed to bidding it out.

Chris and Mitch agreed; it wouldn't hurt to price it both ways.

Chris reported that the course will be paid off next year, but be advised we should be cognizant of the fact that although the debt will be paid off, the money won't go directly to the golf course.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that he is very concerned. It was revealed to Council that healthcare cost increased \$500,000 but he was hoping the money not being used to pay for the course could be used in Parks and Recreation. Where will the half million come from that he was anticipating. Council has to seriously think through the cash flow and possibly ask people to come forth with a Parks and Recreation bond issue. He thought everything was going along fine until he received this bomb. We may need to re-think 2016 if this continues. This needs to get done. Council has great budgeting tools that have proven themselves over the past decade but the shock hurts.

Dr. Peppes reported that Council can allocate the dollar amount but ADA should be top priority, followed by the bunkers. It will cost more than \$250,000 if all done at once. The cost should remain under \$200,000 if the ADA work and half the bunker work is done before completing the other half, tees and immigration.

Chair Fuller agrees. It should be prioritized and kept under \$200,000 per year. A group of five – six holes could be done per year. Irrigation is important. The heavy traffic areas have been a problem due to the lack of water.

Chris reported that ADA issues are funded. The priority list presented could be followed if done this way. The question is if it happens in three, five or six years.

Council Liaison Rawlings reported that this is tangible; golfers want bunkers. He recommends focusing on ADA and the bunkers first.

Council Liaison Rasmussen added that the priority has always been to establish the playability of the course.

Chair Fuller reported that complaints in the past focused on tees, greens and fairways but Troon has done such a good job that this is no longer the priority. As a result players are being more defined with what they are finding fault with. It is a compliment to Troon that we weren't concerned with in the past.

Mark reported that it should be presented to Council that there is a mandatory expense needed to keep the course open by law and also present them a wish list, but the ADA must be done in order to keep the course open period. For example, an ADA compliant sidewalk is needed for the courthouse whether it is used or not. The money has to be spent. It is not a discretionary expense if the course remains open.

Greg made a motion that the proposal is followed as set-forth by Troon for the C.I.P. budgetary items for the next five years. Alec seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

## **V. Discuss Clubhouse Expansion**

Chair Fuller reported that the Committee has been trying to get this done for quite some time. He is concerned that the direction to bring this to fruition is slipping away. There hasn't been any discussion at Council meetings or Work Sessions as to how to get this back on track.; . He believes this is due to the to the projected cost increase. This is unfortunate because a tremendous need has been proven. Troon is also supportive of this. A great deal of revenue has been lost. It is a situation where a loss of a minimum \$305,000 in income in tournaments and booking events at the clubhouse. His major concern is it's off the table and not being discussed. How can we get it back on track.

The Committee can only make recommendations and we need the help of the Liaisons. We need to know if there is support from the Liaisons for the recommendations made. The lodge books eighteen months out for banquets, four-five calls are turned down daily. Each event averages \$3,000-\$4,000. The golf course is also losing tournaments they can't support or accommodate due to the lack of seating. The expansion would provide the access needed for events. What needs to be done to get this back in front of the Council for bidding purposes. Is there support if we decide to move forward again.

Council Liaison Rawlings reported that he personally lost confidence in the process in relation not only to the cost but whoever picked the contractor or the architect didn't know what they were doing. He isn't aware of how the bid process was handled, but a lot of questions were asked that weren't answered. The consultants were wishy-washy in the meetings and couldn't give direct general answers. Everything went downhill from that point. The Council was for it and gave the go ahead for a certain amount and everyone was excited and the anticipation level was high but once the numbers were received, it was an amount the Council couldn't afford and wasn't what was expected or thought that it should have been.

Chair Fuller reported that it is revenue producing but every time they turn around it isn't being discussed. They are working on getting the plans finalized and getting the City to approve them and take it back out for bid so a legitimate firm can determine cost. He is afraid that once it comes back, it will it be turned away again.

Council Liaison Rawlings reported that there is strong support for it, he nor other Council members aren't arguing that it will be revenue producing, but it didn't sit well with Council that the money wasn't there and the plans were insufficient to move forward.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that the financing of it was basically the cash flow and money set aside yearly. The bid presented wasn't feasible at \$1.9 million dollars, which would wipe everything off. The Parks and Recreation Committee had the park improvements set up as a bond issue and he knows from experience that it took two years to campaign for that, which required he and others speaking in the community and to HOA members to get everything in line. It is a lot of work, similar to running a campaign. We will be lucky to get a bond issue before the people in 2018. The City Administrator discussed 2020. There is an extensive list of Capital Improvement Projects; some we can agree with and some we disagree with. The Capital needs of the City are tremendous with curbs, streets, storm sewers etc.

Chris reported that Chair Fuller is right about where it stands City Administrator Scott Lambers has requested the completed set of plans and the City does not want to go with another architect. Planning is reviewing the plans. The question is if the plans are completed will there be support to go back out to bid. She believes there is no way to move forward if the same type of cost is received.

Mark asked if there is a remodel or change configuration to the restroom and kitchen.

Chair Fuller reported that it is mainly an expansion with a slight change to the restrooms. A definite number is needed. How can we move forward. We are sitting at a void. The Council is discouraged, and rightfully so, with the way it turned out. We need the ability to say if we can get it back to rebid with a better number, will there be support for it.

Mark reported that it is difficult to understand a cost of \$1.9 million without reconfiguring the restrooms or the kitchen. It is basically paying a very high price per square foot for a 5,000 square foot addition without remodeling the kitchens or bathroom. The most attractive way to move forward is to show Council the hard work done to reduce the cost.

Alec reported that it won't get built if we can't get it built for a reasonable number.

Chris added that this is true. She has detailed notes from every interview that was conducted. The questions were very specific and pointed. In the end, the DB team kept raising the costs, surprisingly even between the \$1.4 and \$1.7 estimate, when nothing had changed.

Dr. Peppes made a recommendation that the City try to get an idea of current costs to build the project so that we can have a discussion to take it to bid once final plans are satisfied. Once a number is received, if out of reach, it may require a bond issue but if it is a number within reach could it be worked into schedule.

Chris reported that she wants to make sure she understands that the consensus is that there isn't any harm in bidding it out to get a better number. It hasn't been bid out to anyone other than the original group.

Council Liaison Rawlings reported that the only problem with bidding it out again is if the winner isn't notified causes a problem and prices may increase if we drag our feet too long.

Chris reported that costs may likely increase anyway. If not built until 2020, the price may go up. However; it does cost contractors to bid a project.

Alec agreed. It could be a problem if it is bid without having a start date for the project. Contractors can't operate this way. There is credibility when going out to bid. An architect may be able to provide a ballpark but \$300 per square foot is silly. He as a taxpayer doesn't think enough revenue can be generated to make this a good investment.

Chris and Committee members agreed. Contractors won't spend their time bidding without this information. There may not be a good response without this information.

Mark reported that the original square footage cost is outrageous.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that he suggests playing around with the models and see what the projections are like before moving forward.

Alec agrees. It is best to secure the money and then if the money is available bid it at that time if a funding opportunity arises.

Chair Fuller reported that this was done but it was moved out a year. It has been six months with no movement. Can we pressure the contractor to finalize plans to take it back to bid.

Chris reported that we don't have much leverage, we owe them under \$5,000 and they are not responding. She agrees that getting the final plans and consider taking it back out to bid is probably the best option, if supported.

Mitch reported that someone should be able to develop a good cost estimate.

Chris reported that we had the engineers estimate and other bids; it can be done but it isn't a real number until bid. They will build it off of our set of plans.

Mark reported that we may not receive a total bid but a contractor could provide an estimate cost per square foot.

Mitch agreed. This should be easy. There is so much commercial building going on in the surrounding area.

Greg made a recommendation that a resolution to request the City Administrator request finalization of the plans and specifications and payment thereof. Mark seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Mark reported that it makes sense to convene every two months instead of every three or four to discuss how to move forward.

Alec reported that the main focus is getting the plans finalized.

Chair Fuller added that meeting sooner may be necessary; a meeting can always be scheduled if needed.

#### **VI. Update - Setback Violation – Hole #4**

Chris reported that she met with the Planning Department. Richard, Community Development Director thinks they may go to the BZA. We seem to disagree on the gate the resident has installed. She met with Richard, Mark Klein, Senior Planner and the Codes Department and came up with several documents, one found said the fence will be continuous and she recollects it was implied that continuous means no gates. Planning doesn't have anything to prove that there can't be a gate. There is a slight difference of opinion regarding what a continuous fence means. We've had others who we have padlocked, including this one. This is currently unclear. She will continue to watch closely to see if he goes to the BZA. He is clearly in the set back with the play equipment and has received a courtesy notice.

Alec asked the next step after receipt of the courtesy notice.

Chris reported that the next step is they have sixty days to comply. They are long over this timeframe. This comes from the Codes Department.

Alec added that something needs to be done if the sixty day timeframe has passed. You can't say you are going to do something and don't follow through. The code needs to be enforced.

Mark reported that it may be necessary to give them a citation so they understand this is serious.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked if the fence was installed by the developer.

Chris reported that it was.

Council Liaison Rasmussen added that there is a covenant running with the land that we insisted on. Has it been read. The BZA is limited in terms of what it and cannot do because of statutes.

Chris reported that she is uncertain if it has been read. This is a good question. There were a lot of documents that they went through.

Dr. Peppes reported that this is true. It precedes everything.

Chris reported that the biggest issue is they don't want to get rid of the playground but it is clearly in the setback. If the playground is in the set back and you agree that playing that hole can have balls land in their yard and injure children. Similar to hole #10 and the swimming pool issue years ago.

Mark suggests requesting Zoning to enforce the setback via a citation. They've already received the citation and they haven't acted upon it. For example, if he has a junk car in his driveway and receives a courtesy notice and he doesn't respond, he will receive a ticket.

Chair Fuller asked if making a motion has any merit.

Dr. Peppes reported that it does. When the packet is received, it will be read saying that they came to the BZA.

Chris reported that they will always ask if it has gone to the Golf Committee for a recommendation; same with the Planning Commission.

Chair Fuller reported that the Committee has always been cooperative and tried to work with people when there is a problem but they haven't come to us.

Alec made a recommendation that the Ironhorse Advisory Committee requests the status of what has been done regarding this issue. Greg seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Alec Weinberg to adjourn the meeting.

Dr. Peppes seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director  
Leawood Parks and Recreation Department