



GOLF ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES, NOVEMBER 28, 2023

City Hall, Galesburg, Illinois

Meeting Called to Order: Meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m. by Chairman, David Selkirk

Roll Call:

Present: Rodney Bunch, Paul Sandborg, David Selkirk, Alderman Steve Cheesman, Golf Professional Bryan Luedtke, Greenkeeper Matt Miles, Director Parks and Recreation Elizabeth Varner

Absent: Stan Devlin, Jerry Reynolds

Guest: Wayne Miles

Minutes: October 2023 minutes were approved with motions from Rodney Bunch and Paul Sandborg.

Greenskeeper Report:

Greenkeeper, Matt Miles, reported on maintenance of the golf course. The greens have been verticut in two different directions and have been top dressed for winter protection. Approach areas were aerated by pulling soil cores and breaking them up and blowing off the thatch. Fairway aeration was completed using the Bannerman slicing tines. David Selkirk asked why the slicing, with Matt explaining that it allows air in and provides a channel to get in the soil. The rough was also aerated out to the tree line, around the greens and the high cart traffic areas. The taller areas were mowed down for winter. Fall leaf and debris blowing and mulching have also occurred, with most plant material in the ornamental areas being cut and removed. Bathrooms on the course have been winterized for the season. The irrigation system has also been winterized, after repairing the two sprinkler head leaks.

Golf Professional Report:

Bryan Luedtke provided the Golf Professional Report for November. October showed total rounds of golf at 2,640 which is about 700 more above the average, but comparable to the 2022 revenue. (\$31,000) The range revenue had a 34% increase from 2022 with \$1,250. Golf sales were \$3,100 with food and beverage at \$7,000, both comparable to 2022. Rounds of golf are over 30,000 for the season. Tournament participation is up 15%. Golf outing participation showed a total of 1,415 rounds in 2023. New golf outings included Smart TD (Railroad), Zimmerman and McClintock. Peoria Sandtrappers is planning to have two outings next year with their regular date and one at the end of the year in October.

Rodney Bunch inquired about having a Starter position. Bryan agreed that a Starter may be needed but it is hard to know when to put a starter on a tee. Steve Cheesman does not see the need for a Starter. Bryan stated another possibility is to pair up singles or not allow singles to play. Rodney mentioned is it a city course and should be regulated which is why a Starter would be good. Bryan will take this into consideration. Paul Sandborg suggested the option of teeing off in front of the bunker. Rodney did not see this as an option.

Old Business:

Chairperson, David Selkirk, asked about the bridge for #15. Don Miles reported that the bid opening is scheduled for next week, with a goal of having it completed mid-March. Director of Parks and Recreation, Elizabeth Varner, stated this did not move as fast as we all wanted despite the continued discussions, but the goal is to be completed in the spring.

New Business:

David Selkirk mentioned Bryan had some discussion topics. Centennial ideas included a Business After Hours in March, Ribbon Cutting and a Points Race. Bryan also mentioned the Galesburg High School ordered supplies from another vendor, and in the past have purchased them at the golf course. Don Miles suggested Bryan talk to the Athletic Director to explain this concern. Bryan also wanted to be able to purchase flowers for aging member funerals, using a city credit card for a funeral or a league. Elizabeth Varner stated that this would be hard to manage across the board but would check on the policy. This has been a concern for other Department and Divisions as well, but a city credit card is not used.

Another discussion topic Bryan had was adding seed and sand bottles/buckets on carts. Matt Miles suggested these could be added to the next cart rental agreement. This may need to be considered for the next lease agreement with Club Car. Don Miles concern is creating extra work filling them 2-3 times per week. Bryan stated there could be a large container behind the building. Matt suggested just sand, while Rodney Bunch would like sand and seed. Bryan likes the sand and seed bottles for a Par 3, due to the staffing concerns so customers can help and fill up divots. Matt suggested these could be placed by the ball washers possibly. David Selkirk states that each Par 3 needs one. David thought #15 and #12 would be good. Director of Parks and Recreation, Elizabeth Varner, stated these items could be discussed at the staff golf meetings.

It was brought up to start on #13 instead of #1 Tee in June, since this was the original way, the course was set up. The question was asked if it was logistically possible and if Matt had considered it. Matt suggested #10 vs. #13 to make it easier. Elizabeth understands David's reasoning for #13, due to historical reasons.

Bryan is interested in automatic credit card charges, such as charging 3% on membership if they use a credit card. Elizabeth will check with finance regarding the credit card fee.

Bryan also wants to have a band on the patio for people to enjoy after golfers finish while scores are being added. This would be after the Senior Super Ball. Elizabeth stated it was a good idea.

David Selkirk expressed concern regarding the budget and compared the Golf Division to other Parks and Recreation Divisions, stating that golf does not get anything. Elizabeth explained that comparisons should not be made, as all Departments and Divisions have wants and needs that are not met. There was continued discussion with David and Bryan that Bunker Links does not get anything. Elizabeth pointed out that additional staff was in the budget and cut. She also explained that new signage has been requested in the budget for the entrance at Bunker Links while the Lake Storey Pavilion, which also has events, signage was cut. There were continued comparisons with the Recreation Division regarding the budget while Elizabeth explained that should not be compared as all City of Galesburg Departments and Divisions have requests that are cut. Bryan compares "making an extra \$100,000" is justifiable to get more at Bunker Links. Don agreed there is more revenue as compared to last year.

David Selkirk inquired about the fees for next season. Don Miles explained he has just given them to Bryan and will be meeting with him tomorrow to discuss the rates. The fees are not posted yet to the public, but usually are in December and then publicized by the New Year.

David Selkirk inquired about plastic cups for the winter months and wanted to know budgetarily what has been done this past year, as he feels Bunker Links has not received anything. Elizabeth explained the budget and that bridge #15 is part of 2023 and 2024 is not yet approved. She stated that there are new amenities, while the need to maintain what we have is just as important. David wanted to know who made the decision to get more money. Steve Cheesman explained the budget is tight and that he supports golf, while Bryan reiterated Steve supports golf. David wants to find a grant. Elizabeth said she also looks for grants. Steve would like to find a grant writer position for the city and is working on this. David would like to see golf receive more money. Don Miles explained that all Divisions receive budget cuts.

Public Comments:

Wayne Miles was present for public comment. He mentioned other golf courses have assessment fees, of which Bunker Links does not. One example was Lake Bracken just added an assessment fee for a new pool, and that Hole #11 was a donation. He is concerned with the proposed plan to move the driving range, which would affect #6 and was mentioned in the City Council Work Session. He is concerned about the money being wrapped up in a project that is not needed and not seeing the return. Wayne would rather see the money spent on maintaining the course. Bryan stated the goal is to have a grass tee and use real golf balls, while Steve Cheesman stated it will grow the game and increase revenue. He said it would be a difference maker to add to the budget. Wayne stated that Soangetaha and Lake Bracken, as well as 90% of golfers use restricted balls. He stated Dave Dunn sponsors ball but may not for real balls. Bryan explained that he pays a portion of the balls. Wayne inquired what the benefit is of hitting real balls vs. restricted balls, and that more fencing would be needed down

#9 fairway. Wayne does not like the idea of tearing up a beautiful course to shorten it up. Steve stated that it would not be under 6000 yards, and #6 could go back further. Rodney Bunch wanted to know why the Golf Commission had not heard about this. Steve stated that has been discussed. Wayne wants to see these ideas brought up to the members. Steve stated many golfers like the idea and do not see it negative. Wayne stated the course is in great shape and this is taking a chance. Bryan stated that the driving range made \$37,000. Wayne stated he does not think it is wise to spend \$500,000 or more to get \$30,000 back. David Selkirk is also not in favor of the expanded Driving Range. There will need to be fencing added for safety. David and Wayne would like to see improvement on the cart paths, such as #9 and drainage. Paul Sandborg asked for more explanation on how the course is not shortened. Steve explained moving the tee back to #6, bringing #7 back and dog leg it to add in what is lost. Wayne would rather see money spent on course improvements, instead of a survey. David Selkirk does not agree with the City Council and budget. Wayne and David would like to see who is for the idea, and against it. Elizabeth explained Phase One would be Architect and Engineering in 2024, which would allow key stakeholders to provide input. She stated this should include the Golf Professional, Greenkeeper, Parks Superintendent, Golf Commission and Golfers.

Meeting Adjourned: 5:45 p.m. – Paul Sandborg and David Selkirk made the motion to adjourn.

Next Meeting: March 25, 2023 - 4:00 p.m.