

MINUTES

BOARD/COMMISSION: Recreation **DATE:** 8/17/11
MEETING: Regular **CALLED TO ORDER:** 7:30 p.m.
QUORUM: Yes **ADJOURNED:** 9:05 p.m.
LOCATION: Glen Ellyn Civic Center

MEMBER ATTENDANCE:

PRESENT: Chairman Girsch, Commissioners Cavanaugh, Cornwell, Graham, Jourdan, Miller

ABSENT: Commissioner Dell

ALSO PRESENT: Trustee Liaison Ladesic, Recreation Director Pekarek, Recording Secretary Solomon

Call to Order

Chairman Girsch called the Glen Ellyn Recreation Commission regular meeting to order at 7:30p.m., in the Civic Center at 535 Duane Street, Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

Public Comments

None

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Graham moved and Commissioner Cornwell seconded that the minutes of the July 20, 2011 minutes be approved. This motion carried unanimously by a vote of 6-0.

Manager's Report/Financial Report

Recreation Director Matt Pekarek reported July was a fair month for golf as there was only a half-inch of rain in the first three weeks of the month. He stated there were record dew indexes in July as well as warm air temperatures at night that did not fall below 75 degrees, which puts the turf at risk. He stated the soil temperature two inches from the surface was measured at 86 degrees which is when bentgrass roots die. He stated the multiple thunderstorms during July caused tree damage, power failures, and disrupted customer services. He stated they have not run an irrigation cycle since July 20th, which is almost at the 30-day mark. He stated they have never gone this long in mid-summer without an irrigation cycle, and they are scheduled to run the irrigation tonight if there is no rain.

Mr. Pekarek stated July's patronage patterns are starting to show a distinct shift as in the past two years, there has been a distinct drop in 9-hole rounds which is most likely due to the recession and changes in the customers' attitudes toward golf. He stated this is in contrast to the 18-hole rounds which are down a little in the past few years, but not markedly. He stated they have been successful in using specials and discounts for to attract 18-hole rounds, but the specials and discounts for 9-hole rounds have not caught the customers' eyes. Revenue is down for both the 9-hole and 18-hole courses.

Mr. Pekarek stated he was struck by some of the very different adjustments things that had to be made in July as they handled lots of situations. He distributed a sheet titled "What Is More Important?/ How Should We Prioritize?" that listed 15 customer service decisions made from July 12th through August 2nd, 2011. He stated the different priorities ranged from Safety to Customer Service to Protecting the Turf to Saving Money as heat and severe thunderstorms came through. He stated the staff cleaned up damaged trees which were blocking sidewalks and paths, spread 1500 pounds of ice on localized dry spots, repaired damage to the golf-course irrigation system, moved food from refrigerators without power to units that had power, replaced the kitchen hood exhaust fan damaged by power failure, syringing of greens with irrigation water, and shoveled sand in bunkers so they were playable. He stated there were 8000 rounds of golf played during this period as \$374,000 was earned in gross revenue and the staff did an incredible job as issues occurred and showed their experience and work ethic. Chairman Girsch commented it was useful to have the sheet to see what was happening during the three-week period and had seen the crews out repairing damage. She stated she appreciated all the good decisions that were made.

Mr. Pekarek stated that one of the more important decisions was to sacrifice short term putting quality, spike the greens and raise the height of the cut in advance of the heat and humidity. This turned out to be a fortuitous decision that helped prevent turf loss. Another good decision was to spray fungicide on tees, greens and fairways at the first hint of Pythium, a fungus disease that can spread quickly. He stated they sprayed three times, weighing the expense of chemicals against the risk of turf loss. He stated they lowered the height of the cut on August 2nd to the July 17th height in order to restore putting quality. He stated the driving range tee was reseeded last Friday, August 12th, which should pop soon. They will seed more and will aerate in October.

Mr. Pekarek stated the summer of 2011 has been positive as revenue is up in June, in July, and so far in August. He stated they were down 29% in April, 15% in May and are now almost poised to catch up revenue-wise for the year. Commissioner Graham asked about the year-to-date revenue, which was down considerably few months ago. Mr. Pekarek responded he is surprised the revenue has rebounded so much. Rounds and revenues have been up eight of the last 10 weeks. Commissioner Graham stated it is usually slower in September to which Mr. Pekarek stated there is a shift in play during September as leagues start to end, but they tend to get more non-resident play. Mr. Pekarek stated September is the biggest month for groups and outings and there are also three high-school teams that play mostly 9-hole rounds which boosts the number of rounds but hurts revenue.

Commissioner Cavanaugh asked if there is a plan to grow the 9-hole business. Mr. Pekarek stated the resident play on 9-hole courses during the week has stayed strong, especially among the seniors, but the biggest drop has been on Saturdays and Sundays where non-residents pay a higher fee. He stated they have responded with some promotions such as Golf Happy Hour which they instituted in July that has brought in play on the 18-hole courses, but maybe one foursome a day for the 9-hole courses. He stated in August, they did an email special of \$59 for a foursome after 12 noon on Saturdays and Sundays which has gotten a little interest. Staff will continue to try to stimulate demand for the 9-hole course.

Mr. Pekarek stated that for 2011 the golf course is down 4% in revenue and down 7% in rounds. On Mondays, excluding holidays, 18-hole green fees are down 23%. He stated during his conversations with other golf managers, the Village Links is busier than most other courses.

Commissioner Cornwell stated he saw a Groupon deal with certain restrictions today at Arrowhead Golf Course for two rounds on 18 holes with a cart for two players and two buckets of balls that would retail for \$174, but sold for \$85. He stated the deal was limited to 400 which all sold before 12 noon. Commissioner Cavanaugh stated Groupon usually gets about 50% of the sale price. Mr. Pekarek

discussed a Groupon deal at the Links that was sold in June for a 9-hole round with a cart and a bucket of balls. He stated this deal sold for \$22, with 1578 sold. The Village Links grossed about \$18,000.

Commissioner Cornwell stated a Louisville, KY golf course that sends specials on email. Email marketing of tee times was discussed. Commissioner Miller stated it would take a sophisticated computer marketing plan to do this. Commissioner Cornwell stated his fear would be that we would train the consumer to wait for these deals to which Mr. Pekarek stated Phoenix almost destroyed its market by training the consumer to wait for discounts. Commissioner Cornwell stated they need to get the non-resident player list expanded. Mr. Pekarek mentioned that 2/3 of the 8000 rounds played July 12-August 2 were played by non-residents. Commissioner Cornwell stated we need to protect the core customers but there have to be other things we can do to get the non-resident dollars. Commissioner Graham stated we could do an online page with peak tee times and rates based on those times to which Mr. Pekarek stated they do this with leagues and groups.

Mr. Pekarek stated he presented the Village Links Master Plan to the Village Board on July 25th, 2011 and then received the Board's feedback on August 8th, 2011. He stated there is some support to move forward and also some questions raised to which Trustee Ladesic stated the Village Board has some concerns over the generation of revenue. Trustee Ladesic stated there is a report in the works about golf courses in the area that lease out their restaurant facility and the revenue those may generate. Commissioner Cornwell stated the Links should have a destination restaurant as a chain restaurant would be much more concerned about the location.

Commissioner Cornwell mentioned different expansion ideas for the property to which Trustee Ladesic responded he does not know if expanding the property has ever been explored. Chairman Girsch asked what the source of funding would be for buying addition property to which Trustee Ladesic stated there is \$2 million in the cash reserve. Chairman Girsch stated the cash reserve are maintained to address needs on the golf courses and there is not additional money to buy more property.

Trustee Ladesic asked about the potential loss of use of the irrigation system and purchasing generators to keep the system going. Mr. Pekarek responded that he did not feel that would be a necessary expenditure, because a power loss usually follows thunderstorms that drop enough water so the irrigation system is not needed right away. Trustee Ladesic suggested connecting all golf course buildings with transfer switches so power goes to the irrigation system after an outage. Mr. Pekarek explained that the irrigation system runs on 3-phase current that is not compatible with the electrical feed used to power buildings. With miles of wire, many electrical components, and two transformers powering the irrigation system, such a back up system might be complicated. Mr. Pekarek stated he will consult with irrigation experts as to the possibility of a back up system.

Trustee Liaison Report

Trustee Ladesic stated the Village Board had a meeting the night before on August 16th, 2011, where they discussed the widening of Hawthorne Blvd. to 22 feet across. He stated the residents had a great presentation on keeping this boulevard at 21 feet across so 20 feet of driving space from curb to curb. He stated the Village Board decided not to widen this boulevard.

Trustee Ladesic asked the Commissioners to go look at the condition of Panfish Park and stated there may need to be some work done at some point and monies may need to be ear-marked.

Commissioner Jourdan asked if the clubhouse is on the back burner to which Trustee Ladesic responded it will be brought up at the Planning Retreat, occurring in a few weeks. Trustee Ladesic stated that care should be taken with the design of the kitchen so that it will be attractive to outside forms that the Village

might want to hire to operate the food service. Chairman Girsch stated the recommendation was to spend some money to get detailed plans and see what is recommended and what the cost is. Trustee Ladesic stated that drawings presented at the July 25th Board Workshop are on The Links' website. Chairman Girsch verified the facility's Master Plan was to be discussed at the Planning Retreat to which Trustee Ladesic stated he will definitely bring the Plan up for discussion if it is not on the agenda. Mr. Pekarek stated Village Manager Franz has the Master Plan as one of his focuses.

Announcements and Other Business

The next meeting of the Recreation Commission will be Wednesday, September 21, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. at the Civic Center.

Adjourn

Commissioner Cornwell moved, seconded by Commissioner Graham, to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m. The motion carried unanimously by a vote of 6-0.

Submitted by: Debbie Solomon, Recording Secretary

Reviewed and Edited by Matt Pekarek, Recreation Director 9/13/11

Approved by the Recreation Commission 9/21/11