

# MINUTES

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BOARD OR COMMISSION: Recreation

DATE: 9/21/11

MEETING: Regular X Special \_\_\_\_\_

CALLED TO ORDER: 7:38 PM

QUORUM: Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_

ADJOURNED: 9:20 PM

MEMBER ATTENDANCE:

PRESENT: Chairman Girsch,  
Commissioners Cavanagh, Cornwell,  
Jourdan and Miller, Student  
Commissioner Parker

OTHERS: Trustee Liaison Ladesic,  
Recreation Director Pekarek,  
Recording Secretary Blake

ABSENT: Commissioners Dell and  
Graham

## **CALL TO ORDER:**

The September 21, 2011 meeting of the Recreation Commission was called to order by Chairman Girsch at 7:38 PM. A quorum was present.

## **WELCOME NEW STUDENT COMMISSIONER JEFFREY PARKER:**

All members welcomed the new Student Commissioner Jeffrey Parker.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

None

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Commissioner Miller moved to approve the August 17, 2011 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cornwell. The Motion carried unanimously.

### **STANDING REPORTS:**

➤ Manager's Report / Financial Report

The condition of the course is improving with cool evenings over the past three weeks, which helped the driving range tee and filled in some spots in the fairways that suffered in July. The mild weather was also good for golf, but was flat on rounds played and revenues up only 1%. Those with jobs seemed to stop coming out to play during the week while the debt ceiling drama and bad economic reports played out. Other times increased slightly: twilight, weekends and after work. Now the students are back playing, retirees are keeping up, but rounds are still flat. There are improvements in some categories, but losing in others.

Through July 2011, golf rounds throughout the upper Midwest are down double digits: Chicago down 11.3%, Cincinnati down 18%, Minneapolis municipal system down 20%, Detroit down 10%. Rounds at the Links decreased only 6% through July, 2011.

The regional USGA agronomist made his annual visit in August. This yearly visit gives the Village Links an important outside perspective. The staff received a handful of suggestions to incorporate into their course management program. At a cost of \$1,800, it is worth it to receive the high level of analysis and perspective.

The Fall Fest newsletter has been sent out. The customers attracted help the Village Links generate more fall sales than other courses in the area. The newsletter promotes eleven price-based promotions, four events and seven program features, and impacts thousands of rounds and revenue. The promotions are well crafted because they offer more than just discounted fees.

Commissioner Cornwell noted that when he visited to set a tee time, the counter person told him of all the different programs. He did a good job.

Manager Pekarek said that they will continue to modify the offerings and how they are communicated using the website and e-news. He expressed desire to know more about what other courses are doing for promotions that is equally robust.

Chairman Girsch asked about texting available tee times throughout the day, and going from email based communication to more immediate systems. Manager Pekarek said that the most prevalent use of texting now is being done by Mike Campbell to get feedback from players who missed tee times. Also some recruiting for foursomes is done by texting. Text blasts are not being done now, just to individuals.

Chairman Girsch asked about aerating fairways. Manager Pekarek said that aeration has not been done for three years. Instead they are spiking the fairways with solid tines. This is not as effective as aeration, as it does not remove any organic material, but it is much less disruptive for customers. Fairways will be aerated in the future after more effective equipment has been acquired. Also, mild weather has helped the fairways recover quickly from the spiking.

Chairman Girsch mentioned groups she knows that play at the Links because fees are attractive and the course is good. Others come regularly because of the over-60 discount and course conditions. Manager Pekarek said that such factors help when someone calls asking "what do you have for me".

There was discussion concerning the overall downward trend in rounds numbers and whether the new "Play it Forward" initiative might help. Manager Pekarek doubted that this new effort would have a significant impact. He said that popular ideas are easy to adopt, citing the movement away from metal spikes in the 1990's that changed the industry in only three years. There was also discussion about redesigning the course for three six-hole rounds, or three nine-holes.

Commissioner Miller asked about some dead trees, including two along the entrance drive that need to be removed. Manager Pekarek said that staff is focused on the turf playing surfaces that impact customers the most. Currently, important work is being done that will impact course conditions next season. Some tasks, including dead tree removal, take longer to accomplish with a reduced budget. The trees will be removed later in the year as time allows. Staff is doing an excellent job prioritizing work on the course. There was general discussion concerning the financial and staff resources for tree removal, and the possibilities of assistance from other municipal sources.

Commissioner Miller asked how many full time staff are at the Links and are they laid off in the winter. Manager Pekarek replied that there are eight full time people, including restaurant staff, and they are not laid off over the winter. There are some part time people in food service and seasonal mechanics who work over the winter. There are 120 part time seasonal employees.

➤ Trustee Liaison Report

Trustee Ladesic mentioned that the Chamber of Commerce is promoting their golf event and he asked them why they were not at the Links. Manager Pekarek said that they have had that outing at the Links in the past and that this year they are playing a less expensive course with a dining room large enough to handle their group.

Trustee Ladesic reported that a theme of the Village Board planning retreat was how to partner to keep costs down. Combine efforts with other local taxing bodies for equipment, tree care,

maintenance, etc. Other topics were succession planning and economic development, and what sources are available in the Village. There was widespread support for doing “something” with the Links and to seek grant opportunities. Tasks are to create and put up wayfaring signs, particularly because of its off-the-beaten-path location and branding.

Commissioner Cornwell initiated discussion concerning grants and foundations for tax exemptions. The Audubon Society was mentioned. Manager Pekarek said that the only grants he is aware of are to purchase open land. If there are grants applicable to golf courses, or funds available to the golf business, he would like to know so he could apply for them. Other municipal courses use tax dollars to pay for capital improvements like those contemplated at the Village Links. Trustee Ladesic noted that the Village gains a source of revenue and community benefits from the Links. Manager Pekarek noted that the Links is performing in the upper 10% across the country, and is one of the most effective financial performers. Most municipal courses are in deficit. There is no disagreement that the facility needs to be improved, and to do it once and do it right.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER BUSINESS:**

The next meeting of the Recreation Commission will be Wednesday, October 19, 2011 at 7:30PM at the Civic Center.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Commissioner Jourdan moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cornwell, and was carried unanimously. The September 21, 2011 meeting was adjourned at 9:20 PM.

Submitted by Karen Blake, Recording Secretary

Reviewed and Edited by Matt Pekarek, Recreation Director October 13, 2011

Approved by the Recreation Commission October 19, 2011