

**Town of Fairfield, Connecticut
Golf Commission
Monday, November 14, 2011
7:30 pm
Eunice Postol Parks and Recreation Center
75 Mill Plain Road, Fairfield, CT**

Members Present: Jack Slane; Ryan Morris; Jordan Lustig; Craig Curley; Tammi Peterson; Drew Janis and Lou Albrecht

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Gerald Lombardo; Jim Alexander and Peter Grace

Chairman Craig Curley called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

II. Act on Minutes October 17, 2011

*Motion: Jack Slane made a motion, seconded by Jordan Lustig to approve the minutes with the following corrections: Superintendent's Report: on page 2 should read: 12th tee rather than 12th Green. Under the same report, to clarify, Ms. Albrecht's suggestion should read that it is placed in the hand carts rather than carts. **The motion carried unanimously 6-0-0.***

II- Communications-

1. Chairman Curley distributed emails from Mike Herrington and Jack Lett on behalf of the FSGA asking that a vote taken last year be reversed so that the FSGA can have block time on both Mondays and Wednesdays (restoring Monday League play).. In discussion Mr. Harrington explained that they are able to accommodate times that outings are scheduled on Mondays and at the same time they fill times that are left open as well. He feels it is a win-win for both sides. Ralph Butera, 223 Homeland St., remarked that while it may not be popular with the seniors, he doesn't feel one group should get two days. G. Lombardo remarked that not only was this done to allow a day for outings but also to see if the times could be used by people paying a higher rate than seniors pay. Ryan Morris suggested that one day per group makes it easier and clearer for the public. Jim Alexander stated that one day per group is easier to manage but that the FSGA was very accommodating. He added that they give back a lot of times. He also added that the "No Show policy" is not working. He feels that the days that the groups are given are not valued or appreciated and they feel it's too easy just to cancel them.

Motion: Jordan Lustig made a motion to allow the FSGA members sign up for Mondays during a week where they don't have a Wednesday and that they return any days when there is an outing.

Ms. Albrecht suggested that they table the motion until they hear from all the groups

There was no second to the motion. No action was taken. Mr. Curley stated that "no action taken" does not necessarily mean that this request will not go forward at a later date.

III. Staff Reports

1. Pro Manager Report - Jim Alexander reported that October was again a very wet month and rounds are down 500 at HSR and 300 at Carl Dickman Par 3. However, November is looking much better and rounds are up by 500. HSR has been running a special "resident rates for everyone" and it's been extremely popular. People are definitely reading the website. He would like to relook at block times for groups. He would also like to ask for the Commission's support of the Tournament Rate that was voted in several years ago. He feels that it's always an argument or a negotiation. Mr. Curley wondered if perhaps the rate needs to be reviewed but stated that the Commission would support him.

2. Administration Report- Mr. Lombardo reported that he has begun the preliminary budget process and that he has met with Mr. Alexander, Mr. Grace and Mr. Johnson. There are no major increases

other than the \$3.3 million dollar Clubhouse/parking lot/Cart barn plan which will be a bonding issue. He has also kept the tee box and bunker work. The First Selectman has looked at the long-term bonding and debt service and has not taken the clubhouse off the table. Mr. Slane stated that it may become an issue of how much can we do for a million and the Commission may need to have a plan. Mr. Lombardo will speak to the First Selectman to see about timing and when he feels he'd like to see a presentation of some sort to get things moving in the right direction. It will be a process of several years once it gets started This Commission will see it and have the opportunity to approve the budget at the Dec. meeting. It is as usual a multi-stage process.

3. Superintendent Report – Peter Grace reported that all the trees on #3 that were previously identified for the pond expansion have been removed. They are cleaning up leaves and will start doing equipment maintenance once the weather turns. They are working on the 8th hole and Zach will be returning next week to continue his bunker work. When asked about the 2nd hole by Mr. Slane, Mr. Lombardo stated that it would be a spring project. Mr. Lombardo will be going before the Conservation Commission to secure permits for both the 2nd and 11th holes. Mr. Lustig reported a broken bathroom door on the 6th hole. Mr. Grace will check it out and if necessary report it to the company. Ralph Butera asked if the vandalism to the monument on the 13th hole was reported to the Police Dept. It was. Mr. Grace reported that they have been inspecting the range netting and have noticed no bird mortality.

IV. Greens Committee Report – Mr. Janis reported that he feels Zach's work on holes 1 and 3 was excellent. He asked Mr. Lombardo to explain the plans going forward which he did explaining that the bunkers on 3, 9 and 11 will be next. The plan in 2012 Budget, after July, is to do seven bunkers and two tees. The permits that they are waiting for are for 2 and 11 and they will be coming through soon and the work will take place in the spring.

V. New Business – None

VI. Old Business – 1. 8th Hole Chain Link Fence- Mr. Grace reported that the work is almost complete. One neighbor is pleased and one is not.

2. Fee Structure – Vote Chairman Curley reviewed a new proposal put forth by Ryan Morris (see attached) and then suggested tackling each item from last month one by one.

1. ID cards- ***Motion: Jack Slane made a motion to raise the Senior and Adult cards from \$35 to \$50 and to leave the Jr cards at \$25. Tammi Peterson seconded with an amendment to raise the Jr cards to \$30. Jack Slane seconded that amendment.***

Mr. Lustig remarked, "We want to give breaks to out-of-towners but what do we do for the residents in Town?" Ms. Peterson felt that Jrs. should bear some of the burden. Mr. Lombardo stated that regardless of weather, each year expenses go up and it is in fact a business that is being run. Mr. Curley stated that it would put us more in sync with other towns.

Vote 5-2 (Curley and Lustig opposed. Motion Carried.

2. Cart Fees – Chairman Curley stated that the suggestion is to raise cart fees by 1\$ per person per cart. Mr. Alexander stated that on an average, 16,667 carts are used so that would be the increase in revenue in dollars. ***Motion: Jack Slane made a motion, seconded by Lou Albrecht to raise the carts from \$15 to \$16 on 18 holes and from \$11 to \$12 for 9 holes.*** Mr. Lustig remarked that he felt this was aimed at seniors who take carts and that the Commission needs to "stop nickel and diming everyone in order to meet the budget."

Audience remarks: Ellen Everard, 179 Nonopoge Rd., spoke from the audience to raise the idea, as she did last month, of tying the season pass to a special rate for carts. This was again rejected by the Commission. Don Peterson, 1061 Galloping Hill Rd., reminded the Commission that a dollar hike for both 9 and 18 holes would be an imbalanced hike and felt the 9 hole should be left alone.

Mike Herrington, 93 Rolling Ridge Rd. remarked that in order to get the repeat customers that you get with the Leagues, you should be careful not to raise their prices too high and increasing cart

prices will raise their cost to play. *Ms. Albrecht decided that she would like to discuss this after the rate discussion and she withdrew her second of the motion. No other second was forthcoming so no action was taken.*

3. Friday consideration as Weekend or Weekday – Chairman Curley and Mr. Janis both stated objections to changing Fridays to weekend with the feeling that they would scare away potential customers. Jim Alexander stated no preference but did mention that Fridays are the second highest in rounds and the 3rd highest in revenue so it would be nice to capitalize on the numbers. Ralph Butera mentioned that he was around when the Commission made half day Fridays as weekends and “it was a disaster”. No action was taken.

4. Twilight Rate – This topic was brought to the attention of the Commission by Chairman Curley and after a short discussion no action was taken.

5. Res/Non Res Rates – Mr. Morris reviewed the scenarios that he prepared last month. Mr. Slane felt that they could not raise the rate from \$27 to \$30 on the weekends for residents and not raise the non-res. rate from \$54 to \$60. Mr. Morris let them know that “A” is the aggressive scenario and he feels better with “scenario B”. Most agreed that staying below 30 was a better idea. Jim Alexander also stated that staying below the \$70 mark, even \$69 was a better idea. Ms. Peterson suggested a “first time visitor” rate. Mr. Lombardo suggested raising the rates \$1 across the board, bringing in an additional \$40K. After a lengthy discussion they decided not to take action until they discussed the season passes. No action was taken

6. Season Pass Rates – At last month’s meeting there was a suggestion of lowering the non-res. season pass rate to \$175 in order to increase those who might begin to make the course their “home course”. Many felt that residents might feel that the non-res. are getting a better deal. Since that time, Mr. Alexander, Mr. Morris, and Chairman Curley came up with a newer proposal of selling a season pass for \$375 to both res. and non-res. The increased rates would be seen for the non-res in the greens fees. Don Peterson offered to work with the members to show each option and how much revenue would be realized.

Motion: Ms. Albrecht made a motion to sell resident season passes for \$375 with and non-resident passes for \$400 keeping “fees per round” the same for each. There was no second.

Audience member, Kevin Baker, 22 Mellow St. stated that he was not in favor of “helping non-residents while stepping on residents”.

Chairman Curley stated that rather than rush to vote in order to make the Recreation brochure, he’d prefer that the members continue to digest this information. He will send around a questionnaire highlighting each structure. He’ll ask for opinions on options and hopes to have a final vote in December.

VII. Public Input – None

Chairman Curley stated that the December meeting will not be held at the HSR Clubhouse but will remain at the Eunice Postal Recreation Dept. The elections of officers and approving the 2012 meeting calendar will also be on the agenda.

Mr. Slane made a motion, seconded by Mr. Morris to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 pm. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan C. Ryan
Recording Secretary