

**Town of Fairfield, Connecticut
Golf Commission
Monday, October 7, 2013
Eunice Postol Parks and Recreation Center
75 Mill Plain Road, Fairfield, CT**

Members Present: Craig Curley, Chairman; Lou Albrecht; Drew Janis; Jordan Lustig; Ryan Morris; Jack Slane and Phillip Collin

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Gerry Lombardo, Peter Grace, Jim Alexander

Chairman Craig Curley called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

I. Act on Minutes: September 9, 2013

Motion: J. Slane made a motion, seconded by J. Lustig to approve the minutes with several typographical corrections noted by Ms. Ryan.

The minutes were unanimously approved with the corrections.

*Motion: J. Slane made a motion, seconded by J. Lustig to amend the vote taken on Sept. 9 under Staff Reports – Pro Manager -to read that the Fall Specials will begin at **10am rather than 11 am.***

Vote- Approved Unanimously

II. Communications – Peter Trupp – Season Pass Refund – Medical Issue – Mr. Trupp was present to ask the Commission to apply this year’s season pass to next year as he has had several wrist operations preventing him from playing this season (see letter Attachment A). Mr. Lombardo let the Commission know that he had refused this request on September 18 but that Mr. Trupp elected to bring the request to the Commission. The members agreed that the pass is not intended to be a discount but rather a break-even situation where some people reach it and others may not depending on how often they play. Members were concerned that agreeing to this would set a precedent where others who may be sick or travelling and not able to play as often as they had intended would then come before them to ask for the same assistance.

Motion: L. Albrecht made a motion, seconded by R. Morris to deny the request.

Vote: Unanimous

III. Staff Reports

1. Pro Manager Report - Jim Alexander reported that September was a very good month; HSR, CJD and the driving range were all up. He added that the Fall Specials have just started but are very successful. Next year he will need to be sure that the rate he proposes isn’t lower than the Resident seniors would normally pay. G. Lombardo reported that Westport had requested that HSR honor their resident season pass rates because Longshore Golf Course has had to close from Oct 7-10. Mr. Lombardo chose to honor their resident rates at \$24.00 for adults and \$19.00 for Seniors for 18 holes. He felt it was a goodwill gesture and hoped that if Fairfield were ever in the same situation, that they would do the same for us. Jim Alexander acknowledged that they had already had 25 come from Westport on the first day. Mr. Alexander reported that “the course has never looked as good” and feels that this gesture is also wonderful advertising for HSR.

Chairman Curley mentioned that the CSGA hosted the Links qualifier at HSR this past year and next year will be their last year. They have asked to return to HSR again. No date has been set as of yet. Mr. Lustig was not as receptive to the idea, feeling that the Town should not “give away a day of revenue”. Mr. Grace added that the players come once, and sometimes twice, to play practice rounds that they would not normally play and they do pay for those rounds. Mr. Curley asked that further discussion wait until a formal request comes before the Commission.

2. Administration Report – No Report

3. Superintendent Report – Mr. Peter Grace reported that they are in Leaf Cleanup season. He added that he is still dealing with a dying tree on 15. He has decided to let it take its course then replace it with a tree that he

believes he can take from the 17th hole. He will hire Tree Arch to do the work that he estimates will be \$3500. He will look into whether or not there is a warranty of any length of time. Members asked that Jim Alexander get involved to look at the tree on 15 and the replacement tree. Mr. Grace added that he aerified and has over-seeded some greens.

Zach is done for the year. When asked by Mr. Morris, he will not be blanketing the tees as he has done in some prior years. He does not feel the outcome warrants the amount of labor.

IV. Greens Committee Report – Mr. Janis echoed Mr. Alexander’s remarks about the excellent condition of the course. He discussed:

- the Yardage marker on #12
- the 16th Bunker which seems to be consistently short on sand
- A continued effort to keep up on the water fountains as some seemed not to be working.
- Missing Bunker rakes.
- Yardage markers – It was decided that they would have 3 large markers; red, white and blue in the center of the fairway and take the others away.

Mr. Grace will address all these issues.

Mr. Slane brought it to the attention of the Commission that on a number of occasions he has seen people jumping onto the course at the 11th hole without paying. After discussion, it was decided that Mr. Grace will attempt to block off the area with large rocks. If this doesn’t work they will create No Trespassing signs as this is a “theft of services” and can be punishable by law.

V. New Business –None-

VI. Old Business – 1. Minimum age of players at Carl J. Dickman Course –This discussion was a continuation from the past several months. As Chairman Curley explained, it actually pertains to both courses and at what age children should be permitted to play at HSR and at what age they should be permitted to play alone at CJD. This matter will also have an impact on the age that IDs are sold. Chairman Curley presented the following policy at last month’s meeting:

Players using the golf courses must be at least 12 years of age. Children under age 12 may be allowed to play if they are able to satisfy the Pro/Manager that they have an adequate understanding of the golf rules and etiquette. The Pro/Manager may require that the underage child is accompanied by a golfing parent or an adult known to the child. Children younger than age 6 will not be permitted to play or be sold a golf pass.

Mr. Lombardo presented two separate policies, one for each course believing that they are two very different entities and should be treated as such:

HSR- Players using the HSR golf course must be at least 12 years of age. Children under age 12 may be allowed to play if they are able to satisfy the Pro/Manager that they have an adequate understanding of the golf rules and etiquette and be accompanied by a golfing parent or an adult known to the child.

CJD - Players using the Carl J. Dickman golf course must be at least 12 years of age. Children under age 6-11 are allowed to play if they are able to satisfy the Pro/Manager that they have an adequate understanding of the golf rules and etiquette. The Pro/Manager may require that the underage child is accompanied by a golfing parent or an adult known to the child. Children younger than age 6 will not be permitted to play or be sold a golf pass.

Mr. Curley’s recommended rule from last month was shown to the Town Attorney who did not have any objection to it though he felt that the Commission may want to have a parent sign a waiver of some type. All members agreed that they did not want to have children under 12 playing at HSR without the

accompaniment of an adult. Mr. Alexander felt that they could handle this but the only issue is that while most residents are in our database, they really have no way of verifying the age of non-resident youths. He was not as confident about the employees at CJD of monitoring the players. Mr. Slane remarked that “a policy subject to interpretation is like having no policy at all.”

Motion: J. Slane made a motion seconded by L. Albrecht to adopt Mr. Lombardo’s suggested policy for HSR: Players using the HSR golf course must be at least 12 years of age. Children under age 12 may be allowed to play if they are able to satisfy the Pro/Manager that they have an adequate understanding of the golf rules and etiquette and be accompanied by a golfing parent or an adult known to the child.

After discussion Mr. Slane withdrew his motion.

After further discussion the members leaned toward giving the Golf Pro leeway and more subjectivity. Mr. Janis suggested that they remain with one blanket policy and administer it differently at each course.

Motion: J. Slane made a motion seconded by C. Curley to adopt Mr. Curley’s suggested policy for both courses with a change to the last word to read I.D. rather than pass: Players using the golf courses must be at least 12 years of age. Children under age 12 may be allowed to play if they are able to satisfy the Pro/Manager that they have an adequate understanding of the golf rules and etiquette. The Pro/Manager may require that the underage child is accompanied by a golfing parent or an adult known to the child. Children younger than age 6 will not be permitted to play or be sold a golf I. D.

VOTE: Motion passed 5-2 (J. Lustig and P. Collin opposed.)

2. Course Management Update- Chairman Curley distributed a report (see Attachment B) that he had compiled to give an overview of the investigation that he, Mr. Morris, Mr. Slane and Mr. Lombardo had done over the past several months. The report explains several alternatives, cost structures and conclusions. Mr. Morris explained the report in detail. In conclusion, Mr. Morris explained that if they suggested any change to an outside management company, they would lean toward the *Maintenance Only* aspect which could save between \$200K and \$300K each year. Alternatively, an internal restructure of the current maintenance department was also presented which would entail reducing the number of fulltime employees from 6 to 3; three would move over to DPW and not lose their employment. It was understood that seasonal employees would be hired to fill the vacancies resulting in an approximate savings of \$200K. This might present a Union issue which would need to be negotiated through Human Resources. Mr. Morris added that if the Commission can achieve savings this way without any outside Management Company that would be a best-case scenario. He added that they could then show the Town Bodies that they are acting in good faith to make substantial savings when asking for large Capital Budget items such as a new Clubhouse. When asked, Mr. Grace stated that he felt the report was an excellent one and that he felt comfortable going from 6 to 3 full-timers but would prefer only losing two.

The members thanked the sub-committee and especially Chairman Curley for the thorough report. They asked that it be put on the website for all to view, adding that this is a secondary report to add to the 10-Year plan. While they took no immediate action, all agreed that they would like to move in the direction of reducing the full-time maintenance staff with the firm understanding that the employees would be moved to other Town positions and not lose their jobs. Mr. Slane added that if the Town, and HR specifically, doesn’t want to take on the changes with the Union, then this Commission has done its job in suggesting it as a cost-reducing effort.

Mr. Lombardo added that regardless of what is decided about the Clubhouse, the golf course won’t be able to sustain today’s rates because expenses are continually on the rise. Mr. Lustig mentioned that he feels a large deterrent to play at CJD is the goose droppings. Ms. Albrecht suggested that they all brainstorm about revenue-producing ideas. Mr. Curley agreed and asked all to come to the next meeting with some suggestions.

VII. Public Input – Upon hearing from Mr. Lustig, the Commission acknowledged with great sorrow, the recent passing of Paul Roth, a past member of the Golf Commission.

R. Morris made a motion, seconded by L. Albrecht to enter into Executive Session at 9:28 p.m. to discuss a Personnel Matter.

The motion carried unanimously.

VIII. Executive Session -

J. Slane made a motion seconded by R. Morris to come out of Executive Session at 10:08 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

Motion: R. Morris made a motion, seconded by L. Albrecht to extend the contract of Pro Manager Jim Alexander who, by mutual agreement, will take no salary increase for 2104.

Vote: Unanimous

J. Slane made a motion, seconded by L. Albrecht to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan C. Ryan
Recording Secretary