

**Town of Fairfield, Connecticut  
Golf Commission  
Monday, November 18, 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:** October 7, 2013

*Motion: J. Slane made a motion, seconded by J. Lustig to approve the minutes with an amendment to clarify the Management Update Section. Ms. Ryan and members noted the clarification and will amend if approved.*

*Vote: The minutes were unanimously approved with the amendment.*

Mr. Morris also asked that an amendment be made to the Executive Session noting that he'd like it mentioned that Mr. Alexander was in agreement with the fact that there would be no salary increase.

*Motion: J. Slane made a motion, seconded by J. Lustig to amend the Executive Session Vote to include Mr. Alexander's agreement.*

*Vote- The minutes were unanimously approved with the amendment.*

**II. Communications – 1. Mike Moraghan -CSGA –** A request was received to hold the CSGA Public Links Qualifier on June 12, 2014. Chairman Curley noted that in fact the date was Monday, June 9.

Mr. Curley explained that this is the final year of this tournament and they have asked to come back to HSR, out of rotation and it is a compliment to the experiences that they have had previously. Mr. Lustig reiterated his concern about "giving away" time on the course. Mr. Lombardo agreed that while he doesn't like to give away any time on the course, he feels that this event gives notoriety to the course for future visits and they also pay for practice rounds prior to the event.

*Motion: J. Slane made a motion, seconded by L. Albrecht to approve the request as amended to*

*Vote: Motion passes 6-0-1 (Mr. Lustig abstained).*

**III. Staff Reports**

**1. Pro Manager Report** - Jim Alexander reported that October was another very good month; HSR, CJD and the driving range were all up with good increases. He added that the Fall Specials and the Westport Specials while Longshore was closed were quite successful. He added that Westport residents continue to come in. During the Special Westport residents played 13 9-hole rounds and 74 18-hole rounds. Mr. Morris noted that on the Golf Report the non-resident rounds for last year are understated due to the fact that they were registered as residents during the Fall Special.

**2. Administration Report**—Mr. Lombardo will report during the budget review portion of the meeting.

**3. Superintendent Report** – Mr. Peter Grace reported that this is the time of year that they do leaf cleanup and work on the equipment. Because play is still continuing, they are still working on the course, cutting grass, etc. As they can, they will winterize the irrigation system, the range and the snack bar. He added that he is still planning to deal with the dying tree on 15 and take a tree from between 17

and 18. He is waiting for the Tree Warden to pay him a visit with regard to several trees and will discuss this with him as well. Zach is done for the year but will start back in March with the continued approval of the Bonding. He will work on 13, 15 and 16 in that order and then continue as funds permit.

Mr. Morris asked Mr. Grace about the Quick Connects that they had discussed in the past. Mr. Grace would like to do some, especially on #6. Yardage markers were also discussed again and Mr. Grace stated that he would remove all the broken ones and if the ground is not frozen, he'll put in the large ones, red, white and blue as discussed.

**IV. Greens Committee Report** – Mr. Janis praised Peter and his staff on the excellent condition of the course. He noted that the cutting of the cup seems to be solved and suggested that Mr. Grace train at least one other person on the technique. The members discussed pin placement, stating that difficult placement affects pace of play, however they understood that options are limited. Chairman Curley let Peter know that while they do want to be concerned with pace of play, they also don't want to wear the course by using the same areas too often.

Closing of the course will, as always, depend on the weather. Mr. Alexander will use the website to make announcements.

**V. New Business – 1. Discuss Ideas for Increasing Revenue** – Chairman Curley noted that the Commission is pressured not to necessarily make money but, at the least, not run at a deficit. With expenses growing year after year at an unsustainable rate it becomes difficult to generate enough revenue to cover costs. Ms. Albrecht began the discussion listing several suggestions she had for adding revenue:

- Beautification of outside of Clubhouse and grounds. Make a good first impression.
- Offer specials during slow periods, some afternoons, giving Jim to have the authority to offer.
- Make Friday rate a “weekend” day.
- Address the issue of Geese at CJD. 3 or 4 cannot even fly.

Mr. Grace let the members know that he is planning to spruce up the outside of both the front and rear of the clubhouse. Regarding the specials for slow periods, Mr. Lustig wondered whether Mr. Alexander had the authority to make such decisions on his own. Mr. Curley stated that the Commission would have to give that authority with agreement from Mr. Lombardo. Mr. Slane suggested that if Fall Specials work, perhaps Opening Specials might work to kick off the opening of the season in March. He added that he continues to believe that merging the 9-holers with the 18-holers on Thursday would free up a day and generate revenue. There was discussion about Friday as weekends and Chairman Curley mentioned that past Commissions had tried this and it was not successful. Mr. Alexander reminded the members that they did not have online tee times then. Mr. Morris asked that Mr. Alexander look into emailing information, specials, etc. such as Woodbridge does. One audience member, Richard Ross suggested using the CSGA to see if they could share emails. Mr. Alexander let the Commission know that he will speak to the Active software representative but added that his website is a good source of information and used often. Mr. Ross also suggested “Packages” that often include lunch or breakfast muffin, etc. which seems to work well in other locations.

The CJD Par 3 was discussed as it seems to be losing money for the past several years and is an area for opportunity. Some members felt it was due to the goose problem. Mr. Grace and Mr. Lombardo felt that whatever “solution” they try would only chase the geese to the neighboring fields thus creating a more serious problem. Mr. Lombardo will contact the Animal Control division regarding the ones that cannot fly away. Keeping the course open later when possible is also an option.

The Driving Range was discussed and adding bays is not an option but perhaps using the back space close to the Softball field for short game would work. Many were in favor of blast advertising of all three areas; the Range, the course and the restaurant, in the CT Post as suggested by Mr. Janis. Chairman Curley appreciated the ideas and stated that they will implement as many as they can and will continue the discussion in the future.

**2. 2014-15 Budget Review-** Mr. Lombardo distributed very preliminary budgets for both courses. The Budget Dir. had not yet shared all the personnel/union line items. The only Capital items requested were a utility vehicle for \$23,418 and an Auto Reel Grinder for \$45,190. Mr. Morris questioned if a savings of 38 man hours per year warranted a \$45K expenditure for the grinder. Mr. Grace explained that there are other factors than the man hours that dictated his request.

Mr. Lombardo explained that other than the Concession revenue, he had used a three-year average for revenue projections. Some felt that these should be tweaked to reflect a more current trend for example the increase in cart rates and the HS play change that will free up tee times. Members did not want to put forth a budget that shows a loss for the Town. Mr. Lombardo will review them further. A vote will likely be taken in December.

## **VI. Old Business –**

**1. Course Management –** Chairman Curley revisited last month's report of Operating Alternatives that the sub-committee provided. He felt that they had a fruitful discussion last month and hopes to take action this month. He mentioned that he and Mr. Lombardo met with the First Selectman who was pleased with the report and asked that the Commission take action by accepting it and prioritizing their recommendations for the Town bodies that will look at it. Mr. Lombardo suggested that he will put together "Frequently Asked Questions" which will make it easier to present to those bodies. He added that they will need to have their entire financial backup ready to present as well.

*Motion: J. Slane made a motion, seconded by D. Janis to accept the Golf Operating Alternatives Report as presented by the sub-committee with the recommendation of restructuring the Maintenance Operations internally from 6 to 3 through attrition as vacancies in DPW permit. If this is not an option, they recommend outsourcing the maintenance division, or as a third option, leave operations as they are presently, in that order.*

*Vote: Approved Unanimously. 7-0-0*

The members thanked the sub-committee for their work on this extensive report.

**VII. Public Input –**Kevin Baker thanked Jim and Peter for a great year for HSR, mentioning what great shape the course is in and how well it was run administratively. The Commission agreed and thanked him for the well-deserved praise.

Chairman Curley reminded the members that next month they will hold elections and approve the 2014 meeting calendar. He added that because his appointment expires in April, he will not be running for office but would rather hand over the reins and assist in the transition. At Mr. Lombardo's request, the members agreed to change the meeting time to 7:00PM in the future.

*J. Slane made a motion, seconded by L. Albrecht to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 p.m.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

Joan C. Ryan  
Recording Secretary