

Golf Course Advisory Board

Agenda

March 21, 2016

6:30PM

Louisville Public Library – Meeting Room

951 Spruce Street

1. Call to order.
2. Roll call.
3. Approval of agenda.
4. Approval of minutes from February 22, 2016.
5. Public comments on items not on agenda. (Please limit to 3 minutes). Items 1 thru 5 – 10 minutes.
6. Update on food and beverage concession operation - 10 minutes.
7. Staff update on:
 - a. Update on course outstanding issues, readiness for spring kickoff of league golfing and busy course.
 - i. Playability concerns and plans due to fairway and rough condition.
 - ii. Punch Bowl readiness for 4/2/2016 Grand Opening.
 - b. GCAB Capital Project recommendations 2017-21 CIP.
 - c. CCGC Year to Date 2016 financial results vs. 2016 plan.
 - d. Update on Coal Creek Golf Course memberships.
 - e. Update on leagues and tournaments booked for 2016.
8. Board discussion of Council communication packet for 4/12 Council meeting.
9. Proposed agenda items for next meeting – 5 minutes.
- 10. Next meeting- Louisville Public Library on 4/18/2016 at 6:30PM.**
11. Adjourn.



Golf Course Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

02-22-2016

**Coal Creek Golf Clubhouse
6:30 PM**

1. **Call to Order** – Ken Gambon called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.
2. **Roll Call** was taken and the following members were present:

Board Members Present: Michele van Pelt, Ken Gambon, Lisa Norgard, Heikke Nielsen, Cory Nickerson and Sandy Stewart
Board Members Excused Absence: Perry Nelson
Council Members Present: Ashley Stolzmann
Staff Members Present: Joe Stevens, Denise White, David Dean and David Baril
Public: Steven Lembke (F&B Concessionaire)
3. **Approval of Agenda** – The agenda was unanimously approved. Sandy Stewart proposed, Lisa Norgard seconded.
4. **Approval of Meeting Minutes** – The January 11th Minutes were unanimously approved. Lisa Norgard proposed, Michelle van Pelt seconded. The January 20th Minutes were also unanimously approved. Lisa Norgard proposed, Michelle van Pelt seconded
- 5 **Public comments:** Steve Lembke reported on the status of the Sweet Spot Café. After a slow start, Steve is becoming increasingly happy with the business. He is promoting the Café to nearby businesses, hotels and the Ascent Church located in the old Sam's Club building. The church uses several local sources for catering and Steve hopes to secure a share of that business. Last Saturday, 118 rounds were played and a good proportion of golfers patronized the café. The Super Bowl Sunday event was well attended with around 50 patrons during the afternoon. Valentine's Day dinner had 30 diners and Steve was complimented on the quality of the meal. Monarch High School PTO is planning an event at the café on March 12 for 50 adults and 40 pupils with 10% of the proceeds being donated to the school. Other events being planned are an Egg Hunt (Steve has 2000 eggs on hand and each egg will include a prize number) on Easter Sunday starting at 10am for the kids and around

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1pm for adults. The event will be flexible to accommodate church-goers and will be held on the patio with the standard lunch menu on offer. Steve is working with Denise to support the formal punchbowl green opening on April 2nd, this will be promoted at the Easter Sunday event. A St Patrick's Day Dinner is planned for March 17. Next winter, Steve plans evening family-style dinners main courses such as fried chicken and a fish fry. He is working with Robbie Bent (Papa John's Pizza) on serving pizza as an option. This may attract additional Monarch pupils on their lunch break. Steve is very willing to get feedback on his service so he can make adjustments as needed, he is making special efforts to provide fast service to golfers who want to grab a snack during their round. He will join the Chamber of Commerce as this will give extra exposure for the café.

6. Staff Update on golf course outstanding items:

- a. 2015 Financial Results and 2016 Plans
 - David summarized 2015 as showing a higher than expected number of rounds but lower than budgeted revenue per round.
 - David discussed the 2016 Dashboard included in the board packet and a greater level of detail he circulated at the meeting. Ashley noted that more details were included in the 2016 Budget posted on the City website.
<http://www.louisvilleco.gov/home/showdocument?id=7936>
 - i. The board agreed with the format of the dashboard
 - ii. With the course being closed for most of 2016 to date, only 47 rounds were played so any numbers for revenue/round are meaningless until regular play is possible.
 - iii. The board questioned the target of \$2.1M 2016 revenue given that Western Golf never reported revenue higher than \$1.9M. David said that was the number given to him by the City Manager as a target for a break-even operation. **(Secretary's Note: The revenue number in the City Budget is \$1,957,100)**
 - iv. Major expenditures for this year include the \$225K repayment to the Wastewater Fund and Capital Improvement Items such as a \$251K Improvement to the Maintenance Facility, \$35K for chemical storage, \$25K for repair to the deck and \$25K as a 50% share of snow-removal equipment. The course will also contribute to the cost of shared City services and pay \$175K for water. (WGP did not pay for their water usage.)
 - v. To qualify as an Enterprise Fund, the golf course must cover at least 90% of its expenses.



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- vi. 75 total memberships in the Imperial, Regal, Acme and Ajax programs have been sold for a revenue of \$24K. 13 Summit memberships and 476 Peak Player memberships are still active and will expire by the end of June. Emails have been sent to prior members and to league players reminding them to take advantage of the current sale prices for memberships. David noted that many don't start thinking about renewing until play restarts for the season and the sale, which ends March 1, is intended to stimulate interest. The Board asked if it was possible to pay for Regal and Imperial yearly memberships in monthly installments. David said he would consider that and his first thought was to charge a 10% markup for the service which the Board thought was high.
 - vii. The Board discussed the proposal for a \$1500 unlimited cart pass. The consensus was that this was too expensive, would irritate golfers with the perception that we were trying to 'gouge' them and was an unneeded complication. Even dropping the price to around \$800 would not result in increased acceptance. David stated that this was in response to two golfers who wanted an unlimited play, cart and range ball package similar offering to their prior Summit membership. He agreed with the Board consensus not to proceed with the cart pass.
 - viii. As part of the cart pass conversation, our competitive position versus surrounding courses was discussed with diverging views on the relative merits and value of local courses. The Board cautioned against setting fees too high which would discourage golfers to return and noted that perception played a big part in customer reaction. Coal Creek offers discounts to residents and the points program provides further savings however, these are "small print" items that need to be explained.
- b. David Dean reported on the course condition.
- i. The greens staff have been working mainly on routine maintenance while the course was snow covered. Overall the course is in very good shape apart from some superficial marks on some greens (3,5,& 6) from snow clearing and some vole damage – minor and not to the point where state controlled chemicals need to be used.
 - ii. The rough is short at present (2 inches) The native areas are expected to grow to around 6-8" depending on spring weather. There is no plan to modify the grass mixture in the native areas or to modify the sprinkler coverage. Native grass adjacent to homeowners' properties will be left to grow to its designed length. An attempt to mow the rough at the property boundary behind the first green resulted in the grass dying so this will not be repeated. David stated he was unable to mow pathways for walkers for example between the 7th green and the 8th tee but expected that walkers



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- would follow a natural path and trample it down to an acceptable state. The greens will be needle-tined and top dressed while fairways will be slit-seeded as required when weather conditions allow.
- iii. Minor debris such as leaves and twigs will be dealt with by the leaf-picker. Greens are shaggy at present but good practice dictates that first mowing should not be done until early or mid March depending on weather
 - iv. Cart-path only rules will be in force until mid-March
 - v. David has 4 full-time and one part-time worker. 8 applications have been received for the summer seasonal vacancies – 3 – 4 of these are staff hoping to return from last year.
- c. Marketing Plans.
- i. Denise reported that “marketing blasts” continue via Facebook, inclusion of a flier in the water bill etc.
 - ii. Denise attended GOLF EXPO and paid particular attention to activity at the booths of competing courses. Aurora drew a lot of attention to their booth via a raptor display but seemed to have little sales interest, South Suburban had two booths and were successfully selling memberships, Broadlands was selling punch cards. Several out-of-state “destination” courses were present. Merchandise sales and giveaways appeared to be the main attractions. Attendees were mostly male and 50% appeared to be over 40. Staff will review the ROI on attending before making a decision on next year’s participation.
 - iii. The next major even will be the opening of the Punchbowl Green on April 2nd. David explained that there is no plan to charge for this facility and it will be set up as a mini-course with scorecards, numbered flags and a ball-rack to determine order of play. The punchbowl cannot be mowed as closely as the regular greens so it is not suitable to use for putting practice. A staff member will be present to help load bags, carts etc. and he or she will act as a starter for the punchbowl. Casual use will be allowed but anyone using it as a mini-course will have priority.
- d. The league dates for the Coal Creek leagues have all been booked while ORACLE and one other outside league has also booked. 80% of last year’s outside tournaments have booked for 2016. Re-organization of the Stokers League is moving forward with increased Staff involvement following the well-deserved but regrettable retirement of Don Johnson. Additional team events are planned including a blind-draw even to encourage mixing. Fliers promoting the Men’s, Ladies’ and Stokers Leagues will be in a rack at the clubhouse.
- e. David commented that Jed Udall has been promoted to a full-time regular employee to the vacant Second Assistant Professional position. The Board



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commented that Jed was an asset to the course through his friendly demeanor and professional attitude.

7. Future Meetings

The next meeting will be held on March 21st in the Library at 6:30pm.

Proposed subjects for discussion are

- Discussion of potential capital improvement 5-year plan Suggested projects are: extension of cart storage area and provision of an all-weather teaching and club-fitting facility.
- Update on course conditions
- Update on the F&B operation
- Update on financials
- Update on Marketing Plans
- City Council communication package for April 12th Study Session

8. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm. Motion to adjourn proposed by Sandy Stewart and seconded by Ken Gambon.



March 8, 2016

2015 Golf Participation in the U.S. – A slight dip tempered by strong positive indicators

Twenty years after Tiger Woods stepped before a microphone in Milwaukee on Aug. 28, 1996, and with the words “Hello, World,” touched off the most meaningful golf industry growth since Arnold Palmer and President Eisenhower jump-started it 40 years earlier, there are reasons to be confident about the stability of the game. While the latest NGF participation numbers show a slight dip in 2015 to 24.1 million (over the age of 6 who played at least once) from 24.7 million the two previous years, numbers remained strong in several crucial areas: among committed golfers, beginning golfers and in the number of people interested in taking up the game.

While the total drop in golfers from 2014 to 2015 was within the national study’s statistical margin of error, the results do suggest that a slow leak in overall participation persists. However, NGF analysis continues to show that attrition is confined mainly to those who never really got into the game.

About 80 percent of all golfers, or 20 million of the 24.1 million, make up a committed base who accounted for 94 percent of all rounds played and equipment spending in 2015. Play among this group drove an overall increase in rounds played of 1.8% versus 2014, as reported by the National Rounds Played Coalition (comprised of NGF, Golf Datatech, PGA of America and NGCOA).

The twenty-somethings like Jordan Spieth, Jason Day, Rickie Fowler, Lexi Thompson and teenager Lydia Ko appear to be resonating. Beginners numbered 2.2 million in 2015, which compares favorably to the all-time high of 2.4 million in 2000, at the peak of Woods’ success when he won three major championships. And the biggest group of beginners in 2015 were Millennials.

Interest in playing golf is at an all-time high with an estimated 37 million non-golfers saying they are interested in taking up the game. And roughly 20 percent may already be making their first moves. In addition to the 24 million people who played golf on a golf course last year, another 7 million took part in the game at a driving range, a TopGolf facility or on an indoor golf simulator.

Golf’s overall reach is impressive. An estimated 81 million*, including 62 million non-golfers, watched golf on TV in 2015 while 27 million read about the game in traditional or electronic media. One out of three Americans – about 95 million – played golf on a golf course or alternate venue, watched on TV or read about it in 2015. The interest is there. The challenge is to activate more of the people who are interested in playing, and retain a higher percentage of those who do give golf a try. Getting more beginners to enter the game through structured introduction programs like Get Golf Ready is key to improving retention.

While participation growth remains difficult to achieve, with the recession in the rearview mirror and an exciting new wave of young players in front of us, there are good reasons to be optimistic about future growth if emphasis continues to be placed on converting more beginners into committed golfers.

**81 million is consistent with Nielsen viewership statistics for Americans watching PGA TOUR broadcasts for a minimum of 15 minutes.*