

Golf Course Advisory Board

Agenda

April 18, 2016

6:30PM

Louisville Public Library, First Floor

951 Spruce Street

1. Call to order.
2. Roll call.
3. Approval of agenda.
4. Approval of minutes from March 21, 2016.
5. Public comments on items not on agenda. (Please limit to 3 minutes). Items 1 thru 5 – 10 minutes.
6. Staff update on:
 - a. Sweet Spot Café business results YTD and major events coming up to encourage community / golfer support.
 - b. Course outstanding issues and community concerns
 - c. Feedback on league play and comments from players on course condition and business impacts across all aspects.
 - d. Marketing plans:
 - i. Review of previous marketing plans and business results attained.
 - ii. Discussion of new marketing strategies / plans to drive revenue and expected business results / benefits of these efforts.
 - e. CCGC Year To Date 2016 financial results vs. 2016 plan.
 - f. Update on strategy and results of lessons, coaching and other teaching programs.



COLORADO • SINCE 1878

- g. Report on number of days golf course was closed by month from November 2015 through March 2016 due to weather or other conditions.
- 7. GCAB thoughts, insights, recommendations on 2017-18 operating budget for Coal Creek Golf Course
- 8. Update / feedback on Council communication meeting 4/12.
- 9. Proposed agenda items for next meeting – 5 minutes.
- 10. Next meeting- Louisville Public Library on 5/16/2016 at 6:30PM.**
- 11. Adjourn.



Golf Course Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

03-21-2016

Louisville Public Library

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, and Sandy Stewart
Board Members Excused Absence: Perry Nelson, Heikke Nielsen and Cory Nickerson
Council Members Present: Dennis Maloney
Staff Members Present: Joe Stevens, David Baril and Alex Kosel
Public: None
3. **Approval of Agenda** – The agenda was unanimously approved. Sandy Stewart proposed, Lisa Norgard seconded.
4. **Approval of Meeting Minutes** – The February 20th Minutes were unanimously approved. Lisa Norgard proposed, Michelle van Pelt seconded.
- 5 **Public comments:** None
6. **Update on Food and Beverage Concession:** David reported that the St Patrick's Day Dinner was attended by over 50 diners and the food was up to its usual high standard. Steven is seeing significant non-golfing business for breakfast and lunch and getting excellent on-line reviews. Next events are the Easter Egg hunt on Saturday 26th March and the Easter Bonnet Brunch on Sunday March 27th. The Sweet Spot Café is catering a large 200-person dinner in a few weeks' time – this will be off-site but will count towards Sweet Spot Business
7. **Staff Update on golf course outstanding items:**
 - a. Course Conditions. Thin areas remain on some fairways and these will be fixed by slit-seeding once the ground warms up. The punchbowl green is ready for the



COLORADO • SINCE 1878

grand opening on April 2nd. Some minor patching will be done as temperatures permit. Ken pointed out that we seem to be having an unexpected number of issues with the new irrigation installation. Rainbird still has not figured out the problem with decoder boxes losing addresses and blames power outages or surges. The system is not instrumented to prove or disprove this theory. By #9 green, the decoder box was located on top of the valve and it was decided to move it to improve access as the decoder was replaced. In addition, a swing joint problem had to be fixed as a result of improper installation. Joe confirmed that he is in negotiation with Landscapes Unlimited, Rainbird and Brian Keighin to get compensated for the work golf staff is expending on fixing these problems. While the recent snow has stopped play, the moisture is very beneficial to the turf. Lisa raised the on-going question about providing walkways on hole #5, between #7 green and number 8 tee and between #15 green and #16 tee. David D had proposed that natural walkways would form as the grass is flattened but Lisa felt this would be unsightly and it would be better to purchase a narrow mower to define paths and use ropes or even add mulch to complete the job and avoid continuous mowing. Mulch could be created on site from the large amount of dead twigs and branches in the tree-lines.

- b. Staff Capital Project Recommendations for 2017-2012 CIP.
- The present 5-year capital plan was put together before the course re-opened and was the “best guess” that could be made at that time. We have gained a lot of knowledge since then and can now start setting better priorities. Implementation of any Capital Plan is dependent on the revenue we can generate so will have to be updated on a yearly basis,
 - Staff indicated that the renovation of the maintenance facility is the most immediate priority. Over winter, the maintenance staff stripped and serviced all the new equipment but the maintenance facility itself and the chemical storage area have suffered from 25 years of non-maintenance. For safety and code reasons, the golf course chemicals must be removed from inside the maintenance building and stored in a safe small building. The budget for 2016 assumes \$251K for the maintenance building and a further \$122K in 2017 but this assumes that funds can be provided by getting a carry-over of unused 2015 start-up funding and from 2016 golf course revenue. Joe stated that the \$251K was an initial estimate and the actual cost (or what can be done with funds available) is dependent on more study of the building’s condition. Joe is working with Malcolm and Kevin to see what financial numbers can be recommended to Council. The Board supported making this the top priority as funds become available.
 - Staff’s second priority is for an all-weather covered teaching facility. The 2015 estimate for this facility needs to be revisited as part of the development of a



COLORADO • SINCE 1878

business case to justify this capital. February results show that the estimated fixed costs to cover headcount, benefits and other expenses e.g. heat, light, internet, etc. are about \$65,000 per month (\$2,000 per day) over the winter season. David recommends a facility of 3 bays with roll-up doors, two teaching bays, provision for club fitting, a launch monitor and basic power and heating is what is needed. Ken reported that a donor provided Colorado National with a more elaborate structure at the cost of around \$250K. Ken said staff should work with GCAB to study various alternatives. This facility will help with teaching revenue during the winter months and provide additional revenue through pro-shop sales and revenue to the Café to help offset the fixed cost and create revenue to satisfy future capital needs.

- There is a pressing need to expand the cart storage area. There is currently room for 52 carts but we are having to squeeze in 65. It is impossible to cycle carts properly so, it periods of slow play, the same few carts get used over and over again since they are the only ones that are accessible. This is poor from the standpoint of battery life and there is the risk of damage to the carts due to the tight packing. There will be minor relief when the fenced-in area under the deck has side screens fitted but this is a very partial solution. While this is a priority issue, Board agreed with Staff that we should not waste money on additional band-aids to the clubhouse until we see if the golf course revenue can support a replacement clubhouse. The ongoing battle against leaks appears to be quiet for the moment.
- New clubhouse. This is a major expense that needs a full business case justification. The benefits are clear: a larger and better restaurant facility, proper golf cart storage, possible meeting room facilities. However, this must demonstrate that it will provide increased revenue to pay back the investment in an acceptable time.
- Bathroom/shelter on the back 5 holes. Another perennial issue made less likely since the cost for a fully plumbed and serviced restroom is likely to be in the region of \$250K (or more) and this will not produce additional revenue.

c. Financial Results vs Plan

- Due to weather, only 12 of the 29 days in February were playable so only 581 rounds were played against a budget of 781. The course was busy on the days it was open – 25% of the green fee revenue came from one single day. As a result, total February revenue (excluding pass sales) was \$21,352 against a budget of \$42,519.
- Total expenses for February were \$65,005 against a budget of \$45,840 but this include a quarterly insurance payment of \$7000 that hit in February.
- As we see month by month revenue expenses, this will allow us to get a better picture of where we are.



COLORADO • SINCE 1878

- d. Update on pass sales
 - The sale promotion for passes was successful and generated sales of 151 passes YTD (total of all options) for a revenue of \$47,182. It is expected that future pass sales will come from the leagues as they start up and from other golfers as they start to play regularly again. The 2016 budget for pass sales is \$135,000 and we are 35% of the way towards that target.
- e. Update on Leagues and Outings/Tournaments
 - Two additional golf outings have been signed up. The Monarch High School Wrestling Fundraiser will be held on a Friday afternoon and a contract is being signed to bring back the Community Foodshare Tournament (~108 golfers). Two things affect our ability to attract additional outings. We do not have enough golf carts to service a full 36-foursome tournament and the cost of leasing additional carts to satisfy that need makes our bids uncompetitive. The limitation of the dining area inhibits the Sweet Spot from catering a full banquet for a large outing.
 - Our three Leagues (Men's Women's and Stokers) are all holding kick-off meetings in the next month. Brochures are displayed in the "time-card slots" in the pro-shop and restaurant and are resulting in league sign-ups.

8. Discussion of communication Package for the 4/12 Council Study Session

The main discussion on this centered around the capital recommendation as noted in 7b above. The only change to the document Ken had circulated for review was to reorder the list and make the Maintenance Shop renovation the top priority. In the draft document, this was included as a footnote under the mistaken assumption that funds had already been committed for this in 2016. With that change, Staff and the Board agreed that Ken should prepare a final copy and submit it to Polly before the 4/05 deadline.

9. Proposed Agenda for our 4/18 Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on April 18th in the Library at 6:30pm.

Proposed subjects for discussion are

- Feedback from Council Meeting
- Update from Staff on capital budget
- Update on course conditions including irrigation issues and compensation
- Update on the F&B operation
- Update on financials

8. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10pm. Motion to adjourn proposed by Sandy Stewart and seconded by Lisa Norgard.

From: [Polly Boyd](#)
To: [Polly Boyd](#)
Subject: FW: Native Areas on Coal Creek Golf Course
Date: Thursday, April 07, 2016 11:12:45 AM
Attachments: [Environment_Rockland Country Club case study.html](#)

From: David Dean
Sent: Tuesday, April 05, 2016 12:07 PM
To: 'djhonan65@gmail.com'
Cc: Joe Stevens; Alexander Kosel; Justin Williams; 'Ken Gambon'
Subject: Native Areas on Coal Creek Golf Course

David,

The area that thinned out and was stressed was down from your property further into the corner. Behind your house we increased the water trying to get it established so it looks better now than it did last season and hopefully will continue to improve. The native area around #1 green was one of the last areas seeded and is still a little thin in spots. We mowed a strip behind #1 green to see how it would survive at a lower height of cut and with the intended amount of water it does not survive to our standards. What I would like to see and what was intended by the architect is that allow the native area to grow to 6-8 inches in leaf material and then decrease the water input to little or no water at all. As the water is decreased the fescues and rye grasses will produce a seed stalk that will grow 12-18 inches and give a wispy ground cover that players can find their ball in and have a shot out of.

The native area to the left of #1 green is a great representation of what we would like to have all of our native areas look like. One factor we cannot control is the weather and amounts of precipitation. If we have a wet spring the native areas can get thicker than what we want and thinner if the spring tends to be dry but that is the nature of native areas. By design these areas are to be low use, low maintenance areas which were approved and adopted by the City of Louisville. This summer we will be incorporating more areas of the golf course into this native landscape that I think will frame the golf course as Kevin Norby envisioned.

By turning low use areas to native grasses we are lowering our water demand and becoming more sustainable. It is a direction that many golf courses across the nation are headed as the demand for water increases and our resources are decreasing. Below are some links to articles and information about water conservation and golf courses which will shed some light on this subject. In a nutshell maintaining areas that have little to no play does not make sense environmentally or economically.

I understand that some of the areas that have been converted to native grass are new and different to adjacent properties and will take some time to get used to. What used to be an extension to property owner's back yards has changed and with it the intended use of the property. As I drove around last summer I witnessed the area behind #1 green being used as an area to socialize, allow dogs to run around, have children playing in, the setting up a bounce house on the 4th of July, and recently the home of a snowman. With this being part of the golf course and potentially in play these are not the desired activities for this area.

As far as playability goes these areas will direct shots away from adjacent properties and as players learn the course this should keep golfers out of neighboring yards. It is my understanding from comments by the property owners behind #1 green that very few to no golf balls have ended up in your yards so I don't see this native area having a negative impact on pace of play and strengthens the argument that this area should remain native grasses and low maintenance.

<http://digital.tudor-rose.co.uk/asgca/bydesign/2016/spring/#10> This was sent to us by Ken Gambon and there is a good article starting on page 14.

<http://gcmdigital.gcsaa.org/i/605433-dec-2015/74> Shows trends on water use.

Attached is a good article too.

If you would like to discuss further, Joe Stevens and myself can meet you on site and go over the maintenance of the native areas.

David Dean

Coal Creek Golf Course, Superintendent
City of Louisville, Colorado
(970)389-0376
davidd@louisvilleco.gov

Rockland Country Club promotes the value of natural areas

The golf course implements an education and outreach program to gain members' acceptance.

Matthew J. Ceplo, CGCS

Rockland Golf Club, Sparkill, N.Y.

Rockland Golf Club (RCC) is a private 18-hole golf facility that was established in 1906. Environmental stewardship is an important element of golf course maintenance at RCC, an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary since 2000. Natural areas are part of RCC's environmental stewardship efforts. They have a positive impact on the course's bottom line as well. Converting areas into natural areas helped to reduce labor, fuel, fertilizer, and other inputs. The natural areas presented challenges with golfers, but RCC successfully implemented an education and outreach program to gain the members' acceptance.



In the beginning...

We initially developed natural areas within the out of play areas located in the rough. These areas never received irrigation and only received one annual application of fertilizer and pre-emergent. During the transition, drought tolerant grasses had dominated these areas and developed an appearance of a Scottish type links course. Other than a few lost ball comments from the membership, the areas were well received and viewed as a huge success. As the years went by more and more different plants began colonizing sections within these areas. We started getting complaints that the areas looked scruffy and lacked maintenance. I didn't want to start spraying or spending extra time and money to maintain these areas. That would be defeating our main purpose, so I investigated the plants that were invading our native areas.

A plant invasion

Milkweed was the first plant I identified because it was one of the ugliest plants and stuck out the most. We discovered that milkweed is the main food source for the Monarch butterfly caterpillar. I let this plant grow. We used the milkweed as an example of good environmental stewardship and communicated its value to our members. An aquarium with caterpillars and milkweed was set up as an educational display. The aquarium was placed within the ladies locker room as a test before announcing and sharing the display with the entire membership. Our ladies locker room attendant kept me posted on what members were saying. The ladies immediately started asking what was inside the aquarium. The aquarium display included a brief description of the caterpillar's life cycle, which helped capture the readers' attention. When the ladies found out that they came from the native area on hole number seven, I knew that milkweed was here to stay. Since then the aquarium has been moved out to the main foyer where everyone can watch the Monarch's different life stages. Members' can see the life stages from egg to caterpillar (eating the milkweed) to pupa to butterfly. Almost everyone is amazed when they find out that our butterflies migrate to Mexico for the winter.



Butterfly ambassadors

The **University of Kansas** manages a program called "Monarch Watch." I immediately joined the program as a monarch way station. Tagging kits let you catch butterflies and place a small adhesive tag to its wing. Using the tag KU can track and follow the butterfly's migration patterns. As a way of increasing our outreach and education program, a local Girl Scout troop came to the course to catch and tag monarch butterflies. The monarch butterfly has become the ambassador of our native areas. Milkweed is not the only plant colonizing our native areas. After inventorying and researching all the plants that were growing in the different areas, I realized that most of them have some kind of environmental benefit. Just to name a few:

- Thistle is used by finches for food and nesting
- Golden rods and boltonia are good for pollinators
- Little bluestem produces seeds as a food source
- Raspberries on the edge of the woods are a food source
- Rag weed produces seeds that birds forage for in the winter months



Educate, educate, educate

Additional education efforts were required in the beginning. First, we had to dispel the notion that native areas had to be thin wispy stands of grass where golf balls could be easily found. We displayed pictures of the naturalized areas before we let them grow. The pre-naturalized areas are outside the scope of our irrigation system. They get very thin, and in some areas stony, especially in the summer. Golfers learned that you can easily find your ball, but the odds of an acceptable lie are slim. The notion that these areas were pristine before we let the grass grow was quickly dispelled. We then shared how the transition impacted the course's bottom line. We let members know how much money we were saving by not maintaining these areas. Native areas or no mow areas have also saved us thousands of dollars in man hours over the past few years. Our staff currently spends 31 percent (6,332 hours) of our time mowing. Approximately 40 percent (906 hours) of that time is mowing roughs. Over the years we have reduced our rough mowing by more than 10 percent, saving us 90 hours (or approximately \$2,241.00) per year. That estimate doesn't include additional costs like fuel, equipment repairs or the cost of a new rough mower.



Communication

Next, we shared information about the naturalized areas in light of habitat and wildlife. We have seen an increase in our bird and animal population. Turkeys, foxes, and coyotes are a regular occurrence. Deer have been found bedding down in these areas. Blue birds, Thrashers and other birds utilize these areas. Many people don't realize that these areas provide critical habitat for beneficial insects.

Informing the membership about all of these benefits and the specific



plants we have is important. I used my camera to take pictures. The pictures are posted on our bulletin board, web page, and newsletters. When members saw us removing the purple loofstrife's beautiful flowers we had to explain what we were doing. An invasive plant list was posted on our Audubon bulletin board to show members which plants needed to be removed. We strive to manage the naturalized areas and plant species in a beneficial manner. We don't let everything grow everywhere. We have specific areas where we allow milkweed. It looks bad if only one milkweed plant is in the middle of a grassy area as opposed to a group of milkweed on the edge of a wood line. In the few areas where we received complaints of lost balls or speed of play became an issue, we just tweaked our mowing. Usually an extra pass of the rough mower was enough to make the members happy.

Happy golfers

I rarely hear complaints that our areas are unkempt. Members understand that if a plant is left standing, then it must be serving a purpose. Members have actually told me that they have let some milkweed grow at their house and monitor the plants for caterpillars. We never stop tweaking or learning from our environmental projects. Here's an example: We have three acres in our natural area management program that we used to seed yearly. Now we only seed when necessary, and we use more perennials and natives. We could maintain the natural areas differently, such as a monoculture of tall fescue in lieu of allowing some natural succession. However, we have let nature take over and have gained so much more in return.



Learn more about the [Rockland Golf Club](#).