

Golf Course Advisory Board

Agenda

September 19, 2016

6:30PM

Louisville Library, 951 Spruce Street, First Floor Meeting Room

1. Call to order.
2. Roll call.
3. Approval of agenda.
4. Approval of minutes from August 15, 2016.
5. Public comments on items not on agenda.(Please limit to 3 minutes). Items 1thru 5 – 10 minutes.
6. Staff update on:
 - a. Course outstanding issues.
 - b. Update on F & B operation and Fall & Winter plans
 - c. Dashboard review
 - d. Marketing activities for Fall and Winter
7. Joint discussion:
 - a. Feedback from meeting with City Council on August 23, 2016
 - b. GCAB/staff sub-committee strategy development activities.
8. Proposed agenda items for next meeting – 5 minutes.
- 9. Next meeting- Louisville Public Library on 10/17/2016 at 6:30PM.**
10. Adjourn.



Golf Course Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

08-15-2016

**Louisville Public Library
6:30 PM**

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Ken Gambon called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.
2. **Roll Call:** Taken by Ken Gambon and the following members were present:
Board Members Present: Ken Gambon, Sandy Stewart, Lisa Norgard, Cory Nickerson, and Michele Van Pelt
Board Members Excused Absence: Perry Nelson
Board Members Absent: Heikke Nielsen
Council Members Present: Dennis Maloney
Staff Members Present: Joe Stevens, David Baril, Ginger Cross, and David Dean
Public: Steve Lembke, Sweet Spot Café.
3. **Approval of Agenda:** The agenda was unanimously approved. Sandy Stewart proposed, Lisa Norgard seconded.
4. **Approval of Meeting Minutes:** The July 18, 2016 Minutes were unanimously approved. Lisa Norgard proposed, Ken Gambon seconded.
5. **Public comments:** None
6. **Staff Updates:**
 - a) *Course Outstanding Issues* – With school back in session, staffing issues are being worked on as greens-keepers, pro-staff and Café employees leave. Two of David Dean's full-time staff are off work, one due to an injury and one for family issues. Staff will explore other staffing options for next year. The Board suggested putting an incentive bonus plan in place but this has been tried with mixed results. Ken suggested that employing seniors on a part-time basis might result in a more reliable work force. The putting green has been needle-tined. Ken reported that some HOA members are pushing for the use of all-organic chemicals and similar pressure is being put on Staff for eliminating Roundup on City parks and properties. Ken noted that the HOA tried an organic approach around 8 years ago and it

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resulted in weed issues in subsequent years. He suggested that the City contacts Brad Wolfe at Organo-Lawn to explore alternatives. Bee and wasp issues are being addressed in the City along with close monitoring of mosquito issues, West Nile carriers as well as a possible Zika threat. The city has an ongoing contract with Colorado mosquito Control. While mosquitoes are not a major issue, spraying is performed when needed. A presentation will be made to council in October on the City's control measures. The Rainbird controller system has had no issues recently and the irrigation system is working well with only minor adjustments to heads and solenoids needed. David Baril commented on the two golf "skateboards" being offered on a one-month trial. They are proving popular but are still in the prototype stage. David is reviewing options to continue them as a lease or under a revenue share agreement with the manufacturer. He noted that, perhaps due to low volume, they are more expensive than a traditional golf cart and generate less revenue since each board accommodates only a single player compared to two players per traditional cart.

Both David Dean and David Baril are having to work excessive hours to make up for staff shortage. No acceptable candidates were identified for the First Assistant Professional position and the post will be left vacant until next year. Four significant events have been conducted successfully in the last month: Rally for the Cure, the Inaugural Louisville Open (62 players signed up) the Men's Club Member/guest and the Executive Women's Golf Association event. 6 more medium sized events are scheduled between now and October. David thanked Cory for her company Louisville's Realty Associates' role as title sponsors and for the other sponsors who participated on the course.

b) *Update on Food & Beverage Operation and Upcoming Plans*

Steve Lembke reported good business for the Sweet Spot Café. He is seeing good support from the non-golfing public. His main issue is the limited space available for events and he is getting quotes for screens for the patio and the covered area by the driving range. This would increase his available seating capacity and, with space heaters, should allow operation into the colder weather. He noted that the beverage cart does not do adequate business and he has lost employees as a result. He has tried offering commissions to increase sales and adding sandwich options to the cart with little improvement. Some events do well – such as the Rally for the cure but the Stokers and the Ladies League are noticeably abstemious. One issue is that with only one cart, coverage for all 18 holes is sparse but adding a second cart would double the expense with no guarantee of significantly increased business. Cart hours were cut back and no longer start at 8am and will run from 10am to 6 or 7 pm. The weekend dinners do well and he is planning a buffet service during Bronco's games. He is also considering more music offerings during dinners following the success of Katie Hughes' performances. He is

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planning to try to capture more lunchtime business from Monarch students by stocking the beverage cart with soft drinks and snacks and positioning it in front of the clubhouse. He is cooperating with Robbie Bent to offer lunchtime pizza. Cory suggested that he approach Monarch's vice-Principal for permission to post fliers at the school.

c) *Dashboard Review* - David Baril reported on the Financial Dashboard with the following highlights:

- Playable Days: David reports playable days by the "standard" definition based on temperature, precipitation and wind speed. It was agreed that this was a misleading number as this showed only 20 playable days in July while all 31 enjoyed good business. The Board suggested that "playable days" should be any day when the course was not closed or did not suffer significantly reduced business due to weather.
- July showed a net positive revenue of almost \$49K based on expenses controlled at significantly less than budget to match under-budget revenue
- David stated that 34,000 rounds is a possibility for the 2016 total given good weather for the rest of the year. Based on the rounds to date of almost 16,000 and July showing around 4,500 rounds played, 30,000 rounds is perhaps a more realistic target.

d) *Marketing Report* – Ginger requested that the Marketing Report be included as an agenda item for all future meetings and reported as follows;

- Coal Creek and the Sweet Spot Café have joined the Superior Chamber of commerce to expand our marketing reach to our sister community. This gives added opportunities to promote events. For example, a flier could be included in the quarterly "Rooftop Drop" that puts "goodie bags" on the doorknobs of each quadrant of superior on a rotating basis.
- Ginger and David are working together to create promotions to fill days when play is limited – typically Monday and Tuesday
- Sandy pointed out that Coal creek is still above the norm for pricing. Weekday play with cart including Ajax discount is \$51 compared to \$49 at Colorado National (no discount) and \$47 at Ute Creek with Senior discount
- Ginger commented on the survey sent out on Aug 15 to all 7,800 addresses on the email file. So far, the response has been almost overwhelming – perhaps encouraged by the free range ball certificate given for completed surveys. The Board stated the survey was excellent with the minor caveat that only a limited number of alternate courses played could be entered via the pull-down menu.



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- Ginger is planning to create written survey cards that could be given out by the course marshals. This would have the added benefit of having the marshals engage in a positive manner with players.
- Each table in the café has a card showing upcoming events for the course and the café
- Cory stated that golf carts, the golf bikes and potentially the new golf skateboards will be used in the Labor Day Parade and part of the promotion for the Rec Center ballot issue.

7. Council Study Session

The intent of this study session is to give council a view of the course's financial performance and provide input on how the GCAB can contribute to its success. Key items for discussion will be the Dashboard Summary and the Strategic Development Plan. There are several more complex issues to be discussed at the study session and the Board asked Staff to put the golf course discussion early in the agenda to maximize the opportunity for discussion.

- *Dashboard*: the current dashboard provides a good focus for discussion with the following suggested enhancements:
 - Omit the “playable days” number: it is misleading
 - Add a column showing annual budget
 - Break out the debt repayment schedule from that “all other expenditures” item and show the debt service below the line for net operating revenue
 - Show payments made by Sweet Spot for utilities etc.
- *GCAB/Staff Sub-Committee Strategy Development Plans/Schedule*: The sub-committee has not met since the last Board meeting. Michelle has reviewed the Parks & Rec Master Plan (PROST) but this appears to have little bearing on the golf course strategy. Michele asked about the previous Golf course master Plan but this was purely a capital plan to rehabilitate the golf course under Western Golf management and was used as a basis for the flood recovery plan. The Board agreed that the updated draft of the process plan was a good document to inform council of progress and intent for the sub-committee.

8. Proposed Agenda Items for Next Meeting

Ken proposed that we continue to keep the same topics on the next agenda for the September 18, 2016 meeting with the addition of a debrief from the Council Study Session and a specific agenda item for the Marketing Report.

10. Adjourn

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm. Motion to adjourn proposed by Sandy Stewart and seconded by Ken Gambon.

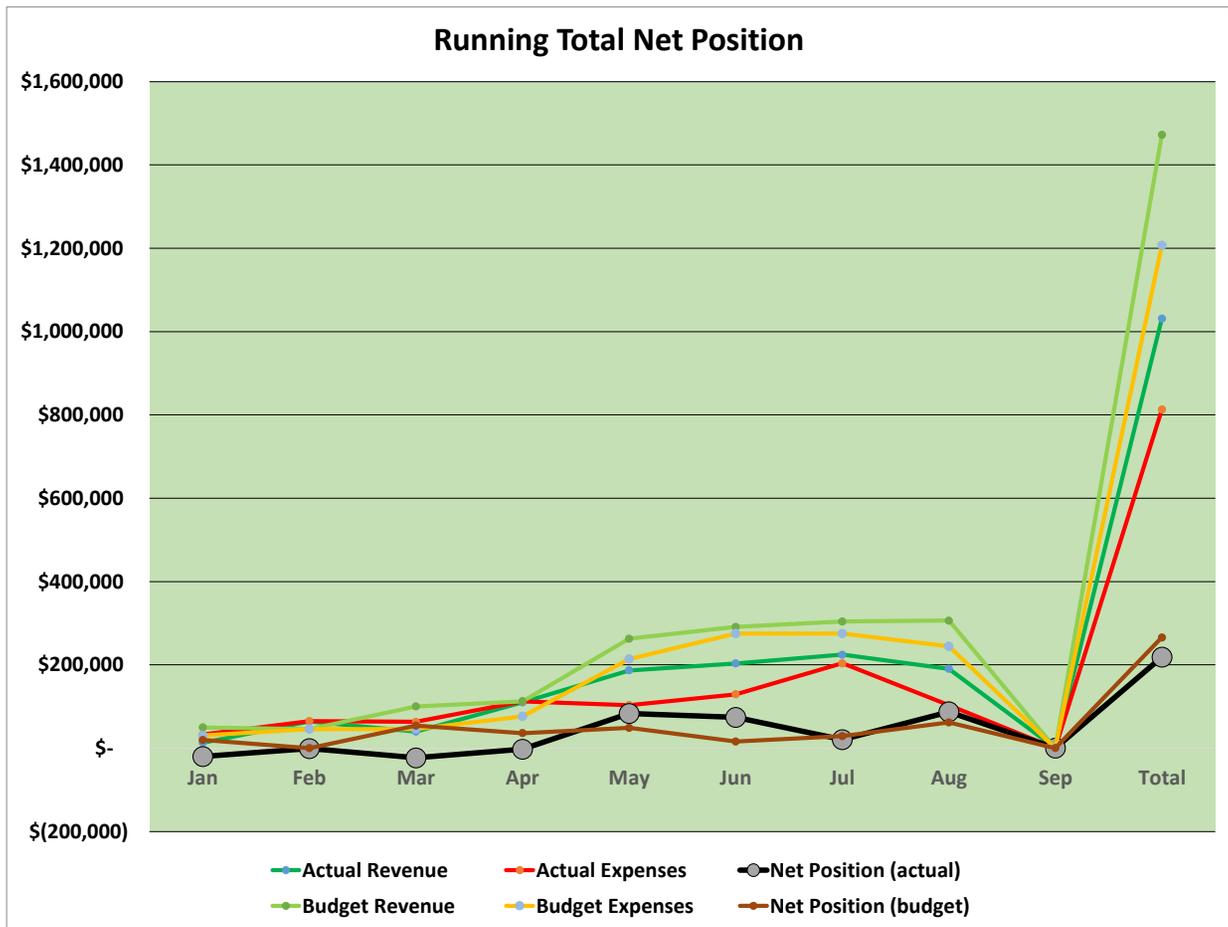
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Coal Creek Golf Course Summary Financial Report

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	ie	Total
Actual Revenue	\$ 12,670	\$ 63,973	\$ 39,867	\$ 109,749	\$ 186,732	\$ 203,527	\$ 224,312	\$ 190,355		\$ 1,031,185
Actual Expenses	\$ 32,794	\$ 65,005	\$ 63,111	\$ 112,275	\$ 103,404	\$ 129,507	\$ 203,696	\$ 102,953		\$ 812,745
Net Position (actual)	\$ (20,124)	\$ (1,032)	\$ (23,244)	\$ (2,526)	\$ 83,328	\$ 74,020	\$ 20,616	\$ 87,399		\$ 218,437
Budget Revenue	\$ 49,839	\$ 45,813	\$ 100,076	\$ 112,656	\$ 262,744	\$ 291,028	\$ 304,171	\$ 306,104		\$ 1,472,431
Budget Expenses	\$ 30,243	\$ 45,840	\$ 45,841	\$ 76,404	\$ 213,927	\$ 275,049	\$ 275,049	\$ 244,488		\$ 1,206,841
Net Position (budget)	\$ 19,596	\$ (27)	\$ 54,235	\$ 36,252	\$ 48,817	\$ 15,979	\$ 29,122	\$ 61,616		\$ 265,590



Longmont golf courses, in disrepair, pose puzzle for city, posted 9/10/2016

By Karen Antonacci, Longmont Times-Call Staff Writer



The year Longmont's Sunset Golf Course sprinkler system was last upgraded, Vietnam War protests were raging across the country and the Batman television series starring Adam West made its debut.

The useful life of a golf course irrigation system is estimated to be between 20 and 25 years, but Sunset's is 50 years old this year.

Longmont city staff are proposing a \$954,000 capital improvement project to replace the aging system, along with a \$2.4 million project to replace the Twin Peaks Golf Course irrigation system.

Additionally, Ute Creek Golf Course needs a \$1.12 million maintenance facility because right now the golf staff is storing expensive mowing and other types of equipment in something that resembles a shack.

Sunset was built in 1922, while Twin Peaks was built in 1977 and Ute Creek was built in 1997.

Those three projects, plus a roughly \$1.6 million general rehabilitation project for the city's three municipal golf courses, are proposed for a possible bonding issue in 2019.

Larry Mills, Longmont golf operations manager, said the \$1.6 million general rehabilitation project likely includes some repeated expenses from the two irrigation system projects and the maintenance facility project.

On Friday, Mills said he was working on figuring out the true cost of the general project less all the costs included in the other three projects, but he didn't have an estimate yet. But, the true cost

of the general rehabilitation project would likely be much less than the current \$1.6 million estimate, Mills said.

The currently estimated \$6 million worth of projects to rehabilitate the golf courses would be part of a \$26.5 million bond city staff are proposing for a general vote in the next two years.

In 2000, the city issued bonds to pay for the Recreation Center and Roosevelt Park projects. City finance staff have allocated \$2.8 million per year in the budget to pay off that bond, but it will be paid off in 2019.

That frees up \$2.8 million per year that staff is proposing be used to issue a new 20-year bond to improve the golf courses and other city facilities.

The proposed bond would be paid off over 20 years from tax dollars, although it wouldn't require a tax increase.

'On the decline'

But as golf declines from its peak recent popularity in the 90s nationally, Longmont is seeing the same trend at its courses.

The number of golf rounds played at all three courses peaked in 1998, Ute Creek's first full year of operation.

"The decline in rounds can be attributed to flat golf participation and the oversupply of courses," Mills told the council on Tuesday. "I think there have been nine courses opened in our service area since Ute Creek opened in 1997."

Brian Johnston, a Longmont resident who grew up next to a golf course, said he is skeptical of the amount city staff says is needed to rehabilitate the golf courses.

"I don't think that abandoning and liquidating the golf courses is the solution. However, I don't think a six-plus-million-dollar bond for a sport rapidly losing popularity is not the best policy either," Johnston said. "I think probably the best solution is some type of middle ground where we maintain the golf courses and we're not putting \$6 million into it."

Johnston said he loves golf, but the city has to look at the facts related to the sport's popularity.

"I haven't played much in recent years due to a back injury but I grew up on a golf course. I'm sitting here in my living room and I've got my King Cobra golf bag and clubs on display in my living room," Johnston said.

Johnston said he understands the need to replace Sunset's 50-year-old irrigation system. But he thinks that perhaps Twin Peaks's system could be stretched from its current 39-year age to 50 years. The city should take a more wait-and-see approach in regards to whether golf regains its popularity, Johnston said.

Mayor Dennis Coombs said that in the future, the city may need to reconsider its use of the golf courses, but even turning them into parks may be more problematic than it seems.

"No one knows the future for sure, golf is on the decline, but what else do we do with that property?" Coombs said. "If we say we don't want a golf course, we still have to maintain that property as a park somehow with no income."

Coombs, who has xeriscaped his own lawn, said the city could save money in the long-term by pulling out all the bluegrass at the hypothetical golf course-turned-park and replacing it with natural grasses that require less water, but it would still be an expense.

When asked if three municipal golf courses are the best use of land within city limits when there are significant affordable housing issues, Coombs demurred.

"If push came to shove and the city is running out of money and needed other things more badly, we could always consider selling some of that property, but boy you'd get so much citizen pushback," Coombs said. "It's not a charge I want to lead in my last term but it is something to think about. Who knows, if golf declines at the rate it has been declining, at some point we maybe need to reconsider whether it's the best use of the property."

Councilwoman Bonnie Finley said that the golf courses do provide benefits to Longmonters, even those who don't golf and the city needs to maintain them.

"It's just like any other upkeep of an asset in your home. If we're going to have them, we have to keep them in good shape or they're not worth very much," Finley said. "As far as green spaces, everyone likes to see green courses in their community, but we may have to continue to have discussions on how to repurpose one of them ... perhaps in the winter, we could add some other attraction on those golf courses."

Coombs said he doesn't golf, but he and his neighbors do use the golf courses during the winter when there is fresh snow on the ground.

"I don't golf. I think it's a waste of time and money and you don't get a lot of exercise from it," Coombs said. "But I do enjoy driving by the golf courses and having open spaces and trees and the environment. There is some benefit to our having internal open spaces. And you know, in big snowstorms, our whole neighborhood goes down there and cross-country skis."

'Tough position to be in'

Councilman Jeff Moore said he had a concern with the possible bond issue because the golf fund is called an enterprise fund, meaning it should be largely self-sustaining.

The golf fund became an enterprise fund in 1985, after Sunset and Twin Peaks were built, but before Ute Creek.

The golf fund is making enough revenues in order to do regular upkeep and maintenance but it doesn't have the millions for large capital improvement projects, Mills said.

Moore said he's also concerned that if this would be a 20-year bond and irrigation systems only last about 20 years, it's going to be a constant expense for the city.

"So it comes back to what's the real life of the irrigation system," Moore said. "If it's 40 years, then yeah we'll start to look at it again. I don't know what the answer is. It's a tough position to be in, to have what we're calling an enterprise fund when it really isn't."

Coombs said he thought with the advances made in materials science, that new irrigation systems could possibly last beyond the 20 to 25 years staff estimates.

Moore echoed the other councilmembers, saying that if Longmont was going to have the golf courses, it needed to maintain its assets.

"Play is going down as a national trend. It's leveled off but it doesn't mean we won't have further decline and in 20 years we're going to have to make a decision as to what to do," Moore said.

"If there's not enough play on the golf courses we'll have to do something different ... but if we're going to have the golf courses, we have to keep 'em in good shape."

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Golf course equipment is stored in an open-sided pole barn at the Ute Creek Golf Course maintenance facility in Longmont on Friday. (Matthew Jonas / Staff Photographer)