

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MacDonald Golf Course
840 N. Yale Avenue
August 10, 2011
6:30 p.m.**

Present: Bryan Frye, Andy Solter, John Stevens, Randy Brown, Tom Roth, Cindy Claycomb

Absent: Matt Goolsby

Also Present: Doug Kupper, Director of Park and Recreation, Christina Butler, Clerk, Bryce Mumford, Fiscal Analyst, Don Harrison, Golf Division Manager, Julie Underwood, over 100 citizens

President Frye called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m.

Item 1A: Future of Golf Courses

Kupper introduced Bryce Mumford to the Board and asked him to present his review of the Golf Course Division.

Mumford reviewed a presentation stating the total rounds in golf were decreasing in Wichita and nationwide and the year 2010 was a 15-year low for City golf courses. He showed that as of January 2011, there were 315 holes of golf in a 10-mile radius of Wichita and of those, 171 are public access. He stated that the 25-mile radius contained 405 holes and 243 of those are public access. He reviewed the CIP Project Schedule for all golf courses through the year 2020. He stated that the Golf System is considered an Enterprise Fund. City of Wichita has a long history of not subsidizing the Golf System. And that the system has operated based on internally generated revenues since 1978. He stated that the Debt Service Fund (DSF) has paid \$3.8 million in principal over the last 10 years that the Golf System has been unable to pay. The City expects the Golf System to repay all DSF money. He stated that the Golf System has made all interest payments on existing debt service, but has been unable to make full principal payments on said debt service. He stated that the Debt Service Fund is funded through tax dollars and is currently making debt service payments for the remaining amount of principal the golf Fund is unable to pay. He reviewed the Pro-Forma and stated that based on the financial data, by the year 2020 the Golf System would be operating at a negative, losing nearly \$900,000 each year and will be over \$6 million in debt. He stated that as things stood now, the Golf System is unsustainable and that changes needed to be made in order to help the Golf Fund meet current and future obligations.

Frye asked if there were any questions from the public.

Johnny Stevens (1555 N. Lakefront) asked if the \$6.6 million debt included the CIP.

Mumford replied that it included a portion of the CIP.

Judy Blue (107 S. Tyler) asked if most of the debt was from Auburn Hills.

Kupper replied that the first portion is Auburn Hills and the debt will extend 10-20 years from the date it was initiated. He stated that the majority of the debt is Auburn Hills and the debt would have to amortize over the life of the bond.

Blue stated she thought in 2001 the golf courses were to make money instead of having the pros run

them.

Kupper stated that the golf courses were run by the Park Board until the 1970's. The golf pros were contracted to be customer service agents.

Hoyt Hillman (Wichita) stated that Clapp no longer has access to well water because it has dried up, therefore the cost will increase. He stated that the golf courses were watering when they were not supposed to. He also stated that the City had not offered any solutions to the issue.

Frye stated that there was a Golf Division history and status presented to the Board of Park Commissioners at the last meeting and the meeting today was intended to gather more information.

Gary Hefley (Wichita) stated that when the City took over the golf courses in 2000 he said it was a mistake and that they have gone downhill since then. He stated that he was not in favor of closing a golf course.

Kupper stated that closing a course was an option, but the Park Board wished to seek out public comments. He stated that every two years the City develops a CIP which is only a plan. He stated that the Board wants quality golf courses and needs ideas on how to make the courses sustainable.

Johnny Stevens (1555 N. Lakefront) stated that he felt Auburn Hills was the problem. He also stated that they do not need new projects. He stated that Junior Golf was growing every year. He suggested trying new management techniques. He also suggested cart rentals after 7:30pm as they currently can only be rented until 7:30pm.

Clarence Raaf (9305 Thurman) stated that he was not in favor of closing a golf course. He stated that the City should offer incentives or bonuses for pros, create new promotions and advertise.

Judy Blue (107 S. Tyler) stated that she volunteers at Auburn Hills. She is not in favor of closing a golf course. She stated she was concerned with the Junior Golf program and for those who are on fixed incomes. She suggested creative pricing strategies like having Junior Golfers play free with a paying adult. She also shared the Sand Creek pricing which includes high pricing for non-Harvey county residents, senior pricing for 55 and above, hero day, student days, and super twilight specials after 4pm.

Harley Miles (Wichita) stated that he is not in favor of closing a golf course. He stated that improvements should be made to golf courses when there is money for improvements.

Glenn Fulton (Wichita) stated he is not in favor of closing a golf course. He suggested asking the public to volunteer to help maintain golf courses (trim trees, etc). He also suggested having golf clubs available to rent for out of town visitors.

Lee Price (3720 E. Sleepy Hollow) suggested partnering with a company to create a public/private golf clubhouse that might generate more revenue.

Michael Loque (Wichita) stated he is not in favor of closing a golf course. He stated that Auburn Hills is the problem and asked why Clapp does not get any improvements done to it. He suggested offering a "super senior" rate, having a shotgun start on Friday evenings and offer price incentives.

Jeanie Vance (Wichita) stated she is not in favor of closing a golf course. She suggested partnering with the Eagle Newspaper and TV to promote the City's local talent. She also suggested creating focus groups to include league members and presidents.

Randy Summers (Wichita) suggested changing Clapp to a 9-hole, par 3 course with a driving range. The

north side could be a mini-golf course and the south side could be a dog park.

Gary Heffley (Wichita) stated he is not in favor of closing a golf course because he felt the City should add courses. He suggested offering incentives to the golf pros and having more tournaments.

Bob Runyan (1432 Dry Creek Circle) suggested expanding food specials such as offering \$1 beer/soda/water one night. He also suggested selling punch cards and offering a free round of golf after so many paid rounds.

Connie Gleave (14200 W. Onewood Place #3) stated that she purchased a home in Auburn Hills by golf course, but cannot trail a cart there. She also suggested getting a liquor license.

Jack Greider (13408 W. Links) stated he was an Auburn Hills resident and the golf carts are in disrepair.

Michael Hardacre (3132 W. 33rd South) suggested having a monthly rate joiner fee, a daily fee and a cart fee.

Mike Lane (Wichita) stated he is not in favor of closing a golf course because the high school golfers would be displaced. He asked when the decision would be made.

Frye replied that the Board was taking the public input and would need to give a recommendation to the City Council.

Kupper stated that there was no timeframe established yet. He stated they had more meetings scheduled and it would depend on what policy the Park Board recommended to the City Council. He suggested having a template by late Fall or early Winter.

Gene McKesson (Wichita) stated that the country clubs were offering incentives because they are hurting too. He suggested placing benches on the back nine of Auburn Hills.

Jason Wenzel (Wichita) suggested billboard marketing and marketing in recreational magazines. He suggested placing (or replacing) signs describing the holes and keeping water jugs full on the golf courses.

Robert Martine (5931 Memphis) suggested better marshalling was needed.

Sue Raymond (Wichita) stated she was not in favor of closing a golf course. She suggested adding courses to get more players.

Dick Martine (813 N. Woodridge) suggested better marshalling needed on the golf courses. He suggested staggering tee time scheduling per the number of golfers and groups of 5 players should be allowed after a certain time of day because most take too long to play. He suggested having a Senior tee box at all courses and having different colored flags. He thought a green fee increase would be ok.

Name not given (Wichita) stated that volunteerism needed to be expanded so volunteers could be used to assist with maintaining the golf courses.

Bill Brant (Wichita) stated that the courses need better marshalling for faster play, tee times and starters.

Brett Moats (Wichita) suggested ways to increase revenues would be to charge parking fees, offer on-line tee time incentives (% off or \$ off) and creating a caddy program for junior high and high school kids.

Jim Jordan (Wichita) asked if Industrial Revenue Bonds could be used and some other form of alternate financing.

Frye noted there was no further public comment. He suggested a larger location would be needed for the 8/15 public meeting.

2. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Bryan Frye, President

Christina Butler, Clerk