

Golf Advisory Committee Meeting
January 20, 2015
4pm

Present: Troy Houtman, Bryan Frye, Blaine Knott, Cindy Renard, Richard Schodorf, Leon Lungwitz, Greg Ferris, Debbie Burch

Golf Staff Present: David Buschschulte, Ron Reese, Ron Mosher, Aaron Calderon, Mike Solomon, Kristi Calkins, Colin O'Bryan, Tom Monahan, Troy Hendricks, Shana Appelhanz

Not Present: Michael Williams

Approval of Minutes

Renard noted there should be a correction on the last page. It should read "non-migratory" geese instead of "migratory". **Frye made a motion to approve the minutes with the correction. Second by Ferris. The motion was approved unanimously.**

Rounds/Expenditures

Hendricks noted that the division ended the year at 158,346 rounds which is a 2% increase over 2013. Revenue was up 2% over 2013 and expenses were down 1%. In comparison to the PGA PerformanceTrak, the average rounds for Kansas are 26,828 and four of the five City golf courses exceeded this number. In 2014 there were 36 days of no-play at the courses.

Frye noted that 2011 was the year the Division began getting attention. They are close to the 2011 numbers in 2014. He asked how Hendricks felt about 2015.

Hendricks responded that if the weather cooperates, they should be able to pick up extra rounds. Two courses picked up leagues from the closing of Braeburn and should pick up approximately 10% in rounds. They should be able to surpass 160,000 rounds in 2015.

Ferris asked if there is revenue after paying debt service.

Hendricks responded yes.

Schodorf stated there does not seem to be a lot of urgency and hopes they keep the recommendation active.

Frye noted they hope to stay proactive.

Golf Advisory Committee Attendance Policy

Frye stated they wanted to set definitions and parameters for the Golf Advisory Committee (GAC) that would mirror those of the Park Board. The Park Board adopted the attendance policy at the previous Park Board meeting. Each Park Board member knows that they have to speak to their appointed GAC member and if that member no longer wants to serve on the GAC, the Park Board member needs to appoint someone else to the GAC.

Renard asked if there is a reason the GAC minutes are not published online.

Frye stated there has not been a directive to have them published online. The GAC is a sub-committee of the Park Board. The Park Board minutes have to be posted per the City Council. There is no problem publishing the GAC minutes; they must find a place to publish them.

Houtman noted it is no problem. They need to find a place to publish them and will get back to the GAC.

Scaled Fees Proposal

Hendricks stated he had asked the Assistant Golf Professionals to apply the scaled fees to a six months study. Based on 2014 hours and tee times, Sim would lose approximately \$15,000 and Tex would lose approximately \$17,000. All in all the division would lose approximately \$45,000 if scaled fees were implemented. They left all things the same except the fees and would lose money. However, what this study did show was the underutilized tee times which are early morning tee times before 7am. They were suggesting offering Early Bird Tee Times for \$22.50.

Ferris stated it should not be cheaper to play golf any time with a cart and thought it was too cheap for Auburn Hills.

Schodorf stated he did not think it will bring additional players.

Ferris disagreed. He thinks the 8am golfers who would like to play at 8 can't because the tee times are full. But if the 8am golfers play earlier, then there are more available 8am tee times. He added that most, more expensive courses have special fees before 7am.

Schodorf asked if they want to try it at Clapp to see how people are motivated.

Hendricks responded that the bills are the same and the course is open whether they have golfers or not. They are trying to give incentives to get golfers there and create additional potential revenue.

Schodorf questioned whether it will drive golfers to the courses and would like to see evidence that they are not just going to cut revenue.

Renard agreed with Hendricks and stated she thought it was a good idea.

Ferris suggested that maybe it is a good idea to try it at Clapp and MacDonald.

Hendricks noted they cannot get more players between the hours of 8am and 11am, but they have time from 6am-7am.

Lungwitz stated he was surprised that the summer early tee times aren't full. He would like to see them try it at all courses for a shorter period of time, possibly in May and June.

Burch asked if it made sense to open the course at 7am instead of 6am.

Hendricks stated that the policy is that the first tee time is 30 mins before sunrise.

Ferris suggested that might be a policy that needs to be changed.

Buschschulte noted that the maintenance crew will be there regardless.

Frye suggested maybe they combine delaying the opening and reducing rates for a couple of months. He asked if the software could suggest a trigger when a person signs up for a 7am tee time and ask if they could take an earlier tee time to save money.

Hendricks responded he was unsure.

Frye asked if the opening tee time is a Golf Division policy or a City Council policy.

Hendricks responded Golf.

Frye noted that it could be changed. They could delay tee times a half hour and give incentives for booking tee times prior to 7am.

Monahan suggested they may run out of carts faster.

Hendricks suggested the following rates: Clapp \$20 (saving \$15), MacDonald, Sim and Tex Consolver \$24 (saving \$11) and Auburn Hills \$28 (saving \$9).

Ferris asked if it is a better deal to charge golfers \$15 and not give them a cart then it is to charge them \$20 and give them a cart.

Hendricks stated he would put something together and bring it back to the next meeting.

Marketing

Hendricks reviewed the Golf radio advertising schedule.

Frye asked if they are only getting 30 second ads.

Appelhanz responded yes.

Burch asked about ladies ads and how much is geared to women golfers.

Appelhanz responded that all of BUZZ Radio is focused on ladies. She noted that Hamm has not given them the numbers yet.

Frye guessed it to be about 10-12%.

Burch stated it should not be more than that.

Hendricks then reviewed the email blast schedule. He noted it can be adjusted, but for now they have 63 scheduled email blasts for the year. They also have customer appreciation emails for pass holders to use a cart for free for their birthday month.

Frye noted they have 6700 addresses on the email distribution list.

Hendricks noted surveys were done on paper in the past and they are looking at doing four surveys on SurveyMonkey. The link will print on the receipts. The Golf Division will be able to rotate the questions.

Some questions were taken from other courses. He asked the GAC to let them know if there are any questions that need to be added. Those who complete the survey will get a coupon for a free basket of range balls at Tex Consolver or Auburn Hills.

Ferris asked about giving them a free cart instead. He thought it needs to be more than a bucket of balls at a west side course. He asked about \$5 off a green fee.

Frye suggested it needs to be applicable at any course.

Schodorf asked what \$5 off would do to the revenue.

Hendricks responded it might bring more people to the courses.

Frye asked how many questions would be on each survey.

Hendricks responded he would like 15-20 questions.

Frye suggested that 12-15 should be the maximum.

Renard asked where they stood on marshals.

Hendricks responded they had 2-3 marshals volunteer last year. They have to work 20 hours and they can play golf for free. They are getting paid and get free golf.

Schodorf stated he thought it might be too many hours.

Hendricks stated they need them from 8am-4pm.

Ferris suggested maybe for every 5 hours worked they could get a free round of golf.

Schodorf suggested they work 8am-2pm for six hours.

Ferris stated they need the marshal to start 20 minutes after the first tee time.

Hendricks stated they need the starter.

Frye suggested they continue the marshalling discussion at the next meeting. He suggested having a survey question asking if they would want to marshal.

Ferris noted they should give options instead of leaving the question blank for someone to answer.

Frye noted most open ended questions are at the end of surveys.

Frye suggested for E-club they might offer a bottle of water as incentive for signing up.

Tournament Host – can do this on the website.

Appelhanz stated each clubhouse will have a poster with the tournaments. She stated the golfers can print the registration form off of the website, but cannot register online.

Hendricks noted they changed pricing on the tee sign advertising. If they buy one sign for all four courses, they will get the fourth year free.

Hendricks showed a mockup of the Golf Guide and noted it was being done in-house.

Hendricks stated they are partnering with the B-52s Indoor Soccer Team and will have an ad on footgolf. They will give coupons to recreation teams. They are planning a media day with the B-52s and are meeting with them the following day.

Frye asked how Pine Bay is doing with footgolf.

Hendricks responded he had no idea.

Hendricks added that footgolf will be advertised on the back of the Spring Recreation Activities Guide.

Frye stated he liked the ad and the photo opportunity.

Appelhanz stated there will be a press release on March 18 and Channel 7 will go out then too.

Houtman noted they are sharing resources with other groups and are working on partnerships.

Handicap Flags

Hendricks asked if there were any questions on it.

Schodorf thought it was excellent.

CIP Proposals

MacDonald Driving Range

Hendricks stated the five years of revenue average is \$56,000 per year per course with an additional labor cost of 1000 hours. The total expense would be approximately \$13,506 with a potential income of \$43,000 to the Golf Fund. They should be able to put in a tee box for 35 people.

Ferris asked if the price includes mats.

Hendricks responded no.

Ferris thought they should put those in.

Hendricks stated it would not cost too much more.

Renard asked what type of fencing would be used.

Hendricks stated there would be no netting.

Schodorf asked what the distance would be.

Reese responded it would be well over 300 yards.

Hendricks stated the total cost would be \$410,000.

Lungwitz asked why they want to do this.

Hendricks responded it is an amenity that they do not currently have on the east side. It will bring people to the facility.

Ferris stated they could bond it over 10 or 15 years and could have it paid off in 10 years. The revenue could be higher because there is no competition and they are providing a service for free.

MacDonald Retention Ponds

Hendricks stated they are meeting with Public Works to expand the retention pond. They can use the additional sand from the pond for the driving range and save on the costs of the driving range. If they can work it together, they can save the money moving the dirt.

MacDonald Pitch & Putt

Hendricks stated it would be a 6-hole with adults \$5 and youth \$2. They are estimating approximately \$16,000 in revenue.

Frye asked if Clapp is similar.

Hendricks responded yes.

Frye asked what the next step is.

Hendricks responded they are meeting with Public Works and Stormwater in the hopes to get them to pay a portion.

Ferris stated that the GAC should take the stand that they recommend the improvements at MacDonald and Clapp because they can take the revenue generated to pay back the bonds.

Lungwitz – 2nd

Ferris stated that it doesn't cost the golf system, it adds revenue. Motion passed unanimously.

Ferris stated he will go to City Council to advocate for this because it is for the good of the City, not just the Golf Division.

L.W. Clapp Short Game Area

Hendricks stated it is an added amenity but no revenue. He thought it could be done at the same time.

Ferris amended his motion to include the Clapp project and added that all five things be included.

Hendricks suggested they have Zimbelman come back in to design it, but it will cost some money.

Frye suggested the rest of the list can be looked at later.

Open Discussion

Ferris suggested they should charge \$10 instead of \$5 for Customer Appreciation Day. They will still be full scheduled.

Ferris asked if there is a 9-hole rate for seniors.

Hendricks responded yes.

Ferris noted the City's is the best deal around in the US.

Ferris noted that the online tee time needs help and that it is not user friendly.

Hendricks stated they are aware of the problem.

Ferris suggested they do not need to promote passes if they are losing revenue on them. He suggested they do an evaluation on the pass structure and how much it is costing. He asked if they are losing key times because they are letting pass holders play for \$5. It needs to be evaluated before the season.

Lungwitz suggested they look at increasing the use of the snack bar and maybe offer to get a free drink with a hot dog if they have a tee time. There should be some type of incentive to keep them at the snack bar.

Schedule Next Meeting

Frye suggested they may need something in March. He asked if they could meet at Sim on March 17 if available.

Renard noted she will be out of town.

Hendricks stated he will send out an email to see who is available.

Hendricks noted there is a Golf Professional opening at Sim which they hope to advertise this week. Calderon will be the interim. Solomon will be the Golf Professional at Auburn Hills. Darryl Court is no longer with the Golf Division. Solomon will oversee Clapp and Auburn Hills.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:40pm.