

IRONHORSE
Golf Club



GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes-October 22nd, 2020
5:30 P.M. – Vista 154

Members attending: Chair Dick Fuller, Gary Bussing, Mark Bodine, and Dr. Greg Peppes

Member absent: Tommy Davidson, Leo Morton and Scott Picker

Troon Management/Staff: Jeff Thomasson, Ryan Eckroat and James Kennedy

Council Liaisons attending: Chuck Sipple and Mary Larson

Staff attending: Chris Claxton and Camille Sumrall

Chair Fuller called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Gary Bussing motioned to approve the August 6, 2020 minutes, Mark Bodine seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

I. A. Review Scope of Needs Assessment and Potential Materials for Updates to Interior of Clubhouse

Chris stated that she received preliminary plans from BBN Architects for the redesign of the pre-existing clubhouse. Chris stated that the designs will increase efficiency and the aesthetic of the kitchen, grille area, entry and golf shop. The plans include reconfiguration of restrooms and pro shop. The architects have proposed a design that ties in with the current look and feel of Vista 154 and allows better use of space.

Gary asked if the bathroom remodel was part of the kitchen remodel project.

Chris responded that yes, the bathrooms, kitchen, pro shop and eating area are all part of the same proposed project.

Ryan added that the remodel will not only help with functionality in the kitchen, but will provide more space and help with first impressions of clients that may potentially rent Vista 154.

Gary added that he would like to see all of the remodel elements take place at once for financial benefit and to minimize disturbance for business.

Chair Dick Fuller added that more emphasis should be added to increasing the size of the bathrooms for event rentals.

Chris added that there may be extra square footage on the western deck to utilize. She added that the western deck is rarely utilized, and that BBN architects is aware of the buildings total footprint and will design several options to utilize square footage.

Ryan stated that there are two goals for the remodel, to update the look and aesthetic to make the clubhouse uniform and to improve efficiency of the kitchen and overall space. Ryan added that there will need to be a discussion of the overall goals of the food service at Ironhorse before the remodel begins.

Gary suggested to strategically define the purpose of the Ironhorse clubhouse before the remodeling begins. The strategic goal will allow for better design work from the architecture firm.

Chris suggested starting the conversation about strategic goals and direction for the clubhouse this evening.

Jeff Thomasson stated that he would be cautious about becoming a full service restaurant with tableside service.

Gary asked what the next step is down from full service food.

Jeff Thomasson responded that a full service restaurant includes wait staff and several culinary professionals. He suggested that the clubhouse may consider becoming “famous” for a specialty food item or offer fresher and healthier options.

Chris added that with the new and efficient kitchen, with adequate space to prepare food, we may be able to offer a step up from hotdog and hamburgers.

Ryan added that if we would like to expand the menu we will need culinary professionals.

Mark added that the objective should be to keep the captive golf audience for a meal and a drink.

Gary stated that he would like to see the remodel of the kitchen to be built on what they need, not what they can afford right now. He stated he did not want to have to come back and remodel again because they cut costs in the wrong areas.

Chair Dick Fuller stated he would like to see a bridal suite incorporated into the space if they would like to book more weddings.

Council Liaison Sipple stated that maybe the new kitchen could support a higher end offering for events at Vista 154.

Chris suggested that another option may be an outside pavilion for wedding ceremonies.

Ryan added that the food model they have now is an extremely efficient source of revenue. This includes the limited menu and allowing guests to bring in their own caterers for events. However, the kitchen still needs to be revamped for efficiency sake, there is little room for employees to move around in the kitchen right now.

Commented [CS1]:

Gary suggested moving the pro shop to outside, in a separate building and converting the shop into a bridal suite.

Council Liaison Sipple asked if we should have a meeting with the architects to look at options.

Chris responded that yes, we can schedule a charrette for this purpose in the near future.

B. Explanation of Plan for New Security Gates at Entrance Drive

Chris informed the committee that we have worked with public works to create an island at the entrance where the gate will be placed. The gate is a substantial commercial grade gate. The gate should be installed soon. They are also exploring working with Black and McDonnell on running electricity to the gate and possible installing a license plate reader. The parking lot will be resurfaced and landscaped this February.

A. Operations Report

Ryan reported the following:

Financial Update

September 2020 Financials: The growth in demand for golf that we've seen this year has continued through September. Through September 2020, we have recorded a total of 26,137 rounds played. In comparison, through August 2019, we recorded 23,852 rounds played. Furthermore, for we recorded 27,424 rounds for all of 2019. Based on the demand we continue to see, we anticipate that by the close of October 2020, we will have surpassed all of 2019 rounds, even with our closure this spring. As a result of this strong rounds performance, Total Golf Fees through September 2020 have surpassed \$1.156M in comparison to \$1.063M through September 2019. As forecasted during the August meeting, we are expecting to surpass 2019 rounds and Golf Fee revenue.

Driving Range continues to thrive in 2020, eclipsing \$135k through September. Not only is this \$24k ahead of prior year to date, it already surpassed our annual budget goal by \$35k. This category continues to drive strong revenue in September and we expect that to continue for the remainder of the year until the weather turns unfavorable.

Merchandise revenue continues to lag behind prior year, hindered by the absence of group events. Through September, merchandise revenue has reached \$120.2k in comparison to \$144.2k prior year. As we continue to see revenue shortfalls in this category with each passing month, we anticipate that year-end merchandise revenue will fall short of prior year.

The Food & Beverage department has been the hardest hit area due to COVID-19. While we have still been able to conduct a handful of weddings and golf tournaments, the precipitous drop in the number of events has led to F&B and Event facility revenue being \$64.9k behind prior year to date. While we have seen event inquiries remain

strong for 2021, we do expect that total F&B revenue will fall short of prior year at year end.

Marketing and Operations Update

- As has been the ongoing story this season, our golf and non-golf event business has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there seems to be great optimism for that returning in 2021 as we already have 85 total events booked.

- As has been reported, the demand for golf has been continually strong this season. As the premier public facility in the area, we have seen very strong performance in daily fee play. Based on this growth in rounds and golf fees, we anticipate total revenue surpassing prior year.

B. Agronomy Report August 2020

James reported the following:

As we entered into mid-August all of our college staff began returning to school. We hired 2 additional staff members in August to help finish out the season. Our current staff level is 10 FTE and 2 weekend only staff members. On the 24th of August, we began greens aerification by completing 9 holes each day. This provided us time to focus on providing better quality results and keeping course open for play. Greens were healed and rolling nicely by Labor Day weekend.

The tees on 7, 12, and 13 were opened the week following Labor Day. These were leveled and re-surfaced beginning of August. We plan to remove trees surrounding the black 12 tee to provide more sunlight to maintain turf quality. 7 tee area additional irrigation is planned to improve coverage to tee surface and rough surrounding. Our focus the first half of September was completing storm repair and clean up.

Numerous bunkers had silt to be cleaned out following storms. We skimmed out contaminated sand and then flushed remaining with water to clean up. New sand was then added to appropriate sand depth to protect liner. On 14 fairway bunker, a large oak tree fell into bunker damaging the liner. The tree was cut up and debris was hauled back to shop for disposal. The damaged liner was then cleaned and repaired. We continue to check depths and add sand as necessary to remaining bunkers. It seems that with the increased amount of play, high traffic bunkers have been requiring additional sand more frequently than in year's past.

The last week of September was our last cut on all zoysia areas. The cooler weather has nearly stopped growth at this point. We will let these areas grow up slightly to provide winter protection and will be closely monitoring weather to make the decision on when to go cart path only. We will begin detailing all zoysia mowing equipment and winterizing as necessary. We will assess any repair and reel maintenance items to have them sharp and ready to go by next March.

As for the rough, we have now completed our fall fertilization to heal existing turf. This week we completed seeding all thin areas of rough. Our cart traffic areas have been heavily seeded. Over the next few weeks we plan to repair cart areas that have

become rough. These areas will be tilled and shaped with new top soil then seeded or sodded depending on location and size.

This fall we plan to clean up remaining trees that fell this winter along perimeters and removal of debris. Many trees along the perimeter will need to be trimmed to provide clearance for mowing equipment and carts. Irrigation and drainage projects will begin as mowing slows.

B. Miscellaneous

Gary asked if the Triple Crown Pass Holder program will continue next year.

Ryan responded yes, it is an efficient program as of now.

Jeff Thomasson stated that he still believes investing in the driving range is a good idea. One idea would be to expand the range and/or add a smart range technology such as TrackMan.

Chris stated that the Troon contract will be expiring at the end of 2021. The committee will discuss renewal at the February 2021 meeting.

Dr. Peppes made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Gary Bussing seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director
Parks and Recreation Department