

**BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
GOLF SUBCOMMITTEE**

There was a regular meeting of the above-referenced subcommittee held on Tuesday, March 5, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. in Conference Room #2, Bloomfield Town Hall, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT.

Committee members present were: Councilor Rivers and Jacobs, Jon Colman

Non-Committee members present were: Ciaran Carr, Mark Mansur, Ryan Phelps, Billy Abee, Kevin Laing, Louie Chapman, Jr., Town Manager, India Rodgers, Clerk of Council

Absent was: Councilors Merritt and Banks, Bill Starkie, Jerry Long, Brad Klein

Guest: Duane Haley, 10 Barn Hill Road

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Councilor Jacobs, seconded by Councilor Rivers to approve the minutes of January 30, 2013. Councilor Jacobs abstained.

Citizens Comments

1. **Duane Haley, 10 Barn Hill Road**, spoke in opposition to allow usage and access to the golf course for off-season activities, such as walking or jogging. Mr. Haley also stated that he observed and found significant abuse on the course when it initially opened. He also expressed concerns regarding liability issues, animals, timing, the pond and actual usages.

Discussion regarding Usage of the Golf Course during Off-Season

Councilor Rivers stated that there was an agreement from the Town Manager about the usage of the golf course. On March 1, 2013, an e-mail was sent by the Town Manager to Councilor Rivers and Jacobs allowing residents to walk the golf course during the off-season.

Councilor Rivers stated that there is no budget in place to plow the cart paths for accessibility to walk. The maintenance upkeep and enforcement of the rules from management is necessary when golf is in off-season.

Mr. Louie Chapman, Jr., Town Manager stated that the primary opposition to allow off-season activities on the golf course was due to the town's liability level. State Representative David Baram introduced legislation to give towns for liability exemption. If not fees are charged for a specific activity, exemption status is in effect.

Mr. Chapman, Jr. also agreed that the usage of the golf course should be at the consumer's risk, allow walking/jogging only restricted to cart paths and consider no other forms of recreation.

Mr. Ryan Phelps of Billy Casper Golf stated that management will support the Town's decision whether to allow off-season activities or not. Mr. Phelps expressed concerns primarily for liability, damage to the course, and safety and hazard risks.

Mr. Ciaran Carr, General Manager of Wintonbury Hills Golf Course stated concerns of mixed usage during on and off season. Mr. Carr is also concerned about the overall monitoring of management to maintain regulations for off-season activities.

Mr. Mark Mansur, Maintenance Superintendent stated that there are only a few walkers that currently utilize the course. He agreed that guidelines should be in place to abide my set regulations. Mr. Mansur also stated that there is no present wear and tear in the off-season that would delay Spring opening.

Mr. Kevin Laing stressed the importance of communication on and off season with pass holders and guest.

Mr. Jon Colman was in opposition of the usage of the golf course during off season. He stated that the course should not be used other than its purpose. Mr. Colman suggested utilizing open space which is very prevalent in town.

Councilor Jacobs stated the need to have transparency to residents for accessibility to the golf course. He also stated that the entitlement and justification that residents can walk as taxpayers is a concern. Mr. Jacobs agrees to have clear eyesight and communication to walkers. There should be maps and identification on where to walk. Overall, Councilor Jacobs is in favor of allowing access to the golf course during the off season. However, no other recreational activities should be permitted.

Mr. Chapman, Jr. stated that there is ample open space available, however not many parcels are "developed" open spaces.

Councilor Rivers reiterated the process to amending the existing ordinance by consulting with Town Attorney Mark Needelman to develop regulations. He also stated that Council should pass and approve an ordinance supporting these changes. Management will execute direction and maintain the opening/closing of the facility for off season activities.

It was moved by Councilor Jacobs, seconded by Councilor Rivers and voted unanimously for a recommendation of Council to allow access of the golf course during the off-season for walkers.

It was moved by Councilor Jacobs, seconded by Councilor Rivers and voted unanimously to amend Section 13-23 of the Town of Bloomfield - Code of Ordinances to allow walkers at Wintonbury Hills Golf Course during the off-season from dusk to dawn, pursuit to the Town Attorney review of policies.

Status of Property

Mr. Ryan Phelps presented the committee with an update regarding the monthly financials and overall progress at Wintonbury Hills Golf Course. Overall, the course made revenue for the month and is in line with the proposed 2013 budget.

Management overspent slightly in payroll, while maintenance and labor expenses remain steady. Mr. Phelps has also projected a distribution back to the town of approximately \$50,000 by year end.

Course Operations

Maintenance Update

Mr. Mansur reported no damage to the golf course during this winter season.

Status of Food and Beverage Service

The Meals to Go Program will continue through March 29, 2013. Management will re-evaluate the process of the program and consider an earlier opening late October, early November. The program did not cover its costs. The new menus, advertising, publication sustained a significant portion of the budget. However, the profit gained covered a portion of the salary for the Executive Chef position.

Report of Usage/Revenue/Expenditures

Mr. Phelps reviewed the proposed 2013 budget and the current economic climate.

Proposed 2013 Budget

It is projected that Wintonbury Hills would receive \$1,900,000 in revenues, although membership fees have decreased. Management may return approximately \$103,000 to the town.

Management will also consider dynamic pricing regarding course fees and programs.

It was moved by Councilor Jacobs, seconded by Councilor Rivers and voted unanimously to accept the proposed 2013 Budget for Wintonbury Hills Golf Course.

Marketing

Mr. Ciaran Carr gave an update regarding the publication of the Juniors Program in the Hartford Courant. Mr. Woodrow Wilson will submit an article in two or three sections for publication online at Courant.com. A

condensed article with be published on March 22, 2013 in the Hartford Courant – Town News – Bloomfield Times.

Mr. Carr also informed the committee of the St. Patrick's Day Party on March 17, 2013 from 3:00 – 7:00 p.m. The party will have a specialized menu and spirits to celebrate this Irish holiday.

Management suggested to the committee to consider passing an additional Early Bird/Super Twilight special for \$1600. Golfers could play weekdays before 8am or after 5pm, 7 days a week.

An e-mail campaign for the Men's Club was launched.

Management will sponsor theme nights as a marketing tool for the restaurant. Mexican Night will be held on Saturday, May 18th, 2013.

A proposal was submitted regarding funding for compensation for costs incurred for the Juniors Program. Approximately \$26,000 in program expenses was submitted to the Board of Education.

Other Business

Mr. Carr informed the committee of some needed improvements at the course. Mr. Carr stated the following request for these improvements:

- Ice Machine
- Refrigerator
- Industrial Hot Water Heater
- Fencing

The costs of these items would be approximately \$16,000. Mr. Carr will submit estimates for the items needed for improvement.

In addition, a podium will be installed by the starter tee. The pathways will be extended to accommodate carts. The podium will be staffed with a starter, who may possible use a tablet for GPS and monitor pace of play. However, some committee members agree that starters should remain mobile.

Adjournment

It was moved by Councilor Jacobs, seconded by Councilor Rivers and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m.