

BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

GOLF SUBCOMMITTEE

There was a meeting of the above referenced subcommittee held on Monday, June 27, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, Bloomfield Town Hall, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT.

Committee members present were: Councilors Rivers, Seldon and Merritt, Jon Colman, Abraham Ford and Ciaran Carr, Ryan Phelps, Byron Lester, Brad Klein and Mark Mansur

Also present were: Councilor Neuwirth, Philip K. Schenck, Jr., Town Manager, David Melesko, Director of Leisure Services, and India Rodgers, Clerk of Council

Guests: Mark Jacobs

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. **Michael Trueman, 7 South Barn Hill Road** expressed concerns about public access to the golf course, police presence at public events and overall sound decibels and noise abatement issues if constructing a new banquet facility.
2. **Alex Kellner, 117 Duncaster Road** read and provided a written statement to the Chair of the Golf Subcommittee with concerns regarding the following:
 - Overall purpose for public access on the golf course
 - Access for unrestricted recreational play to meet the needs of the public
 - Cost benefit analysis and environmental review for new construction for a new banquet facility
 - What percentage of available off season event times is currently booked? How is this projection made? Is there a market analysis with data to review?
 - What other public facilities in a 50 mile radius offer banquet facility services?
 - Does the rental rate offset construction labor cost? Bonding levels, lifespan of the building, potential increase with property tax values.
3. **Roy Duncan, 18 Barn Hill Road** expressed concerns about the consideration for a new banquet facility, will this proposal be a profit maker or public nuisance. He also suggested to reduce security lighting at the course. Overall, Mr. Duncan agrees with the quality, beauty and maintenance of the course. Public access has been an issue over the years. He mentioned the issue regarding liability concerns in a state law proposed by State Representative David Baram.
4. **Jon Omichinski, 194 Terry Plains Road** expressed concerns regarding noise permits/ordinance, decrease in property value due to high traffic volume.
5. **Kevin Gough, 5 Bear Ridge Drive** stated relevancy to the issue of public access, reinstating the plan for the Wintonbury Trail to be in place. A draft plan is being developed by the Wintonbury Land Trust to be introduced for east-west access to the public. In addition, the proposal for a new banquet facility

should be outlined with a cost benefit analysis, building materials, noise concerns as well as an environmental review template for an evaluation of noise, pollution and traffic congestion.

6. **Tollie Miller, 88 Kenmore Road** echoed resident comments and stated that there needs to be more direct communication with the citizenry in advance regarding issues and concerns.
7. **Robert Berman, 8 Hiram Lane** stated that Wintonbury Hills is a quality golf course, the cost to play is not expensive, best public course ranking #2 in New England and #6 in the United States. The Billy Casper Golf Management team provide an excellent environment for golfers and the overall public.
8. **Hannah Roditi, 12 Beacon Hill Drive** stated that her land abuts the golf course and has concerns about public access and walking trails that were proposed by the town during the initial build over 10 years ago. She stated that the public is not allowed to walk year round, only given access during the off season in 2004 and 2013. She also stated that she has been threatened with arrest when walking on the course, even though she is completely out of the line of play. Ms. Roditi expressed concerns regarding noise complaints during public events.
9. **Duane Haley, 10 Barn Hill Road** expressed issues of concern regarding golfers' responsibility to assist in maintaining the course. Golfers are not repairing divots and dog owners are not picking up "poop" off the course. There should be more accountability to protect this valuable asset.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor Seldon and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of April 25, 2016.

STATUS OF PROPERTY

Mr. Ciaran Carr, General Manager of Wintonbury Hills Golf Course gave a brief review for the months of April-May 2016. The course is close to budget and net ordinary income (NOI), in which revenues beat budget and expenses are on track. At the end of March 2016, the operating cash reserve was approximately \$271,951. The course received an \$18,000 increase in gross income. Through the month of May, the course is \$26,000 ahead of budget and \$20,000 behind prior year.

The total number of rounds and revenues were slightly down. For one month, the course charged pre-season rates due to date of opening.

Marketing

Wintonbury Hills promoted and participated in several marketing events such as: Bloomfield Celebrates and Time for 9.

Golf Management hired a new F&B Manager by the name of Max Fiore.

The new golf range was installed, however there have been issues regarding the disappearance of range buckets.

The maintenance department received new utility and beverage carts.

Course Conditions – Status Update

Mr. Mark Mansur, Superintendent reported that conditions of course are very dry. The course is in need for some severe rain in the next few weeks.

Mr. Brad Klein mentioned that the level of compliance is good by industry standards and human behavior. He stated that the subcommittee should have a discussion about developing proposal to allow adults to walk with minors.

Ms. Hannah Roditi stated that comments were made about threats of arrest. She suggested that the committee should review policies of other community golf courses regarding walking trails.

Ms. Alex Kellner restated management's request to have a golf cart and not walk with her son. She also mentioned that there should be a rate for golf cart rental with minors. In addition, information should be shared prior to meetings to discuss cost/market analysis and demand.

Councilor Seldon recommended to examine policy and be clear and specific on demographics of concerns.

Councilor Rivers that the town received many request to utilize the facility during off season. The committee asked Billy Casper Golf Management to submit an initial proposal on enclosing the facility as a benefit to the town.

Mr. Jon Colman mentioned that the discussion regarding the proposal for a new banquet facility is in its infancy as an initial feasibility study.

Mr. Klein stated that as a golf industry professional, he suggests that every effort should be made to create a safe walking trail. It is worth pursuing as a potential plan done by Wintonbury Land Trust.

Mr. David Melesko, Director of Leisure Services is also a member of the Connectivity Committee. This committee will continue to work with the Master Plan of Parks from 2014 for bikeways, pathways and trails. The plan was done and approved with no timeframe for implementation.

Ms. Roditi requested that these issues be addressed and resolved prior to the creation and development of any trails.

The next Golf Subcommittee meeting will be held in September 2016.

Other Business

The Mayor's Annual Brunch was held June 26, 2016 from 2 -5 p.m. It was a very successful event.

Course Maintenance

Mr. Carr stated the Golf Range has been completed.

The 6 new maintenance utility vehicles and beverage cart were delivered.

ADJOURNMENT

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