

BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

GOLF SUBCOMMITTEE

There was a meeting of the above referenced subcommittee held on Monday, September 26, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, Bloomfield Town Hall, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT.

Committee members present were: Councilors Rivers, Merritt, Seldon, Jon Colman, Byron Lester, Ciaran Carr, Ryan Phelps

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

Absent were: Abraham Ford and Brad Klein

The meeting was called to order at 6:08 p.m.

STATUS OF PROPERTY

Mr. Ciaran Carr, General Manager of Wintonbury Hills Golf Course presented an update of golf financials and course progress for June/July/August 2016. The course is behind budget, net ordinary income is \$42,000 and \$66,000 behind of prior year. At the end of August 2016, the operating cash reserve was approximately \$461,000.

The total number of rounds played in 2016 increase from year to date. However, figures were slightly down with more event rounds than pass holder rounds. There was some brief discussion regarding competition from Gillette and Keney Park golf courses. The weather has also impacted public play for the past few months.

Course Conditions – Status Update

Mr. Mark Mansur, Course Superintendent reported that conditions were dry during the active season in the Spring, Summer and Fall. Mr. Mansur and staff will perform extra work to reseed on fairways with fertilizer. It has been a challenging year due to weather related issues.

It was noted that there were water concerns and tentative discussions about accessing MDC water and cost involved.

The driving range renovations were received very well by golfers and visitors. In addition, golf management is drafting plans to have tokens purchased via accessible by internet. In addition, plans for renovation of the range shed will be a smaller building closer to the parking lot. Mr. Mansur and Mr. David Melesko, Golf Subcommittee liaison will collaborate on size and pricing.

On October 18 – 19, 2016, the Bloomfield Juniors will play for 1 ½ hours for the next 4 weeks.

Marketing

Mr. Carr presented marketing e-mails for 2017 Annual Pass holder passes for September 2016. Moreover, other e-mails included promotions for current sales and marketing offers for Back to School – late summer savings, weekend and holiday specials.

Community Involvement

Mr. Carr also noted that Wintonbury Golf Course will participate in Toys for Tots on October 23rd and 29th. Golfers will play shotgun at a discounted rate, they will provide an unwrapped new toy valued at \$20.00. Advertisement will be posted in local newspapers/media and BATV. In addition, the course will also have a food drive for a week long collecting non-perishable items.

Juniors Parent Walking/Riding Policy

Mr. Carr and Mr. Melesko presented information regarding the Junior Parent Walking/Riding policy. Mr. Melesko gave a brief overview of local area golf courses and their policies. The pricing schedule at most area courses do not charge a cart fee, however Wintonbury charges \$30.00 for 2 persons. There was some discussion regarding allowing parents to walk with their child on the course. They also discussed what age should a junior be, cart restrictions and availability.

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor Seldon and voted unanimously to approve a \$10.00 cart fee for parents to drive and at any time they can walk with their children for golf play.

Banquet Facility

The subcommittee discussed the necessity and proposed options for a banquet facility renovation at Wintonbury Hills. It was noted that such a facility would increase revenues in regards to rentals and food/beverage sales enhanced. Mr. Ryan Phelps, Regional Manager for BCBG - Billy Casper Golf presented three options:

- Option A – No changes with current facility - \$100,000 in revenues
- Option B – Renovated to a four season facility (enclosed) – estimated cost \$800,000, would see a dramatic increase in events and outings
- Option C – Complete Clubhouse remodel - \$2,000,000 estimate, \$310,000 annual debt service repayment, would see a slight return in approximately 8 years for the date of completion.

Councilor Rivers is very interested in plans to enclosing the current space. By renovating and enclosing the space, would attract any event to Wintonbury Hills.

Mr. Phelps stated that Billy Casper Golf is capable of handling project management, engineer of the project, possibly co-invest with Billy Casper Golf and determine the municipal reason to have a larger facility.

Mr. Byron Lester, committee member inquired about ownership of clubhouse if renovated.

Mr. Jon Colman, committee member inquired about long term – full renovation versus four season facility (partial renovation), which is more profitable?

Mr. Philip K. Schenck, Jr., Town Manager stated that the town would like to promote a project with multiple revenue streams. The proposed capital from BCBG would be a return on investment, addressing the current noise complaints from residents, parking concerns- significant issue, reserve and overlap golf community, prevailing wage requires municipalities on a project that reach a certain threshold

Mr. Schenck, Jr. and town staff recommended Option B. - \$800,000 partial renovation and develop solutions to address noise in the neighborhood. The subcommittee recommended that Mr. Melesko and Mr. Schenck, Jr. to investigate whether the property for sale next door to the course is still on the market. If acquired, this space would be allocated for additional parking.

Mr. Mark Jacobs, former Councilman, interested resident suggested completing a market analysis on golf for the future, worth the investment. He also inquired about the cost of damage relative to dry conditions to repair and how it is reflected in the budget. It was noted that repairs are budgeted for current fiscal year.

Mr. Mansur stated that nominal repairs will be made accordingly. The cost of seed is approximately \$5.00 per pound for pure bank grass.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

1. **Alex Kellner, 117 Duncaster Road**, thanked Councilor Rivers and the Golf Subcommittee for promoting play with children and adolescents. Ms. Kellner expressed concerns about pricing for junior membership. Currently, the course offers 18 holes at \$25.00 for juniors. She is requesting a reduction in the rate for juniors, reflective for twilight rates.
2. **Robert Morisse, 17 Arnold Drive** expressed concerns about enhancing revenues, attracting events to the golf course prevents the public for playing golf. He also stated that course conditions are excellent compared to other area golf courses.

Mr. Jon Colman inquired about the threshold to go out to bond for possible renovations.

Councilor Merritt stated that the parking issues need to be resolved. He also stated that this project could be added to the capital budget list and financed over the next 3 years.

Mr. Lester stated that Wintonbury Hills has the best golf course New England, however outing space is a deterrent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Councilor Seldon, seconded by Councilor Merritt and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of August 22, 2016.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor Seldon to adjourn the meeting at 7:09 p.m.