

**OAK HILLS PARK AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING ON
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2023
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE: Joe Andrasko; chair, Gary Leeds, Alan, Dutton, Richard Dellinger, Denise Brown, Jim Schnell, Jennifer McAllister, Robert Stowers; Director of Recreation and Parks (7:20)

OTHER: Jim Hollyday, Paul Alexander, Mark Guartner

ATTENDEE: Charlie Brennan

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:15

ROLL CALL

Mr. Andrasko called the Roll as indicated above and stated that a quorum was present.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Mr. Andrasko made the following corrections:

Mr. Andrasko asked Rich Dellinger to comment on tennis issues because Denise Brown had not yet joined the OHPA meeting. Rich reported that Denise Brown and Chris Mayotte did a great job recently with both the youth clinics and the first-ever USTA youth tournaments. Kudos to both Denise and Chris, as it was great to see so many kids who were involved and to see the courts being utilized. Also, last Monday, October 16, the pergola construction was completed, except for some caulking that still needed to be done. Next year this pergola should provide much-needed relief and allow players to comfortably congregate on the patio. Special thanks to Jaime Smith and John Kuczo for all their work in making this happen. Jaime Smith is planning to have a November dedication of the last November. Thanks also to Jim Hollyday who took over supervising the construction as the pergola has been a great addition to the tennis facility. The Tennis Friends leadership group is also planning to have a meeting soon to review accomplishments and work on additional fundraising activities for next year. Tennis Friends had several good fundraising events this year including the weekend drop-in program, which so far had over 600 players and raised approximately \$1,500. Alan Dutton thanked Rich for his help getting the building permit for the pergola.

- ** MR. DELLINGER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED.
- ** MR. DUTTON SECONDED THE MOTION.
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Brennan from the Men's Association took the time to thank, everyone for all their work saying it was a great year. There were no other participants so public comments were closed.

Mr. Androsko said there was nothing to note other than the dissolution agreement with DDSA was still being worked on. He noted they had an agreement in principle and were looking at an end date in early January. He indicated there would be more updates on it later in the meeting.

MANAGEMENT REPORTS

A. REPORT OF THE GOLF PROFESSIONAL: PAUL ALEXANDER

Mr. Alexander presented the report as follows

Golf Operations Update 11-16-23

Now that it is mid-November, leaves have come down, and temperatures drop into the 40's, golf at Oak Hills Park moves into the Fall/Winter golf season and starts to slow down dramatically. We continue to see some golfers on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays but weekdays are very slow. All outings, golf events, tournaments, high school golf, clinics, and golf schools are finished for the season and all were very successful.

Our "Learn to Play Golf" clinics and programs have increased more than 10% each of the last two seasons. Our GolfNow tee sheet program has worked very well and our Golf Genius premiere tournaments software program has been a huge benefit to both men's and women's golf associations and our 19 golf outings. Our 68 golf carts are clean, in good shape, and running well. The golf shop has had numerous sales in the last month to move some of the 2023 merchandise out and make way for 2024 new Spring product.

We added two new commercial hitting bays for golfers to warm up before their golf round and they are now in use. We have pared down our golf staff to 23 from a high of 40. Most of these staff members are working less than ten hours a week. The golf shop is open from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm and the golf course opens at 9:00 am. We have had a couple of frost delays and expect more. On the 20th we move to a 10:00 am start.

We had a very nice Staff Appreciation Day with golf at OHP and dinner at Ischoda Yacht Club. We have added another outing to our 2024 golf season and tentatively we have 20 outings scheduled.

Overall, it has been a successful 2023 golf season at Oak Hills Park!

B. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT: JIM SCHNELL

Mr. Schnell gave the following verbal report on bunker restoration.

Mr. Schnell discussed the current condition of the golf course noting there were still problematic wet spots. He also reported on the state of the golf carts and getting a quote for a utility cart. He stated there was a bid in the commercial debt schedule for \$12,000, but they were now looking at a \$3,776 increase. He indicated there was a \$1,100 saving on another item in the commercial debt. Mr. Dutton and Mr. Androsko had questions about the price increase. Mr. Schnell explained that the cost difference was based on the previous cart being gas and the new offering being electric.

Mr. Guartner wanted to know if they could go forward. Mr. Androsko asked if there were other options, such as trading down or going back to gas. Mr. Schnell said he hadn't gotten a quote for gas.

It was asked how this might affect the capital budget. Mr. Guartner explained the various avenues they could take. Mr. Dutton reminded everyone that in a previous meeting, big mowers were approved but not budgeted to add to the commercial debt. Mr. Guartner explained the financial situation and how it could be used in this situation. Mr. Androsko disagreed saying the funds they were looking at should be for emergencies. He also stated it wasn't material to the finances being spread out over 5 years. Mr. Guartner countered by saying he'd rather buy the item outright and flip it over to commercial debt. Mr. Hollyday asks what's your forecast for other types of equipment they would be needing. Mr. Schnell informed him of the evolving commercial debt schedule for every year and that it's part of the budget and indicated his support for buying the item outright.

The group continued to discuss how they should handle things from an accounting perspective. Mr. Androsko asked if everyone supported buying it outright. All were in agreement he noted it was not a formal vote.

C. REPORT OF THE CONTROLLER: MARK GUARTNER

Mr. Guartner presented the report as follows.

Report of the Controller (filed on Nov. 14)

October 2023 Financial Commentary

General Notes:

- We've continued with our debt payments to the City of Norwalk as normal, paying down \$57k in the first four months of the fiscal year.
- The year-end financial audit fieldwork took place in July. The Audit Report is being updated and reviewed by the partner at PKF O'Connor Davies.

Preliminary Financial / Operational Activity:

- YTD revenue rounds, cart rounds and discount ID cards are performing above budget, putting us in a favorable position as we head into off-season.
- Preliminary YTD through October revenues are \$80k over budget and expenses are flat compared to budget.

- We ended October with an unrestricted bank balance of \$849k as well as a capital reserve cash balance of \$43k. The reserve can only be used for capital improvements to the structures on the course. Total cash at 10/31/23 is \$263k higher than prior year.
- We are slightly underspent in capital improvements for the first four months of the year. The areas we've focused on so far include refurbishments made at the Clubhouse and old admin building, cart path paving, artificial turf for teaching range, bottle filling station at the tennis facility, kitchen equipment, a new roof at the Stone House, new garage doors at the cart barn, two warm-up netted cages, and pavement markings at the golf course and tennis facility. We can look forward to additional spending on cart path paving, storage bays for the maintenance area, and more building improvements.

Cash Investments / Cash Flow

- On 9/25 we moved \$225k to an eight-month CD at Chase Bank earning 5%. If rates are still favorable when the CD comes due on 5/25/24, we plan to reinvest.
- On 10/31 we moved \$225k to a Money Market acct at Bankwell earning 4.25%. This is liquid so it can be transferred to our operating acct at Norwalk Bank & Trust as needed.
- As of 11/9, \$45k of our Capital Reserve account has been moved to a Savings acct at Bankwell earning 3.5%.
- We should earn roughly \$15k on interest income from these investments in FY24.
- Given that we have moved a total of \$495k out of our operating account, even with the current cash overage vs. budget, we will likely need to transfer \$50k back to operating at some point in March/April '24 to ensure we do not fall into a negative cash position at Norwalk Bank & Trust.
- We should end FY24 with a cash balance \$155k higher than budget, or \$660k, if we remain on target with budget.

D. REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER: JIM HOLLYDAY

Mr. Hollyday presented the report as follows.

Report of the General Manager (filed on Nov. 6)

Report of the General Manager (filed on Nov. 6)

Lots of good activity and here are a few highlights:

New Cart Paths / Paving - This was an issue for several of you in our latest survey.

We now have new cart paths between 1 and 2, 11 and 12 and in front of the Starter's Station at # 1.

We also repaved the area in front of the cart barn, which you've likely not seen.

These areas were deemed the worst, so they made it into the 2023/2024 Capital Budget. Paving is expensive and the work was needed and long overdue. Also, first impressions are important so we:

Re-stripped the parking areas and the driveway

Created a fresh look to allow you to park in a parking stall instead of guessing where you should park!

New cart path initial impressions are very favorable, as walkers say it's much easier and safer to walk on paths. We'll budget wisely and update our infrastructure continuously over time.

New Hitting Bays! – They're up and ready! You asked for them in the survey and we got them. We hope you'll take advantage of the two practice nets we placed by the Employee parking lot. Please take a few swings before you tee off on Hole # 1. If no one is waiting to use them, feel free to hit as long as long you like.

Bathroom Updates – Little things add up too, so we:

- Installed new exhaust fans in the Clubhouse bathrooms activated by wall switches outside the doors.
- Replaced a couple toilets that were not functioning – freeing up my time on repairs Restaurant News – Many expressed their opinions (survey) on the restaurant, a few items:
- The big news is that our restaurant concessionaire has volunteered to dissolve our license agreement in January 2024 – We thank Smokin' Aces for their time at Oak Hills.
- We're actively talking to several potential new concessionaires and we're optimistic about the interest shown so far.
- The City of Norwalk, owns the building so they will distribute an RFP (Request for Proposal) that Oak Hills Park will create.
- Oak Hills Park will distribute a survey on what you'd like to see in the 2024 version of our restaurant very soon – remember it takes a village and this is your club.
- In addition, we will form a Manager's Council of patrons, to informally chat about how we can all contribute to the success of our next food and beverage operation.

We're trying to communicate actively, keeping you abreast of happenings at your club. If you ever have a concern, thought or suggestion, please email me at ohpgm1@gmail.com or stop by the old pro shop.

Thank you for your time and your business, we don't take either for granted.

For the OHPA Staff,

Jim Hollyday, General Manager

Mr. Hollyday added that the restaurant is his priority and he's been using the opportunity for the kitchen to be closed to woo potential prospects.

Mr. Hollyday stated that a preference survey that would help them in moving forward with the new restaurant went out to 5100 people.

Mr. Dellinger had questions about various issues with wifi providers. Mr. Hollyday indicated they haven't been able to resolve the issues that require the customers to update their accounts. He also stated information about this was posted on the website which will also contain archived manager's reports, and there are notices in the Pro Shop.

Oak Hills Park Authority Parks Authority Regular Meeting

Thursday, November 16, 2023

Page: 5

Ms. Brown asked if just the bar was open. Mr. Hollyday said yes. The kitchen was closed and would remain closed until the end of their contract but the bar would remain open from noon until closing.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Tennis Committee: Denise Brown

Ms. Brown stated that tennis season was over and Jim was working on closing down the courts. She left courts seven and eight open temporarily for whoever wants to come and play but the season is over.

Ms. Brown discussed their two fall programs and the frustrations of dealing with the weather when scheduling. She said \$4,500 was netted for the supporter's account. She also stated through the UCA program that they ran for the youth program they had 12 tournaments three canceled for weather for a total of 9. She said they put out a survey sent From the UCA for feedback. She hoped to get in touch with them to get the results.

Ms. Brown mentioned a meeting on December 6th with Land Use and Building Management and went through the process of getting a plaque and naming the court which is then followed by a public hearing. Mr. Stowers told her there were instructions for the process.

Ms. Brown asked about the pergola. Mr. Dellinger said it looked like there was enough money to paint the metal structure and they would do it in the spring. Ms. Brown thought the money was slated to go elsewhere. Mr. Guartner said it would go to the architect and he agreed to paint.

b. Supporters of Oak Hills Park: Jerry Crowley

There was no report from Supporters of Oak Hills Park

c. Nature Advisory Committee: TBD

There was no report from the Nature Advisory Committee

OLD BUSINESS / NEW BUSINESS:

a. Creation of a Committee for the Master Plan

Mr. Hollyday discussed going about the process of creating a committee for the master plan and appointing a chair. Mr. Androsko stated that by the bylaws he could appoint a chair, create a committee, and then they can bring in members. Those individuals would not need to be members of the authority. He also stated he didn't feel the need to form the committee in a formal meeting.

Mr. Dellinger wanted to know if the current plan would be as extensive and costly as the last master plan. He stated he was on board but not to the extent of the previous plan. He said he wouldn't mind volunteering only because he was worried about it getting out of control.

Mr. Stowers said that the plans have to be gone through to remove what was no longer relevant and what was relevant should be transferred to the new master plan. Mr. Androsko would follow up to see if the TJ was on board, so he can be appointed and prepare an update for the next meeting.

b. Request For Proposal

Mr. Hollyday stated he released the completed RFP on November 15th. This will be followed by a non-mandatory walk-through on November 28th, and a return of questions on December, 5th. The electronic version of the proposals is due December 12, and the written version on the 14th. He also stated that any questions relative to the actual project would be forwarded to him so he could create a list of all interested parties.

Ms. Brown asked would the city of Norwalk have control. Mr. Stowers explained the process and said the city of Norwalk information is on all the forms.

Mr. Schnell stated the whole agreement was very misleading in this request for proposal. He felt that 27 and 28 were the only relevant pages. He felt it was not for someone to come in and lease the restaurant but for a service, they would end up paying for. Mr. Hollyday stated it was the same document used in 2018 and he described the steps they should take. He also noted that none of the current potential applicants have had an issue with it being intimidating.

Mr. Stowers indicated that the agreement was a pro forma contract and they would be negotiating and the Oak Hills Lawyer would be part of the process. Mr. Androsko outlined the full process which includes a selection committee and indicated being very deliberate about who ends up on it. Mr. Dutton agreed to chair the RFP Selection Committee and was told by Mr. Androsko that he could populate as he pleased.

c. Bunkers

Mr. Schnell stated that this was for the fiscal year 2025 and was being done now to lock in a contractor. He discussed the original quote which did not include drainage and irrigation, used to get a ballpark figure. Mr. Schnell said it came to \$13.2500 per square foot and the whole project would come to roughly \$171.000. He stated that he recently received a quote that totaled all things \$196,413.00, which includes materials, mobilization costs, irrigation, hauling of dead material, a \$10,000 contingency, rebuilding 2 tees, and increasing the size of the tee area. Mr. Schnell stressed this was a chance to get everything done in one shot.

Mr. Dellinger asked if an RFP was necessary. Mr. Schnell stated he didn't think so and reminded everybody he already had three bids.

Mr. Dellinger inquired about the price per square foot in the new proposal. Mr. Schnell said \$9.16 per square foot and that included everything. He said he had to call references and was confident in the way it was presented. Mr. Dutton asked whether it was for 8 or 9 holes. Mr. Schnell stated they would do the worst 15 bunkers firsthand if the remaining 20 7 didn't need any work

Ms Brown asked about the putting area. Mr.Schnell responded that it was the worst two tees 1 and eight. Ms. Brown asked if the quote was guaranteed. Mr. Schnell indicated it would be signed on November 17, 2023. Ms. Brown inquired about a deposit. Mr. Schnell said they hadn't gotten that far and were trying to get approval for a number in advance of 2025 fiscal budgeting. He wanted to lock in a contractor while they were still available. Mr. Dutton was concerned about avoiding price escalations and suggested someone at the authority look over the contract.

Mr. Stowers asked if they had tried an invitation for bids. He described the process and said once completed it was sent out as an invitation to bid within a certain time frame. He stated that would ensure against auditors coming and wanting to see competitive bidding. Mr. Schnell indicated he had three with a fourth coming. Mr. Androsko had questions about the bidding process being open or directed to specific companies. Mr. Stowers indicated both. Mr. Dutton asked if you need more than 3 bids. Mr. Stowers said he didn't think more than three bids were necessary but was concerned they were not acquired through a process.

Mr. Androsklo stated because of the type of the market there weren't a lot of companies that do the work. Mr. Schnell conquered. Mr. Stowers offered up the sole source process, after a possible background check purchasing puts it through and it's done. Mr. Schnell stated all the companies they talked to had proper credentials and feared any further delays could impact moving forward. Mr. Schnell was also concerned about avoiding a prevailing wage job and was told it could. He then pointed out he used the same selection process for building the car parks.

Mr. Schnell informed Mr. Leeds they were using the capillary concrete process. Mr. Schnell also indicated it would be a two-phase process. He also responded to Ms. Brown that they were waiting on references and hoped that the process would wrap up by Christmas. Mr. Stowers said he would talk to Mr.Schnell to tap out a sole source.

Mr. Androsko said there were virtues to putting in a little extra governance. He also indicated he wasn't convinced that they could come up with a resolution by the timeline indicated and felt they should go through the invitation process. Mr. Schnell asked if the 2 tees would be added to the bid.

Mr. Alexander then described what the golf course experience should be like and what people looked for.

1. The bag drop.
2. Customer service at the pro shop

3. The starter
4. The overall experience at the first tee box.
5. The quality of the putting green

Mr. Alexander stated the first tee was an absolute necessity. He then stated that it was impossible to grow grass on the eight-hole. Mr. Androsko asked if changes to the first hole would affect things like ball flight. Mr. Alexander indicated it wouldn't and that it would be easier to maintain. He also discussed talk about installing a camera to have a view down the first hole.

Mr. Androsko wanted to form a motion that authorized Mr. Schnell and Mr. Androsko to enter into an agreement with a company identified through an invitation to bid process. Mr. Dellinger said yes providing it met Mr. Schnell's timeline. Mr. Dutton wanted the option of using the sole source process. Mr. Androsko asked about using a time writer. Mr. Dellinger reiterated if the process held to Mr. Schnell's timeline he felt a decision could be made, otherwise they should go with Mr. Schnell's recommendation.

Mr. Androsko made the following motion

** MR. ANDROSKO MOTION TO AUTHORIZE JIM SCHNELL AND JOE ANDROSKO TO PURSUE, AND JOE ANDROSKO TO EXECUTE, WITH A VENDOR IDENTIFIED THROUGH AN INVITATION TO BID OR A SOLE SOURCE PROCESS TO WORK ON THE BUNKER PROJECT ADDING TEE BOXES ONE AND EIGHT WITH THE PROVISION JIM SCHNELL AND JOE ANDROSKO DEEM THAT THE INVITATION TO BID PROCESS WILL BE RESOLVED AND A CONTRACT WILL BE EXECUTABLE ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 15, 2023 OTHERWISE THEY WILL GO WITH THE INFORMAL BID PROCESS THAT MR. SCHNELL HAS ALREADY PURSUED.

** MR. DUTTON SECONDED THE MOTION
 ** THE MOTION WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

d. Preliminary 2024 Rate Discussion

Mr. Androsko indicated that this was preliminary and the final discussion would occur at the December meeting. Mr. Alexander indicated he discussed the rates with Mr. Schnell and Mr. Guartner and kept everyone in mind that similar to the last couple of years there were some small increases. Mr. Alexander talked about discontinuing off-peak rates next year because there wasn't an off-peak time at the course anymore. Ms. Brown had questions about off-peak options Mr. Schnell stated multiple courses have off-peak pricing some courses had multiple pricing during the day.

Mr. Alexander said that Oak Hills had multiple categories and pricing that many found difficult. Mr. Guartner agreed they had too many categories and this was something other courses have done. They used the slide to show the various rates per category. Mr. Androsko said to consider

giving a small discount for off-peak rather than lose people who still expect it and consider phasing it out for 2025. Mr. Alexander suggested making off-peak one hour instead of two so peak golfers could you assured a full 18 holes. Mr. Dutton likes the idea of phasing it and if they're's not too much outcry it can be phased out completely. Ms. Brown agreed as well. Mr. Androsko indicated it could be part of the final proposal.

Mr. Stowers suggested doing several studies including a price elasticity study to establish a model that automatically adjusts itself when they do the master plan. Mr. Guartner talked about compensating for rates going up. Mr. Leeds requested they at least have Sterling Farm's and Smith Richardsons's rates to compare to Norwalk's rates and Mr. Androsko said those numbers should appear in their final proposal. He also requested the numbers be converted to percentages for the last meeting.

Mr. Androsko stated we're about to have people come to use the park and the modest increases and preserving some features of off-peak was a good service to the city for accessibility and affordability.

Mr. Alexander discussed the pass being good for both golfers and Oak Hills and keeping it gave a municipal golf course the feeling of a club golf course. Mr. Leeds mentioned at the Men's club meeting that the majority of the golfers there were unlimited and those are the ones that play all the time and try to make the place a club.

Mr. Alexander stated that the pass increase was \$25.00 and the pass had to be purchased by the last day of February.

They next discussed in detail what that meant in potential revenue. Mr. Guartner said slightly less than \$10,000. Mr. Guartner explained how he arrived at the numbers and then compared them to the difference between buying a pass and a discounted I.D. card. He stated he got a blended rate for seniors and nonresidents and determined that if these passes were eliminated they would lose \$13,000.

Mr. Guartner described the contents of the final tab and indicated they were not up for discussion. He also responded to Mr. Androsko's question about carts and suggested in a year or two the price of cart rental for nonmembers should be raised by \$1.00.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** MR DELLINGER MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN**
- ** MS. BROWN SECONDED THE MOTION**
- ** MR. ANDROSKO MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AT 9:31 PM.**

NEXT SCHEDULED AUTHORITY MEETING – Thursday, December 19, 2023

Respectfully submitted
China Mayhew
Telesco Secretarial Services