

**Minutes of the Waukegan Park District  
Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners**

**Golf Advisory Committee Meeting  
December 14, 2017**

The Board of Commissioners of the Waukegan Park District and staff met for a Special Meeting to hold a Golf Advisory Committee Meeting on December 14, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at the Bonnie Brook Clubhouse, 2800 North Lewis Avenue, Waukegan, Illinois.

**I. Call to Order**

Acting Chairman Bill Sarocka called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and directed the roll.

**II. Roll Call**

Commissioners Bill Sarocka was present. GolfVisions staff present were Dirk Skelley, Greg Benson, and Mike Jesse. The staff and members present introduced themselves. Waukegan Park District staff present were Jay Lerner and Jon Beckmann.

Due to lack of a quorum, no official board business was conducted.

**GolfVisions Update**

**Dirk Skelley**

Quick review of what they are hearing in the industry. Golf had hit bottom, but is moving in an upward direction. Wellness and tracking of steps is also being seen, which is driving more people to the course on a health upswing. On playable days, they are seeing more juniors and more golfers that are new. They expect this will all benefit the industry. Weather plays a big role.

GolfVisions continues to add properties, such as Antioch, which may be going away as they have a potential buyer. They will contact the new owner if he is interested. They added Danville Country Club, a private club that has been around for years. They also added Midlane in October. They continue to look for properties that will work well for them. Discussion took place about the damage to the Midlane property due to flooding. He encouraged anyone who hears of a potential opportunity to acquire a course, let them know. Discussion followed about a course that is bank owned and may be sold for subdivision housing.

**Mike Jesse**

Mike spoke about Bonnie Brook and noted that the in three months he has been here, everything is very impressive. He has some responses for leagues that will be returning and is seeking new outings. Mike then talked about the rain damage and stated that

they are in good shape considering the weather and compared to other courses. Chairman Sarocka spoke about a lunch held for the staff to thank them for their hard work to keep the course in good shape.

Greenshire has the biggest ladies league in Lake County, they are a fun group. He said that food and beverage has done very well and that Ralph is not here today as they have done about ten events back to back. Taco Tuesday is a big hit, and will be carried to next year, along with the chillin' and grillin' events. They may also have a steak and shake Thursday or something similar. He also spoke about improvements to the property.

A question was raised by Ellen about the Thursday 18 hole ladies league and their guest day. This year, they were rained out on their guest day but the lunch itself was very disappointing. They mentioned it but did not get a satisfactory response. It was \$17 per person and they had to pay a \$75 setup fee. It was chicken salad or tuna salad, one scoop on lettuce, and was not worth the price. This did not make a good impression on their guests, who they are trying to have come here. They tried having their closing dinner on Wednesday night to take advantage of the buffet, but they did not have a private place to meet. They are considering changing the place they hold the guest luncheon if things cannot be changed, as the Wednesday night league has gone to Quonset. This problem has been ongoing over the last few years, with them running out of food on another guest day, and having hamburgers and hot dogs for another date.

Chairman Sarocka mentioned that with what they put into the course, they should have something in return. She requested that the \$75 set up fee be waived which Dirk stated would be done. Further discussion noted that they have a wonderful lunch salad plate on some days at a cost of only \$8. This will be rectified; Mike and Dirk will work to ensure it. There is not yet a social committee chair for the group, but once chosen, they will work together to meet the needs of the group.

Discussion further noted that the parking lot is full and that many enjoy dining at Bonnie Brook, which reflects on the great job that Ralph is doing.

## **Greg Benson**

Greg began by discussing the weather and the extensive rain, noting its impact on the course. He considered it a bit of a difficult year, with insects not being a big deal, but lots of rain. Discussion took place about past years in comparison to the present time.

Greg noted that they acquired two greens mowers and moved them to Greenshire. He discussed other equipment changes as well. He indicated they replaced an old 1985 trailer with a wood deck.

In addition, they ground over 150 stumps and have removed 262 ash trees, with only 87 remaining ash trees on the course. About 40 trees of other species were taken down. Discussion about trees in certain locations followed. They have not begun to remove

trees from Greenshire nor do they have inventory there yet. A 30 year old fence around the maintenance area was replaced at Greenshire. All fencing is level and safer. For next year, they will continue to work on removal of emerald ash borer trees.

Accolades were given to Greg Benson for his 30 years of hard work and caring for the course.

### **Jon Beckmann**

Chairman Sarocka introduced Jon to the group and noted that he grew up on the course, as his grandparents lived on it. He is a recreational golfer and enjoys the course. He spoke about the remodeling and painting that is going on at the facility. He noted that the Parks department did a great job of coordinating the roof and exterior painting improvements. He noted that the carpet will be replaced in February.

Chairman Sarocka noted he visited a Milwaukee County golf course recently to discuss flooring options, using carpet versus wood flooring. He noted it seems to work well and the board voted to install it, with a Waukegan contractor winning the bid. It is planned to be done January 2-9th. In addition, to be installed is a permanent dance floor, so it doesn't need to be moved every time it is used. Finally, design services were used to choose colors and finishes, and everything should look great when finished.

He also noted that a job fair will be held on January 4th at the Field House, and to refer anyone looking for a job to apply.

Discussion about potential work on the Bonnie Brook roof took place in answer to a question. Planning for the golf capital improvement plan is beginning and Jon provided an overview of that process. Jay noted that in addition, there are funds set aside for emergency repairs.

A question was raised about the clubs that were stolen from outside the clubhouse. Discussion about a security camera for the area took place.

### **Jay Lerner**

Jay was introduced to the group, noting that he was promoted to Executive Director in July. Chairman Sarocka noted that he has more than 20 years of experience with the district and is highly qualified for the role.

Jay informed the group that the administrative center in Belvidere Park will be moved to the former Waukegan Savings Bank at 1324 Golf Road. This is expected to take place in late spring 2018. Chairman Sarocka noted the plans for Belvidere Park including the new outdoor aquatic center, a new playground and new picnic shelters.

The committee asked about holding one of their meetings at the new administrative building once it is ready.

Jay reported that there are now nearly 6,000 memberships at the Field House, compared to 900 in 2012 when they opened. The biggest group is family memberships and he noted that the pool has been a great addition to the facility.

### **III. Questions and/or Comments**

In closing, Chairman Sarocka offered to anyone to ask any question and get any information.

A question was raised about rounds and Mike noted they were down to 3,289 at Bonnie Brook. Total rounds for the year was around 25,000.

A member said that Bonnie Brook is really a first class course and he is totally impressed.

Chairman Sarocka thanked everyone and gave accolades to Ralph, with the members concurring. All noted that Ralph is a great addition to the Bonnie Brook team.

In addition, he stated he wants to add more members to the Golf Advisory Committee. He asked that Mike help in this effort with league members. He suggested incentives for their input.

When asked about other commissioners attending, Chairman Sarocka noted that they usually don't as they have other committees that they lead and attend.

All were wished happy holidays.

### **IV. Next Meeting**

The next meeting date is scheduled for Thursday, May 3, 2018 at 7 pm.

### **V. Adjournment**

**Motion by Commissioner Sarocka to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Beckmann  
Acting Secretary

JB:ss