

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

Golf Advisory Meeting

Dec 7th, 2023

Start time- 6:03pm

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 7, 2023, at 6:00pm at the Bonnie Brook Club House, 2800 North Lewis Avenue, Waukegan, Illinois.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Michael Jesse called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. and directed the roll.

II. Roll Call

Michael Jesse was present and welcomed those in attendance: John Miles, Joe Cervantes, and Ellie Gerdt. The staff and members present introduced themselves. Waukegan Park District staff present were Jay Lerner and Michael Jesse.

GolfVisions Update

Speakers

John Miles- Senior Vice President with GolfVisions

Joe Cervantes- General Manager

Ellie Gerdt- Director of Food and Beverage

John Miles said Bonnie Brook and Greenshire both had a great year. Bonnie Brook, at the end of November, had 29,105 golf rounds and \$1.42 million in revenue. Greenshire did 6,420 rounds. Very little weather impacts this season, storms went north and south most of the time which kept the course in great shape. Greg Benson could not attend the meeting due to illness. Since March, we have had 95 banquet events with 15 more scheduled until the end of the fiscal year. Average attendance at the banquets was 60 people. We would like to grow the food and beverage side by pre-booking events. At this time, we have 12 booked events for 2024, including two weddings. The Banquet totals do not include special events like Chilling' and Grillin' and the Friday Fish Fry. They brought back the Fish Fry Buffet in November 2023. We will watch the attendance numbers but know it will be high during Lent. Ellie has done a great job getting the menus out for guests to read before they attend. The season pass drive went well this year, same as last year. 17 prior to the Christmas party and over 20 passes at the Christmas party were sold. Added two new golf outings, the spring scramble and the turkey shoot average attendance for both was around 84 players. Nice thing with the turkey shoots only 11 passholders played, the rest were new players which gave good feedback and will have the outings in 2024 possibly adding in one new event. 144 attended the Easter Brunch plus held an Easter egg hunt for the children as well. 130 attended the Mother's Day brunch. Bonnie Brook won the Battle of the Bars golf outing. Ellie attended the WPD Trick or Treat Trail event that had 2700 people in attendance, she handed out

flyers to 100 people. It was a good thing to meet the community, and she was able to add 30 new people to the e-blast system and handed out all 100 flyers. Ellie said the Friday Fish Fry is going well, it is hit or miss, one week they have 70 guests and the next they have 30 guests. Fish Fry will be cancelled on the last two Fridays in December due to the holidays and the last 2 Fridays in January due to renovations. Larry asked how they advertise Fish Fry, and they stated it is done using email and social media. Next Sunday, they will hold breakfast with Santa and have 35 people signed up so far. One of the Chillin' and Grillin' had a food truck from a local Waukegan restaurant and it went well, they ran out of food. State of the game right now looking at this year's rounds and revenue, they are going up and we anticipate it to continue to go up. Considering all aspects of the golf industry and anticipating next year to be another great year. Bonnie Brook and Greenshore have both been updated with the new Golf Now software called Golf 365. Golf Now owns a lot of golf booking engines and websites. With the new software, we are expecting positive results with easier access to booking rounds and both courses. This will be the first year Greenshore will have its own tee time booking engine so we should see an increase in rounds. Should attract new outside the area golfers since the software reaches out to so many players. Larry asked about the kind of discount golfers get through Golf Now compared to people that pay at the course. Golf Now gets three tee times per day during the week and two tee times per day on the weekends. They are called hot deals, and they are about 20% lower than the standard rate, but those times are usually spread out and don't start until after 10 am on weekends. With the new system, they will need to capture everyone's information to help build profiles for all guests, to make us more efficient. People will be able to book food orders which will go straight through to the cooks. Helps with customer flow and better communication. Helps with starters and ranges and beverage carts. As players check in, it would change the color of the player in the system signifying if they checked in or not. Dale asked if the season passholders will still be able to book two weeks in advance while everyone else can only do one week in advance. The system will have in the season pass profiles of what pass they have so the staff will know who the passholders are. Each year they have added Golf Now 365 to five GolfVisions courses to work out the glitches. The course was in great shape, Greg Benson did a great job. Due to the weather the course dried out quickly and we only had a few days we could let carts out. Received lots of good feedback from new customers about the course and course condition being outstanding. Save a Tree finished stump grinding and applied growth regulator. Could not complete core aeration because the aerator broke. Dale talked about the tall grass on holes 12 and 1 where it gets too tall the ladies can't see over the top and they get upset so he is asking if Greg would be able to do a better job of keeping it cut down. Larry says it also slows down play for people looking for ball or lasers not working. Winterized the course, heavy top dressed the greens. Complete fertilizer applications on greens, teeboxes, and fairways. Save a Tree completed stump grinding at Greenshore and they also verticut the greens at Greenshore and put down all winterize solutions. Blew out the lines and got the bathrooms at Bonnie Brook cleaned and prepped for winter.

Michael Jesse- Manager of Operations

Mike Jesse went over capital; we are replacing the ice machine. Greg will receive a new spreader, new paint in the banquet room, bar stools, and new flooring in the bridal room and men's and women's locker rooms. March 12th GolfVisions will present the budget to the WPD.

Jay Lerner- Executive Director

Jay mentioned the possibility of cart paths. Dale is for them been an idea for 20 years. Ed Holm did not agree because he believes that if it rains, there will be cart path only more, but it depends on the conditions of the day. Mr. Miles and I work on explaining the positive of cart paths, allowing people to still play when certain areas are wet rather than walking only and losing revenue. Larry says he is in the middle where we just put cart paths where they are needed. So, do we do fully continuous or partially? We let them know that the weather has been so great the last couple of years it is hard to see the need for cart paths, but if you look 4-6 years back when we had 60 to 90 no play days due to rain but if we had cart paths, we could have still had players out. Mr. Lerner discussed the Top Golf range idea that has been tabled. The marquee on Lewis Avenue has been approved to replace the current one which is outdated. The WPD is renovating Bevier Park and is still working on the Carnegie Library. Also discussed how popular pickleball has been at the Field House.

III. Questions and/or Comments

Larry talks about his disappointment that the Club Championship did not happen due to the fact the no one signed up because the prizes were not worth playing for based on the price it cost to sign up. Ed Holm would like to see the whole back pad of asphalt replaced and resurfaced since people are eating out there and looking at cracks. The height of the rough on areas close to the creek was discussed. Dale asked why the WPD has a management company running the golf course, he doesn't like as a taxpayer that it's not going to the golf course.

IV. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 2, 2024, at 6pm

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:54pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Jesse
Acting Secretary

