



Golf Division
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MINUTES

GOLF COURSE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

WebEx Meeting

JUNE 22, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: Laurie Steenrod, Chairperson; Jesse Stine, Vice-Chairperson; Dorothy Shadrick, Doug Webb, Elizabeth Hamilton, John Lichtner, Shannon Crouthers, Wes Severin

MEMBERS ABSENT: Brendan Wild, Pete Schlickman, Perry Jowsey

STAFF ATTENDING: Doug McNeil, Manager of Golf; Karin Rivale, Marketing Specialist; Suzie Jaquith, Administrative Supervisor

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Laurie Steenrod, Chairperson called the meeting to order at 5:16 P.M.
- II. CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS – Laurie Steenrod remarked she played the back nine at Murphy Creek and thought the course was in very good shape. She encouraged using less bags stands on the driving range; recommending skipping spaces to spread them out farther. She commented many golfers use push carts or have bags with stands and do not use the course stands.
- III. PUBLIC INVITED TO SPEAK – None.
- IV. COMMITTEE REMARKS -
 - Shannon Crouthers is new to the committee. She and her family are avid golfers and play numerous Aurora courses.
 - Wes Severin is new to the committee. He is also a member of the Saddle Rock and Murphy Creek Men's Club.
 - John Lichtner is new to the committee. He is also a member of the Meadow Hills Men's Club.
 - Jesse Stine remarked he is pleased with the course conditions at Saddle Rock. Recently, Saddle Rock staff changed hazard markings to where the cart paths on #6 and #9 are now inside the hazard in certain areas. Golfers are forced to make a difficult decision if their ball lands on the concrete path, especially in tournament play. He explained hitting the ball off the path has potential to cause a wrist injury or damage to clubs. He referred to staff to comment. He agreed with Laurie that the greens at Murphy Creek are in beautiful condition and may be faster than Saddle Rock's greens. He recognized the challenges staff have with mowing the bunker edges as it's labor intensive. He remarked the rough is extremely tall and needs to be mowed. He remarked traps look rougher than in previous years with weeds. Doug McNeil, Manager of Golf, responded that Murphy Creek Maintenance is dealing with severe staff shortages, and the superintendent's main focus is on tees, greens and fairways. The rough and traps will continue to struggle until appropriate staff can be hired. Extra staff are not available at other courses to assist.

- Doug Webb remarked he has played Aurora Hills a couple of times and the course is looking decent. Springhill course conditions have much improved over the last 2 months. The driving range tee is in rougher shape because it's a smaller area. He suggested utilizing the new artificial grass areas more to let the regular turf recover more quickly.
- Elizabeth Hamilton remarked she has played Springhill, Aurora Hills and Meadow Hills with the Couples League. She thanked staff for installing the sign at Meadow Hills to direct golfers to the portable restroom between #15 and #16. She thanked the course maintenance staff for allowing the contractor, hired by the homeowner's association, onto the course to make repairs to the iron fence that separates the golf course from the residential properties. She noticed dead fish around the pond between #17 and #18 at Meadow Hills golf course. She alerted the superintendent, and he is investigating the cause of the situation. She commented how great the flower beds looked.
- Dorothy Shadrick remarked she had heard comments from other golfers about dynamic pricing the courses implemented recently. She remarked the rough at Murphy Creek is extremely thick and the golf carts make a strange noise. She later found out from staff that its due to a part and staff are working on ordering new part replacements.
- Wes Severin played Saddle Rock with the Men's Club and thought the course conditions overall were good. He mentioned pace of play was slow, taking 4 hours and 50 minutes to play 18 holes. This was a men's club event and their tee time was 7:00 A.M., but there was public play before them. He contributed some of the slow pace due to difficulty of the course and pin placement. He also played Murphy Creek in another men's event and was impressed with the course conditions and mentioned greens were much smoother than he has experienced in the past. He remarked the area around the waste bunkers along #4 has many weeds and looked like it has not been touched in about a month. He noticed a lack of bunker rakes on the course as well. He suggested if staffing issues continue, to have a volunteer day where men's club members could assist with maintenance of the course and possibly be compensated by offsetting green fees. Doug McNeil responded there are city policies regarding compensation for volunteer activities, but he appreciated the feedback and will keep it under advisement.
- John Lichtner remarked Meadow Hills Men's Club has a divot fixing party during their championship event and could organize it as a once a month activity, to supplement regular course maintenance. He played during the junior girl's tournament and heard many positive comments about the course from parents and participants. There was one comment regarding too many golf carts being checked out to parents during the tournament which left a cart shortage for the public.

V. STAFF UPDATES –

- Karin Rivale, Marketing Specialist, gave an update on marketing activities. Working with 104.3 The Fan Radio Station to have Aurora Golf featured during live talks on their mid-day show with radio personality and new golfer, Zach Bye. Zach will golf with the golf professionals and superintendents at each of the five Aurora golf courses and talk about his golf outings during the radio show for 10 weeks. In addition, Zach will be recording radio spots for Aurora Golf. Aurora Golf's Kids Golf for Free program was featured on Fox 31 News live cast interview with news reporter Dan Daru at Murphy Creek. Working on the monthly newsletter and survey.
- Doug McNeil, Manager of Golf, responded to Jesse Stine that he will follow up with the head pro at Saddle Rock regarding the concern of golfers having to decide whether to hit off cart paths within hazards in certain locations when competing in tournaments.

VI. FINANCIAL REVIEW – Doug McNeil, Manager of Golf, gave a Rounds/Financial Report update. Doug reported May was a good month. Revenues and rounds are coming out quite well. Expenses will continue to be up over last year with the new pay structure for seasonal staff that was implemented a couple month ago. Inflation is also a contributory factor in increased expenses. He hopes the increase in revenues will continue to keep pace and offset some of the increased expenses. The good thing is last year we were able to increase the fund balance considerably, and that will certainly help with the impact of significant new expenses this year. Overall, Doug is very pleased with golf's performance so far and thinks the demand for the game continues to be strong.

VII. DISCUSSION -

- Doug shared a slideshow presentation on an overview of the Aurora Golf Division with focus intended for new committee members.
- Doug gave an overview of the 2023 budget process which started in April. There are some new additional expenses that will need to be covered by revenues. Annual fee increases will be more than normal to cover the significant increase in payroll and other operating expenses. Findings showed, when comparing cart fees to Denver and across the metro area, we are lagging in what we charge for cart fees. When looking at fees, we work with the budget office and study the fee structure for area golf courses. We want to offer golf as a reasonably priced recreation option. We need to stay competitive with the market but also make sure our strategy allows us to be financially responsible. He explained dynamic pricing is one strategy used to help fund additional expenses and capital projects by increasing fees during high demand times instead of larger across the board increases. This is no different than strategies utilized by the airlines and hotel industries. People have a choice of when to play based on the fee they are willing to pay. Prime times are going to be more expensive because demand is high.
- Doug reported the Annual Committee Staff/Golf Outing is planned for this season. The committee agreed to schedule the event on September 21st, in place of a normal committee meeting. Golf course to be determined.
- Doug reported the city does not have the resources to support hybrid boards and commissions meetings. In order to meet in-person, there must be a unanimous decision made between all committee members. Staff will share a new survey with the committee members to vote anonymously to keep meeting virtually or to start meeting in person. Results to be shared at the July meeting.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS – None.

IX. GENERAL DISCUSSION –

- Laurie Steenrod remarked she was happy to see the bunker rakes back at Saddle Rock again.

X. ADJOURNMENT -

- Dorothy Shadrick moved for adjournment and Elizabeth Hamilton seconded the motion.

Minutes approved by: Laurie Steenrod Jul 25, 2022
Laurie Steenrod, Chairperson

Minutes prepared by: Suzie Jaquith
Suzie Jaquith, Administrative Supervisor

Signature: Laurie Steenrod
Laurie Steenrod (Jul 25, 2022 21:01 MDT)

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6-22-22 MINUTES_final_dm

Final Audit Report

2022-07-26

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