

## **Wicomico Shores Golf Course Advisory Board**

**Wednesday, July 11, 2007**

**Minutes**

**6:00 PM**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jim Hodges, Chairperson; Chico Rivers, Vice-Chairperson; Wayne Pettit, Bob Richardson, Phil Cranford and Gloria Tippet.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Rick Smith.

### **STAFF/OTHERS ATTENDING**

Phil Rollins, Director, Recreation, Parks and Community Services (RP&CS); Pat Meyers, Golf Course Manager, RP&CS; and Mark Weber, Chairman, Property Owners of Wicomico Shores Association.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting of the Wicomico Shores Golf Course (WSGC) Advisory Board was called to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Wicomico Shores Golf Course Maintenance Building.

### **AGENDA CHANGE**

There was one change to the agenda; a discussion item regarding parking was added.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Phil Cranford motioned, seconded by Chico Rivers, to approve the minutes of April 18, 2007.**

### **CLUBHOUSE PROJECT**

Director Phil Rollins reported that the construction contract for the Clubhouse renovation and expansion project was recently awarded. Interior demolition has been ongoing for several weeks and exterior demolition should begin within the next few days. Dennis Anderson Construction's projected timeline indicates that, if all goes as planned, the project may be finished as early as next March. Mr. Rollins expressed the desire to go stick to the original, more conservative, timeline which anticipates the project to be completed by spring or early summer 2008. There have been a few unforeseen issues that have come up, but the construction manager and architect don't think those should change the cost or time schedule significantly. Wayne Pettit asked if the contract has an official deadline. Mr. Rollins stated that the deadline is listed within the contract.

Mr. Rollins reported that Dennis Anderson strongly suggested the Clubhouse brick work be stained or painted since it will be very hard to match the existing brick.

Chairman Hodges asked Mr. Rollins to continue to provide regular updates on the Clubhouse project progress to the Board and to update the board if any problems occur.

### **MARKETING COMMITTEE**

A Market Committee was formed during the April 18, 2007 Board meeting. The Committee was charged with studying marketing options with an emphasis on advertising revenue. Members include: Chico Rivers, Chairperson, Wayne Pettit and Bob Richardson.

- ❖ Scorecards - The advertising contract for the scorecards is a three year agreement. Mr. Rivers provided some samples of scorecards used. The cards generate approximately \$4,600 annual revenue to Burco the cost is about \$1,500 to print 30,000 scorecards. The agreement runs until December 2008.
- ❖ Tee Markers - It's estimated that customers pay \$1,000 per year for each tee marker; Breton Bay charges \$1,500; Cameron Hills charges \$900. Mr. Rivers reported that 18 tee markers at \$1,000 each = \$18,000 per year to Burco (six year contract). The markers cost about \$400 each. Cameron Hills Golf Course buys the markers from Burco and manages their own program. The Breton Bay Golf and Country Club Board of Directors handles selling advertising and getting their own signs. Cameron Hills and Breton Bay do not advertise on scorecards. They do advertise on golf carts but are rethinking this practice. The tee marker contract expires in 2011.

Mr. Rivers stated that times are changing with regard to marketing and it seems that more and more courses are letting outside companies that specialize in golf course profitability handle advertising. Mr. Hodges stated that the golf course could realize at least \$20,000 per year by handling its own advertising for scorecards and tee markers.

Mr. Rivers was impressed with the open to buy computer program at Cameron Hills. Ms. Meyers stated that after the building is wired and ready for use decisions will be made with regard to information technology advertising options.

Mr. Hodges asked if the committee had done any research on the feasibility of using billboards. Mr. Rivers reported that he didn't do research on billboards since it was stated at the last meeting that they may be considered visual clutter. Bob Richardson stated that would depend on where the billboard is located.

Mr. Hodges asked if the committee planned to do further research on advertising. Mr. Rivers stated that the more information you can have before the new Clubhouse opens the better. He stated the Board should also be thinking about the fee for the banquet room rental. Ms. Meyers has also been doing research on costs for banquet room rentals.

## **MARKETING CONTEST**

Ms. Meyers reported that implementation of the marketing contest has not moved forward due to the delay in the move to the temporary golf operations trailer and other issues. Mr. Rollins recommended tabling this idea due to time constraints.

**Bob Richard motioned, seconded Chico to table the marketing contest. Motion carried with all in favor.**

## **PARKING**

Mr. Rivers stated that a few patrons have asked if there is any way to prevent people from parking in the 4 handicap parking spaces. Ms. Meyers stated that she will monitor this, but hasn't noticed a great deal of abuse of that.

Mr. Pettit stated that the grounds crew should be commended for the condition of the greens, especially in light of the current drought conditions. Mr. Richardson was surprised that the irrigation sprinklers came on while he was playing golf. Staff will post a notice at the Course letting patrons know when sprinklers will be coming on during golfing hours.

## **SEASON PASS HOLDERS**

Mr. Hodges referred to the April minutes where it was stated that 188 pass holders had signed up to date compared to 229 the year before. Ms. Meyers stated the number is now 205 with 248 users. Ms. Meyers stated the number of season pass holders is down for several reasons. Some reasons include: health issues, moves, deaths, relocations, etc. There was a big influx a few years ago due to Robin Dale Golf Course closing. Historically, the passes number about 198.

The rounds of golf played last year from July 05 to May 06 were 35,159; July 06 to May 07 rounds were 33,180; this is down by a little under 2,000 rounds. Mr. Hodges stated that the number of pass holders is down and rounds of golf are also down. Mr. Rollins doesn't think the Clubhouse renovation project had much to do with this. Mr. Pettit stated that today's cost of living and the fact that sometimes people like change may be some reasons for the fluctuations. Chico stated that it would be interesting to look at the numbers from 2002 up to today to see if there is a pattern. Ms. Meyers stated that quite a few people didn't renew season passes but are still playing at the course.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Mr. Hodges asked about the revenue and expense comparison from last year to this year. Mr. Rollins provided a handout detailing revenues and expenses for FY06, FY07, FY08 recommended and FY09-FY19 projections. FY06 net profit was \$114,104; FY07 budget's profit was \$56,209; and the FY08 recommended budget's profit is \$104,687.

Mr. Hodges expressed interest in appointing a Financial Committee to examine rounds of golf, revenue and expenses. He asked Phil Cranford to Chair the Committee with members Rick Smith and Gloria Tippet serving also. He would like the Committee to study this information and make recommendations to the Board. Mr. Rivers stated that the report could “red flag” issues that may need to be addressed.

### **ANNUAL REPORT**

The Board of County Commissioners sent out letters to Boards and Committees requesting annual reports by July 1. Staff will prepare a draft of the annual report and provide it to the Board for input within the next 30 days.

### **GOLF COURSE IMPROVEMENT PLANS**

Mr. Hodges stated that a golf course should have a plan in place for future improvements. He referred to a letter from Mr. Pete Delman containing suggestions for course improvements. Mr. Rollins stated that needed improvements are usually addressed in the annual budget process. There is currently no written plan for Golf Course Capital Improvements. Jim Farren has a replacement plan where he budgets for things like the chemical shed, dressing tees, etc. Staff tries to do as many improvements as possible, but unexpected items sometimes come up which divert funds to other areas. Mr. Rollins suggested developing a written six year capital program as part of the upcoming budget process.

Mr. Pettit asked if future Program Open Space funds could be used to fund projects such as cart paths. Mr. Rollins stated that is a possibility but historically, tax dollars haven't gone into improvements at the Golf Course. The Course has always been expected to pay for itself. Even though the Golf Course is a public facility, the general public can't access the course without paying the fee to play. Using Program Open Space funding for the golf course would utilize funds that could be used for other public recreational projects.

Ms. Meyers reported that staff completed upgrading two tee boxes on holes eleven and seventeen. There was some discussion on taking out the bunker on hole number one; staff decided to give it a season to determine if the bunker should be moved.

Ms. Meyers stated that Metcom has applied to MDE for a permit to treat affluent to irrigate the Golf Course. The State has restrictions on spraying treated affluent near residential properties.

### **INTRODUCTION OF POWSA CHAIRMAN**

Mr. Rivers introduced Mark Weber the new Chairman of the Property Owners of Wicomico Shores Association. Mr. Hodges informed Mr. Weber that he is welcome to attend any of the WSGC Advisory Board meetings.

Mr. Weber asked if the treated affluent would have an undesirable smell. Ms. Meyers stated the affluent should not smell and won't affect the health of people or animals.

### **FOOD SERVICE**

Ms. Meyers talked to several caterers, golf courses and country clubs and most don't recommend a full service restaurant at Wicomico Shores. Staff does feel the food and beverage operation should be expanded at the Golf Course when the renovated Clubhouse opens to the public. She has also looked at the pros and cons of contracting out the food service operation. Mr. Rivers agreed that the food and beverage operation should be expanded to include more variety - maybe a buffet, pizza, etc. Ms. Meyers will report back to the Board on the issue of food service during the next meeting.

### **SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING**

The next regular meeting of the WSGC Advisory Board is scheduled for Wednesday, October 10, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. at the Golf Course Maintenance Facility.

The meeting concluded at approximately 7:45 P.M.

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Kathy Bailey, Recorder