



## Minutes: Golf Course Advisory Committee

July 8, 2019

The regular meeting of the Middle Smithfield Township Golf Course Advisory Committee was held on July 8, 2019 at 8:30 AM with Ray White presiding and with Holly Freese as recording secretary.

Committee Members: Ray White, Craig Wetherbee, Mike Sweeney, John Smith, Mike Yesunas

Township Staff: Township Supervisors Mark Oney, Mike Dwyer and Annette Atkinson, Pro Shop Manager Kevin Dixon, Golf Committee Liaison Holly Freese, Banquet Hall Manager Chris Rain, Groundskeeper Bill Parr.

Also in attendance, Country Club of the Poconos Golf Members: Paul Suhrie, Russell Fustanio, Erik Kehoe, Brian Ohare, Michael Lozupone.

**Meeting called to order at 8:33 am by Ray White**

### Minutes and Agenda

- A motion to accept the minutes was made by Ray White, Seconded by John Smith. Motion passed 5-0.

### Public Comment

- Paul Suhrie, who lives in CCP and is a member at the golf course read a letter on behalf of the course members. Mr. Suhrie thanked the BOS, Golf Committee and the grounds crew for their hard work and the offer for half priced memberships for 2020 but most of the members are not happy with this offer. Mr. Suhrie also stated that members are not happy with lines of communications and are frustrated that they haven't been able to golf for three months. (editor's note: at no point was the course closed. The course was open to all at \$25/round, including cart.) Member Erik Kehoe stated that he paid in full and would like more compensation and is disappointed with what he sees out on the course. Member Brian O'Hare stated that he would like to observe the rest of the meeting and address further comments during new business.

### Grounds- Bill Parr

- Ran out of sod on hole #1
- All back greens have been aerated and seeded

- Fairways haven't been sprayed in a few weeks.
- Will continue sodding this week and tee boxes will be moved back. Slit seeding for the collars will be done this week also.
- Mark Oney stated that we need a timeline for when the course will be back. Kevin Dixon stated that 8, 17 and 18 are open.
- Bill Parr stated that the weather this week has pushed us back, but hope to have 4, 5 and 6 open by the end of the week.

### **Whispering Pines—Chris Rain**

- There are currently 46 events scheduled for the year, which is down slightly from last year.
- There was an issues with the dining room AC, Nauman Mechanical has it functioning right now, but are still waiting for parts to fix it.
- Ray White asked if any attempts are made to reschedule cancelled events. Chris Rain said no, unless it's a scheduling conflict, because the events that are cancelled aren't happening for anyone anywhere (e.g. wedding called off.).
- Correction to the Whispering Pines report- The cancelled outing on 8/31 was due to a scheduling conflict, not greens issues.

### **Pro Shop—Kevin Dixon**

- Merchandise sales are down 40% for the month, but up 20% year-to-date
- Rounds were down 50% in June
- Total revenue was down 68%
- John Smith asked how the rain is compared to last year. Kevin Dixon is unsure, Annette Atkinson stated than this year is wetter than last year but couldn't give a number at the moment.

### **Financials—Mike Dwyer**

- Mike Dwyer stated that the numbers he has is through June and the sod cost isn't reflected yet. Still at a loss at about \$18,000 more than anticipated. Between virtually no income and the expense to fix the course, will be the worst year for this administration. 2 donations have been made to go towards sod, but still looking at a \$60,000 cost in July.

### **Marketing**

- Marketing has been put on hold until the greens are repaired. Holly Freese, Annette

Atkinson, Mark Oney and Kevin Dixon have been working on a marketing plan to launch the first week of August.

### **Old Business:**

- Ray White stated that members continue to be unhappy about course conditions and the offer of 50% off 2020 rates, but stated that as far as the lack of communication, they have many avenues including Kevin Dixon and the pro shop, and golf committee meetings which are held monthly.

### **New business:**

- Members have a list of course improvements they would like to see addressed including the wetlands on hole 3 because they can't see over the brush. Mike Yesunas agreed that hole 3 is a safety issues because you can't see over the wetlands and don't know if there are golfers on the other side.
- Eric Kehoe suggested having travel teams come to the course, Kevin Dixon said that teams do but had to reschedule this year due to the greens but are hoping to have them back in the fall.
- Members asked if it was possible to increase the budget for course maintenance. Ray White stated that the course is municipally owned and operated and an increased budget would require increased taxes. Members stated that in order to save the course, more needs to be spent on maintenance. Mike Yesunas stated that members were lost due to age and changing demographics. Annette Atkinson went over the rule of thumb: in general, it requires a population of 25,000 people to support one golf course, and there are 6 courses within a 15 mile radius. The changing demographics and loss of income is not exclusive to just this course – that's 150,000 people. All of Monroe County has 168,000 people. Brian O'Hare suggested applying for a grant for the course. Annette Atkinson stated that a municipal course in a private community would not qualify for a grant.
- Mike Dwyer suggested that the members meet prior to the August golf committee meeting and bringing concerns and suggestions to the next meeting. Paul Suhrie will send a punch list to Holly Freese with a list of concerns that can be addressed in the meantime.
- The Big Ridge bridge is open after being replaced.

### **Meeting Adjourned**

- Ray White made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:56 am, seconded by John Smith. Motion passed 5-0.

The next meeting will be held on August 12<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 am at the Whispering Pines Banquet Hall.