

**Wicomico Shores Golf Course Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 8, 2010**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Hodges, Chairperson; Phil Cranford, Patrick Dugan, Don Nolan, Bob Richardson and Gloria Tippet.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Wayne Pettit.

R&P STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT: Phil Rollins, Director, and Pat Meyers, Golf Course Manager.

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Phil Cranford moved, seconded by Don Nolan, to approve the minutes of January 13, 2010. Motion carried 5-0.

Jim Hodges, moved, seconded by Phil Cranford, to approve the special meeting minutes March 3, 2010, with one change (that his statement be filed in the official minute book, attached to these minutes, as noted on page 4). Motion carried 5-0.

DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT

Chairperson Hodges referred to the draft 2009 Annual Report document that was emailed to Board members. Members were asked to review the report and provide any additions, changes or corrections to Mr. Hodges by Friday, April 16th.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Rollins provided a copy of the WSGC annual comparison of FY04 – FY10 to date. Actuals for FY10 from July – March are total revenues - \$813,359; and total expenses - \$937,565. Currently through March there is a deficit of about \$124,000. In December the course was operating at a deficit of about \$23,000. This winter was very difficult; the course was only open for three days in February. It's hoped that favorable spring weather will help with the situation. Mr. Rollins also provided a handout that showed how the course has historically done from July through February. Staff is optimistic that the changes made in the food and beverage operation and in other areas will help get the operation back in the black. The first eight days of April look good; the course took in approximately \$75,000 in revenue. For the same time period, the course had 940 rounds of golf; last year the entire month of April saw 3,200 rounds.

Chairman Hodges asked if "we are cutting back on maintenance." The amount approved in the budget for maintenance is \$490,000; however, we have only spent \$264,000 to date. Ms. Meyers stated no; the budget includes some items that may not be needed. For example, she referred to seasonal help to assist with watering the golf course; if the course doesn't need watering, then those hours for seasonal help wouldn't be spent. Concern was expressed with the quality of the rakes; staff will pass that on to the Course Superintendent.

NEW GOLF CARTS

Ms. Meyers reported that 69 2010 Yamaha golf carts were delivered to the course this week. Three work/maintenance carts were also received (two to be used for beverage carts and one for the Maintenance Shop), as was one ADA compliant cart. The course traded in 61 carts (six older carts were kept for use for special events, marshals and maintenance). The new carts are being leased for five years at about \$28,000 per year.

RESTAURANT/BANQUET FACILITY UPDATE

The fourth quarter for the restaurant was the best quarter with \$144,500. Wayne Pettit through Chairperson Hodges recommended staff might explore hiring a part-time chef for special events. Ms. Meyers stated that could be a good idea; but it might be hard to find a chef on a part-time basis that's not already obligated. Don Nolan stated he has nine chefs at his place of business; he thought this is possibility worth pursuing.

Chairman Hodges referred to the price list for golf outing food; fried chicken and potatoes would be about \$12.95 per person and menus can be customized. Weddings would be looking for something more and can bring in their own caterers. Mr. Dugan stated that establishing a relationship with a caterer to book events may be an option; the County may need to put out an RFP for that. Mr. Rollins stated that we should have a relationship with all the local caterers. Chairman Hodges noted the nice ad in this week's Enterprise for the facility. Mr. Nolan suggested hiring an event planner that would be paid a commission for events. Mr. Nolan, Ms. Meyers and Mr. Rollins will discuss this further.

Ms. Meyers stated that currently there are five events booked for this spring and summer; three of these are using the Riverview for catering. Mr. Hodges asked how many tournaments are reserved for this year that would close the golf course for the day (until 2:00 pm). Ms. Meyers stated that so far for this year there are 17 with over 100 people; and 18 with fewer than 100. Chairman Hodges asked if staff tries to have people schedule tournaments on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays; not Tuesdays and Thursdays when the seniors play. Ms. Meyers stated that she doesn't do that as she has the interest of all the pass holders in mind when scheduling tournaments. Most organizations have their tournament dates pre-planned.

R&P BOARD APPOINTEE CLARIFICATION

Patrick Dugan clarified his role as the Recreation and Parks Board representative on the WSGC Advisory Board. Regarding a recent email that was sent to the Board from Chairperson Hodges, Mr. Dugan stated he is not "a yes man" for R&P staff. He serves on the Recreation and Parks Board and that Board was asked last winter if one of the members would like to serve on the WSGC Advisory Board to replace Bob Richardson, who's service on the R&P Board was about to end. Mr. Dugan volunteered to serve on behalf of the R&P Board. Since the biggest challenges at the golf course are matters pertaining to the restaurant and bar and he has work experience in those areas, he thought he might have some expertise to lend. He respects staff, but does not necessarily always agree with staff. He thought some issues might be better addressed with phone calls instead of emails.

WATER STATIONS ON THE COURSE

Chairperson Hodges informed the Board that he has heard from golfers that more water stations are needed on the course. The recommendation is that a water station be placed at the fourteenth tee. Ms. Meyers stated that staff put one there last year and will place one there

again shortly.

PROMOTION AND MARKETING

Ms. Meyers showed a copy of the five week ad for the Riverview and golf course that is currently running in the Enterprise/Independent newspapers. An ad was also placed in the Enterprise, Independent and Recorder wedding guides in February. A coupon will be placed on windshields for soccer opening day at Chaptico Park this weekend; other parks will also be targeted for marketing in the future. An Easter morning buffet breakfast was held with 65 in attendance. Gloria Tippett stated that she attended the Easter buffet and it was priced reasonably and very nice. This was advertised on the Homeowner's Association bulletin board. Mothers Day, Fathers Day and other themed specials are planned. Chairman Hodges asked about holding happy hour promotions. Mr. Dugan stated that we should decide "what we are" before we look at the kind of specials and incentives to offer. He thought post card advertising would be a good idea.

Members discussed the issue of allowing one day liquor licenses for events. Ms. Meyers spoke to the Liquor Board staff and was told the course could not do that. Could you have more tournaments by allowing the one day liquor license or would that reduce revenues? Mr. Dugan asked if staff currently has the desired number for tournaments. Ms. Meyers said that there is a delicate balance in maximizing tournaments and keeping pass holders happy.

Ms. Meyers talked to the State Highway Administration about a golf course and food symbols on the Aviation Yacht Club road signs. SHA will not approve of that; however SHA did make some recommendations on what can be done.

BANQUET ROOM FEE WAIVER REQUEST

Robert Richardson asked the Board to consider waiving or reducing the \$500 room rental fee for the Marcey House tournament and other County agency tournaments. He felt since this is a County agency and receives funding from the County, they should not have to pay the fee. Mr. Dugan asked if the full fee should be waived because that would take money away from the golf course. If they do the luncheon with the restaurant, they do not have to pay the room rental fee. Staff understands the request; however does not support the recommendation to waive the room rental fee as it's felt that all charitable organizations should be treated the same. Ms. Meyers stated the fee helps to offset cost associated with staffing the facility, set up and break down, utilities, etc.

Robert Richardson moved, seconded by Phil Cranford, to recommend waiver of the room rental fee for the Marcey House annual benefit golf tournament. Motion carried 5-1, with Chairman Hodges opposed. A letter expressing this recommendation will be sent to the Board of County Commissioners from the Chairperson in the near future.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE PRICES

Chairman Hodges stated that at Giant you can buy three cases of water for \$10; the golf course charges \$18 for one case for tournaments. Tournaments can bring their own water for \$8 per case and the golf course will provide the coolers, ice and beverage carts. Mr. Dugan asked if we had lost any tournaments because of prices. Mr. Richardson knew of one team that moved to Breton Bay because of this. Mr. Rollins stated you may be able to get these items some cheaper someplace else, but this is one of the ways the golf course makes money. Ms. Meyers stated that we charge \$5 more per case for beer than Breton Bay and \$5 less per case than

Chesapeake Hills; so we are in the middle. Mr. Cranford volunteered to do a fee comparison on water, soda and beer fees charged at other courses for tournaments and provide a report at the next meeting.

SCHEDULING THE NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the WSGC Advisory Board will be held on Thursday, July 8, 2010 at 6:00 p.m.

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

Kathy Bailey, Recorder