

**Wicomico Shores Golf Course Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 8, 2009**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Rick Smith.

R&P STAFF AND OTHERS ATTENDING: Patty Meyers, Golf Course Manager; and Jay Morgan, Food, Beverage and Banquet Supervisor.

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

Wayne Pettit moved, seconded by Jim Hodges, to approve the minutes of February 18, 2009. Motion carried 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Draft Annual Report

Jim Hodges moved, seconded by Phil Cranford, to approve the calendar year 2008 annual report as drafted by staff, and requested that the report be mailed to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). Motion carried 5-0.

Request that Chairperson Be a Voting Member

Mr. Hodges explained his reasons for suggesting the bylaws be changed to make the Chairperson a voting member. He referred to the January 14, 2009 meeting where 5 members were present and the following motion was made: **Robert Richardson moved, seconded by Gloria Tippett, to endorse staff's recommendation to increase golf fees as proposed. Motion carried 2-1; Chico Rivers voted nay and Rick Smith abstained.** The motion passed to increase the fees, though the Chairperson did not support the motion. He indicated he didn't think 3 people should control what happens on a board of 7 members. Chairman Rivers stated that in his opinion, the bylaws are written to follow Roberts Rules of Order for certain reasons; however, he recognizes Mr. Hodges' right to disagree.

Jim Hodges moved, seconded by Wayne Pettit, to petition the Board of County Commissioners to change the Wicomico Shores Golf Course Advisory Board bylaws to make the Chairperson a voting member. Motion carried 5-0.

Update on Program Open Space Funding

Pat Meyers reported that it appears that the phone calls and e-mails from across the state may have had a positive impact on the preservation of Program Open Space (POS) funds. It looks like:

- The full amount of funding (State and local side) will be preserved in the FY 2010 budget; however it is likely to be switched over to being bonded;
- POS local funds which have been allocated from previous years should be okay; however some funding up to \$40 million may be taken from the State side;
- It seems the signs are pointing in the right direction for authorizing the use of POS funds for indoor recreation facilities without the amendments added to SB 163.

Maryland's Program Open Space is the dedicated funding source that helps protect valuable farms, forests, open spaces and park lands. St. Mary's County recently used POS funds to assist with the renovation of the Golf Course Clubhouse.

Riverview Restaurant Update

Jay Morgan provided an update on the Riverview Restaurant operations; he stated that with the onset of warmer weather, the Restaurant business is picking up.

- The restaurant is participating in the Maryland 375 Birthday program.
- The Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours event was recently held with about 140 people in attendance.
- Several inquiries were received this week for upcoming parties and events.
- A wedding reception was held last week with 70 people; a full room wedding rental is scheduled for this Saturday.
- A Tri-County Council meeting is scheduled for April 20th.
- Another business meeting and a golf outing are scheduled later this month; at least 6 other events have been reserved; and 14 of 19 upcoming golf outings will include food service.
- Mr. Hodges noted an upcoming Lions function to be held at the restaurant.
- Staff is working with the students from the Forrest Center on developing a television commercial.
- Staff worked with the Small Business Development Center on a business development evaluation. Positive feedback and recommendations were obtained and the Center's follow-up report on the operation was very positive. Mr. Morgan provided copies of the report for Board members.

Chairman Rivers stated he has received feedback from patrons that are disappointed that the restaurant will be closed this Saturday for the full facility wedding rental. Ms. Meyers reminded the Board that this was discussed when the renovation project was going on and the Board concurred with this plan to maximize revenue. Chairman Rivers expressed concern that a significant number of full facility rentals would make golf patrons unhappy. He wasn't sure it's prudent to close the restaurant on a Saturday, during peak golf season, for the extra \$400 room rental fee. Ms. Meyers stated this would be evaluated over time; she didn't think full facility rentals would happen that often. Golfers can still sit on the patio and order food from the window when the restaurant is closed for banquet rentals. Mr. Hodges stated a curtain might be considered that could be used to separate the golfers from the banquet patrons. Ms. Meyers stated that staff will do everything they can to make the golfers comfortable during the rental. Mr. Pettit stated that golfers need to know that all the money generated at the course goes back into the course.

Chairman Rivers expressed concern about parking; Ms. Meyers stated that the wedding party conducted a trial run last week, which worked out fine. Signage will be posted and employees have been instructed where to park their cars.

Mr. Hodges asked if a financial report on the restaurant could be provided during the next meeting; Ms. Meyers stated that would be done.

Request for Amendment to the Current Budget

Ms. Meyers stated that staff requested supplemental budget authority from the golf course fund balance and held a public hearing on this on March 31, 2009. The public record will be open for 10 days. Only one citizen commented; she expressed concern with using tax dollars for the golf course. Staff informed her that no tax dollars are being used for the golf operation. It is expected the BOCC will consider and approve the request on April 21st.

Golf Association

Rick Smith previously proposed a Golf Association or Player's Club to help promote the game of golf and to help organize and schedule in-house tournaments. The first meeting of the new Association was held on March 28th. Twelve people attended the first meeting and staff hopes more will attend the next meeting. Also, Ms. Meyers stated a Handicap Committee has been meeting for about 4 years. The Committee oversees the USGA Handicap system and works to promote fairness between fellow competitors.

Portable Restroom Facility on the Golf Course

Gloria Tippet stated that some of the ladies are concerned about the location of the portable toilet; Ms. Meyers stated it has now been moved back to the original location. Part of the reason it was not moved earlier is that the company got stuck last year trying to pump out the facility.

Friday Night League

Ms. Tippet stated that she thinks the course and restaurant would benefit from implementing a “nine and dine” Friday Night league. Ms. Meyers supported the idea and stated that in the past, the league started with a “blind draw” and then some teams only wanted to play with certain folks, which became a challenge. Ms. Meyers will do some research; maybe this could be implemented every other Friday.

Robert Richardson said that it would be nice to have golf balls available with the course logo printed on them.

Outside Balcony/Patio Safety Concerns

Ms. Meyers met with the Fire Marshall and Adam Knight, Code Coordinator for Land Use and Growth Management, about safety concerns and falling hazards at the balcony area. The County’s insurance carrier, Local Governmental Insurance Trust (LGIT), also conducted a site visit. In addition to the safety railing that was previously discussed with the Board, another suggestion was to post signage on the doors that would read – children 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult at all times. LGIT suggested installing planters or other barriers where the brick tile and concrete sidewalk meet to act as a buffer to traffic and the area near the handrail.

SCHEDULING THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the WSGC Advisory Board will be held on Wednesday, June 10, 2009, at 6:00 p.m.

The meeting concluded at approximately 7:15 P.M.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder