

Wicomico Shores Golf Course Advisory Board

Wednesday, November 6, 2007

Special Meeting Minutes

6:00 PM

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

STAFF/OTHERS ATTENDING

Phil Rollins, Director, Recreation, Parks and Community Services (RP&CS).
Two citizens, Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Slagle, also attending the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Wicomico Shores Golf Course (WSGC) Advisory Board was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the RP&CS main office conference room in Leonardtown.

DISCUSSION OF EXPANDED FOOD AND BEVERAGE OPERATION

Chairperson Jim Hodges stated the purpose of the meeting is for Board members to ask questions about the proposed expanded food and beverage operation at the renovated Golf Course Clubhouse. Since the last meeting of October 25, 2007, the Board members have had time to review: 1) the minutes of the last meeting; 2) an estimated operation cost analysis; 3) financial statement comparison; 4) latest floor plans for the building; and 5) time to do any other research that Board members desire. After tonight's discussion, the Chairperson will ask for recommendations from the Board on: 1) should the food and beverage operation be a café style type of operation; 2) should the operation be self operated or privatized; 3) should operation be open to the public as well as to the golfers; 4) should operation be managed by a qualified and experienced supervisor; and 5) should that Supervisor fall under the County merit system or be hired on a contract basis.

Chico Rivers stated that after reviewing information on different types of food and beverage operations and after looking over information provided by staff, he believes this is not the time to privatize the operation. He believes expanded kitchen and banquet facilities can be successfully managed in-house. Phil Cranford concurred with Mr. Rivers that self operation is the best option for the operation. Bob Richardson also expressed support for self-operation. Wayne Pettit stated that the operation is only going to be as good as the service provided and that the operation should be managed by an experienced person. He agrees with the in-house operation and would like to see all the food prepared on-site.

Chairperson Hodges asked for comment on the proposal to expand the food and beverage operation to a café type operation. A café wouldn't be a full service restaurant, but would be upgraded to serve sandwich-type breakfast, lunch and dinners, with the focus being lunch. This would be similar to Breton Bay Golf Course's food and beverage operation. The banquet operation would be catered. The infrastructure will be included to expand to a full service restaurant if needed in the future.

Mr. Hodges asked members what they thought about promoting the café and banquet area as open to the general public. Mr. Rivers stated the thought that was a good idea as there are almost 500 homes in Wicomico Shores. Ms. Meyers will attend the next Property Owners of Wicomico Shores Association (POWSA) meeting and show them the plans for the new building. Chairman Hodges stated that would be a good idea as we are looking for as much business as we can get. The consensus of the Board was that the facility should be marketed to the public.

Chairman Hodges asked the Board for thoughts on the food and beverage operation being managed by a qualified and experienced supervisor. Mr. Cranford thought this was a "no brainer" and necessary for a successful food and beverage operation. Mr. Rollins would like someone from the restaurant business serve on the interview panel; it would be ideal to hire a chef.

Chairman Hodges asked if the Supervisor should fall under the County merit system or be hired on a contract basis. Mr. Cranford stated that he thinks that recommendation should be left up to staff. Mr. Richardson stated that a merit position would attract more qualified applicants. Mr. Rollins stated that he recommends this be a merit position and if the position is advertised as contract then the contract should be for at least three years. Mr. Rivers stated that does not want to recommend either one; he would like to leave the recommendation to staff and let the BOCC make the decision. Mr. Pettit asked how extensive the background check would be; Mr. Rollins stated that all references will be checked and the County requires criminal background checks for employees.

Chico Rivers motioned, seconded by Robert Richardson, to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners with regard to the Food and Beverage operation in the renovated and expanded Clubhouse: 1) that the food and beverage operation be expanded to a café style operation for the golfers and the public; and 2) that the food and beverage operation be self-operated by RP&CS, with a qualified and experienced Supervisor on a contract basis or under the merit system to manage the operation. Motion carried 6-0; (the Chair supported the motion, although he does not vote). Chairman Hodges will draft a letter to the BOCC regarding the Board's recommendation. Mr. Rollins will attach the letter to the packet of information to the BOCC for the November 20th meeting.

Chairman Hodges would like to discuss the management of the banquet operation during the January meeting. He stated that he sees banquet hall rentals as a good source of revenue. Mr. Rivers agreed and suggested that Board members check out/research other rental facilities during their upcoming holiday travels. Mr. Rollins will also have Ms. Meyers check into the rental rates and rules for other comparable rental facilities.

Mr. Rivers stated that he hoped the annual POWSA meetings could still be held in the banquet room as in the past, free of charge.

Two citizens attended the meeting. Mr. Jerry Slagle asked what the hours would be for the expanded food and beverage operation. Chairman Hodges stated that this will be considered after the new Food and Beverage Supervisor comes on board.

SCHEDULING THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the WSGC Advisory Board will be held on Wednesday, January 9, 2008. A media release will be done announcing the location of the meeting.

The meeting concluded at approximately 7:00 P.M.

Kathy Bailey, Recorder