

**Town of Westport
Golf Advisory Committee
Minutes
April 6, 2015**

The Golf Advisory Committee of the Town of Westport met in Town Hall in Room #309 on Monday, April 6, 2015. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Fred Hunter at 7:30pm.

Members present: Fred Hunter, Jean Murdoch, Gary Solomon, Jim Harman, John Ehli and Lura Paschal.

1. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of the March 2, 2015 meeting were approved as stated with no changes.

2. Golf Association Presidents' Reports

Representing the LWGA 18 hole group, President Regina Masterson stated that the group would be holding their welcome meeting on Tuesday, April 7 at 7pm at the YMCA. Representing the LLNHGA, Co-President Ellen Ehli said that the group held their welcome coffee on March 26 which was very well attended. LMGA President Michael Fox mentioned that the group's annual clean up of the course took place on Saturday, April 4 and he appreciated the large turn out by the men and also from the Staples High School golf team. Stuart McCarthy, Director of Parks & Recreation, also added that he appreciated the efforts of both groups in helping to clean up the course in preparation for opening. Michael also added that he has seen the return to membership of some men that had not renewed in recent years, which is a good sign for the group.

3. Superintendent's Report

Mike Golden, Superintendent, was introduced by Chairman Hunter. Mike is the new superintendent representing Valley Crest, replacing Ryan Segrue. Hunter asked Mike to give a brief bio to educate the group. Mike stated that Longshore is the 7th course for which he has worked. He listed all his previous clubs, all high level and in the NY/NJ area. He stated that his goal is to bring the private club atmosphere to Longshore and focus on continuing the good work that Valley Crest has started. He stated that the greens were aerated last Saturday/Sunday and the crew has started aerifying the tees as well. Most tees have been cleaned off. Aeration went very smoothly and the timing is good as rain is expected in the coming days. The greens are still weak coming out of the winter showing thin areas but he expects they will bounce back. Mike intends to build and extend Valley Crests' area of focus to include bunkers and fairways. He expects the course will be ready to open by the end of the week. Jean Murdoch asked about the status of the border collie that had been used on the course to chase the geese away. Stuart McCarthy added that Valley Crest was not really interested in using the dog but their employee did take the dog in as a family pet. Stuart added that Mike also has a dog that players might see helping at the course. David Levin, meeting attendee, asked Mike Golden about the

logic of aerating at the beginning of the year. Mike responded by saying that the timing for aeration seemed good with the coming rain and also because the opening of the course had been delayed by 2 weeks due to the cold weather. Mike added that opening any sooner would have only caused damage to the course as the greens were still very fragile. Stuart McCarthy added that the decision to postpone opening the course was made jointly by himself, Mike Golden and John Cooper and that it seemed to be the perfect time to aerate the greens. Gary Solomon asked if this aeration was a deep tine aeration and Mike said no as that was done in the spring but in the future he would plan on a deep tine aeration at least once a year. Stuart added that the tentative opening date for the course is Friday, April 10. John Ehli asked Mike about drainage and Mike responded that low spots on the course continue to be problem areas but the only place on the course that really stays wet is the fairway on the 17th hole. Looking to remedy that situation.

John Cooper also reported that the course is ready for opening this weekend. He said he has tested the tee time system and all is in working order and ready to go for the season. He is simply waiting for the final word to make tee times available. John said he has adjusted the Longshore website to make it mobile friendly versus creating an app for mobile phone users. John stated that the app was simply too expensive and in his research he found that people do not use the app. John attended the PGA show in Florida a few months ago and mentioned one of the new trends is lacrosse golf. Basically it is a combination of golf and lacrosse where a lacrosse type stick is used to chuck the golf ball towards the hole. The stick can also be used as a putter. John is very interested in introducing this new game to Longshore as he feels it would promote junior play and generate additional round revenue. Scott Smith, meeting attendee, asked John if there is any planned marketing effort for lacrosse golf and how did he think this new game would affect pace of play on the course. John said he has contacted Jane Daly, a LWGA member, as she is very interested in promoting this as well and they are hoping to schedule some type of event to introduce the game to the town. John believes this new game could improve pace of play but it remains to be seen. John added that the pro shop and putting green are open but the driving range remains closed. Chairman Hunter asked John about the progress of the junior team from Longshore and their plans to compete at the interclub level and John responded that due to the fact that this will be the first year of the program he has decided the team will not compete this year. The time involved in creating the team and spending time on course will prohibit competition for this year but will look to compete in the future. John added that currently there are no other municipalities locally that field a team in junior competition. Gary Solomon asked about procedures for renewing handpasses and was reminded by Stuart McCarthy that you cannot renew your handpass online until it has actually expired. Michael Fox asked about the possibility of seeing the names of those who have signed up for the same tee time online and Chairman Hunter said that due to privacy issues raised with Chelsea, the online tee time software maker, the names are not revealed.

4. Discussion – Short Term Improvements

Stuart McCarthy reported that the new tee signs, as reviewed and recommended by the GAC, have been ordered and the new tee markers should be ready for the opening of the course this weekend. Chairman Hunter thanked Michael Fox and the LMGA for their generous donation to fund the purchase of the tee signs. Hunter

mentioned that only due to the success of the LMGA fundraising efforts were we able to order the new signage this year. Hunter also thanked Jean Murdoch for all of her work on the sourcing the manufacturer and establishing a design for the new signage. Stuart McCarthy added that a decision has not yet been made about a screen for the 15th tee. He said that he was considering the use of signage instead.

5. Discussion – Long Term Improvements

No discussion of long term improvements

6. Discussion – New Longshore Logo

Chairman Hunter stated that the purchase of the new tee signs led to a discussion of the Longshore logo and the realization that there are actually several existing logos for Longshore. One is the logo owned by John Cooper with the wave and the flag. Another incorporates the Minute Man. Hunter said that it is crucial that Longshore have an identifiable logo that is official. David Levin, attendee, added that he would recommend the logo with the Minute Man as it would be most identifiable with Westport. Hunter added that the creation of a Longshore logo could possibly be a project for art students at Staples High School. John Cooper added that he has a lot invested in the logo he owns and that he pays the town a fee for each round played therefore the adoption of any particular logo should be considered for the possible affects it might have on the people at the golf course. Hunter agreed and said this would be a longer term project.

7. Discussion – Golfer Survey

Chairman Hunter presented a rough draft of the Golfer Survey he and Jim Harman created in an effort to gather the information necessary to build a 5 year plan for Longshore, a goal of Charlie Haberstroh. Hunter reiterated that this document is just a beginning draft and welcomed any thoughts and/or ideas from the group and any other interested parties. The survey contains a list of long term projects that have been discussed from time to time within the GAC and asks survey takers to prioritize that list. This will be helpful to see from a players point of view, what items are of the highest priority. This information will then be passed on to the town to consider. Chairman Hunter asked John Cooper if there was anything in particular he would like to see in the survey and John responded that he would speak to Hunter after the meeting. Charles Kerry, attendee, recommended that it be asked of the person taking the survey if they are currently a member of one of the Longshore golf associations. Hunter agreed that would be helpful. Hunter added that the survey will be done online and will be sent to all golf handpass holders first and then to potentially all those who have reserved a tee time at Longshore but do not hold a golf handpass. Hunter added that it was interesting to see in the date that 2,700 different people played at Longshore last year. Lee Feldman, attendee, recommended not limiting the survey to only handpass holders and to cast as wide a net as possible. Hunter said he will continue to take survey suggestions for the next few weeks and expects it to be finalized by the beginning of May. John Cooper added that he wanted the group to know that he gets new range mats every year and new range balls every year. John also said he has gone to the town several times to ask for the funding to fix the driving range and the bases for the driving range mats but has been turned down repeatedly. Jim Harman added that perhaps with the survey, if players place a high priority on such items there would be a much better case for justifying funding from the town for those projects.

8. Old Business

Chairman Hunter reminded the group that Valley Crest will be holding its' annual meeting open to the public on Wednesday, April 15 at 7pm at town hall. This meeting will serve to introduce Mike Golden as the new superintendent and provide Valley Crest with a forum to discuss their plans for the course in the coming year and beyond. Management of Valley Crest will also meet at Longshore with all relevant parties for a similar discussion.

Chairman Hunter then addressed recent press related to the long term development of Longshore, which has been previously discussed by the GAC. Hunter reiterated that the town of Westport has allocated money in the current budget to develop a site plan for Longshore, the first step in the process. Included in this long term discussion will be the subject of a club house for the golf course. Sean Doyle, attendee, recommended that any potential site plan identify the clubhouse structure as a community clubhouse versus a golf clubhouse in order to satisfy the larger Westport community.

9. New Business

No new business.

Motion was made to adjourn meeting and passed unanimously.

Chairman Hunter adjourned the meeting at 8:21pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Lura Paschal
GAC Secretary