

Town of Westport
Golf Advisory Committee
Minutes
June 1, 2015

The Golf Advisory Committee of the Town of Westport met in Room #201 of Town Hall on June 1, 2015. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Fred Hunter at 7:30pm.

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

1. New Business

Charlie Haberstroh spoke first as he needed to be excused from the meeting to attend a separate meeting. Charlie reported that the Board of Selectmen has agreed to a new subtenant of Roy Tagert, lessee at the Longshore Inn, in order to open a restaurant to replace Splash. The new tenant will open a restaurant to be called "Pearl at Longshore". The owners of the proposed restaurant all have restaurant experience in the area and a chef has been identified, although not publicly. The new restaurant will feature both seafood and meat dishes and is planning to be open year round. The décor will be open and somewhat upscale. A golfers menu is being proposed that would be more reasonably priced. The new owners would like to make the new space as hospitable as possible to the golf community. Renovating the space will take several months as it was left in disrepair. The new restaurant is hoping to open in Oct/Nov. Roy Tagert has agreed to extend his current lease for the last remaining extension to accommodate the demands of the new subtenant. Tagert's current lease expires in 2030. Charlie also added that he is working on moving the trash to alleviate the odor problem as soon as possible.

2. Approval of Minutes

Minutes were approved as submitted.

3. Rounds Report

Chairman Hunter reported that a total of 5,304 rounds were played in May, 2015, the highest number of May rounds since 2004. Chairman Hunter complimented Superintendent Mike Golden and his team for all their hard work in bringing the course condition up to such a high level.

4. Superintendent's Report

Mike Golden reiterated that with 5,300 rounds in a month, the course is packed every day. As a result, certain things have not been able to be done, like weeding, topdressing of greens, venting greens. Mike asked if the GAC

would consider recommending a proposal to delay opening the course until 10am for one weekday a month in order to get some maintenance things done around the course. He suggested perhaps a Monday or a Wednesday morning. Mike suggested that taking the time to do this type of preventative maintenance will save money in the long run. Chairman Hunter asked John Cooper what type of push back from golfers he could expect if such a delayed opening were implemented and John indicated that it would probably be quite a bit. Mike reiterated the need for some time to do work around the course without players present as he felt it was essential to keeping the course in top condition, particularly the greens. Chairman Hunter asked for an informal vote of GAC members in support of a delay in course opening of 2 hours once per month and all members approved. Hunter agreed to discuss the proposal with Charlie Haberstroh in an attempt to get the item on the agenda for the June 17 meeting of the Parks & Recreation committee.

5. Golf Association Presidents' Reports

Michael Fox, President of the LMGA said his group is happy with the condition of the course and all is well. He did have a question about LMGA members being charged the higher non-resident fee when they play personally scheduled matches within the league. Michael understood that under those conditions the member rate should apply. Chairman Hunter agreed to talk to Charlie Haberstroh about this issue. Regina Masterson, President of the LWGA said that her membership is strong and the season is going well. She asked about the safety of getting in and out of some of the bunkers on course and Chairman Hunter responded by saying that Valley Crest agrees that something should be done on certain steep bunkers. Mike Golden is currently working on the options and hopefully something will be done by the end of the year. Ellen Ehli, Co-President of the LLNHGA said their membership is growing and the group is off to a good start. She reiterated how pleased the membership is with the condition of the golf course.

6. Golf Professional's Report

John Cooper reported that he has found a ranger for Sunday evenings. He also added that the lightening detection system is not working on the maintenance building which means all golfers playing on the back side of the course do not hear a lightening siren. He is trying to get it fixed as soon as possible.

7. Golfer's Survey Report

Chairman Hunter thanked Jim Harman and Mike Durkin for all their help with the Golfer Survey. A total of 444 people responded to the survey which was a 66% response rate, quite high. Hunter went through the basics of the results and said the results were a bit surprising. Responders indicated that pace of play was fine, the clubhouse got poor reviews, the breakdown of male and female responders reflected a fair representation of actual golf

membership and no juniors responded. Jim Harman then went through the part of the survey which asked responders to prioritize potential improvements at the golf course. The top priority was to add food/drink options for golfers, second was improving the driving range, third was a new clubhouse, fourth was to eliminate the odor from the trash, fifth was to improve the bunker sand, sixth was to add practice nets at the driving range. Improving cell phone service did not appear to be a priority nor did moving the maintenance building from the current location. Based on the survey results now the town has a good list of priorities for future improvements. John Ehli asked what happens next. Hunter said he and Charlie Haberstroh will get together to discuss how to publicize the results and make use of the list. Hunter added that another survey might be sent out in the winter. Mike Durkin suggested that the presidents of the golf associations let their members know that their responses did matter and that a summary of the report should be sent to all the presidents.

8. Old Business

Jean Murdoch asked Chairman Hunter when the new hole signage is expected to be in and he said approximately 2 weeks. Another member asked Hunter if the bunker redo on hole #3 to the left is a prototype of what will be done with other bunkers and he said yes.

Chairman Hunter asked for a motion to adjourn and it was so motioned and passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 8:53pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Lura Paschal
GAC Secretary