

**OAK HILLS PARK AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES
July 17, 2014**

PRESENT: Clyde Mount, Vice Chairman; John McKenna; Elsa Obuchowski; Jerry Crowley; Paul Cifatte and Joseph Kendy.

STAFF: Shelly Guyer, Executive Director; Ed Ruiz, Golf Pro; and Jim Schell, Golf Course Superintendent.

ABSENT: Ernie DesRochers, David Hollar, Bill Waters

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Mount called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

2. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES- JUNE 19, 2014

Mr. Mount asked the Authority Members to review the minutes the June 19, 2014 meeting.

Mrs. Obuchowski said that Ms. Works name needs to be added as absent on the attendance list because her term did not expire as of that date.

****MR. CROWLY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 19, 2014 AS AMENDED.**

****MR. MCKENNA SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH 6 IN FAVOR, 1 ABSTENTION (MR. CROWLY)**

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Mount asked that public comment be kept to three minutes.

Mr. Paul Cantor of Fillow Street asked the OHPA to answer the following questions tonight.

What is the reason the OHPA is asking taxpayers for a loan to construct the driving range in Oak Hills Park?

What is the reason the OHPA is asking taxpayers for a loan to upgrade the course?

Will the OHPA apply for Audubon International certification?

Will the OHPA provide the press and the public on a regular basis with complete information about the chemicals that are begin used on the golf course, the hazards posed by those chemicals and the safety precautions that are being taken with regard to them?

Mr. Cantor said that he had attended the Planning and Zoning sessions and asked why the request for action was withdrawn on the master plan with the Planning Commission.

Yvonne Lopaur of Fillow Street said that chemicals should not be used and that the OHPA has not agreed to receive Audubon International certification. She said being that hazardous chemicals are being used, that everything should be done to reassure the public that they are being stored and applied according to their safety guidelines. She said in having viewed the chemical storage sheds that she and others have concerns that the pesticides are not being stored safely, and the only way to convince them that there is no cause for concern is to demonstrate they are following safe practices.

She said that the OHPA had promised that the dumpsters would be moved from the exit of the nature walk and that has not been done

Diane Lauricella of 21 Blue Mountain Ridge Road gave an overview of the Audubon Sanctuary program and said that it includes ways to reduce operating costs and to reduce polluted run-off. She said that she is not saying this is the only way the issue of pesticides can be addressed and that there are other ways. She suggested that folks with the issues consider meeting with the Superintendent to begin a productive discussion regarding saving money, saving water quality and to begin to immediately reduce some of the toxic uses.

Mr. Mount answered the questions that were presented and said the OHPA believes that constructing the driving range is the right move for the park, and that the conservation plan that was drafted by the city calls for a driving range somewhere in the city, and that it fits in the park and is the right solution. He said that obviously the funds would be much cheaper than going to a bank and even if the money is borrowed from a bank the city would still be responsible.

Mr. Mount responded to the question that if the OHPA will be applying for Audubon certification and said that it is part of the master plan, and that he thinks that Mr. Cantor will be surprised with what was uncovered with his letter, and the claims made and how things are a little bit different than he made them out to be. He said that in 2009 the OHPA spent \$140,000 on chemicals, and in 2013 the amount that was spent was less than \$100,000, which was a 40 percent reduction, and that in 2014 \$30,000 was spent. Mr. Kendy said that he has 25 years experience in the cosmetic industry and said that any substance can be referred to as being hazardous or toxic, and that the question is use and exposure as to whether or not it is harmful to humans.

Mr. Mount said that the Fire Department was at the golf course yesterday and performed an inspection and said that the stickers need to be updated.

4.CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

No discussion.

5.PRO'S REPORT

Mr. Ruiz reported and said that the course overall is doing great and there is a lot of positive feedback. He said that the outing is going well, and that over 80 people are registered for the event on July 28th. He said that the Mayors Trophy will be a great event, and there will be on course contests to make it more exciting. He said that the junior camps are going strong and there is lot of activity.

Oak Hills Park Authority
Regular Meeting
July 17, 2014

6. SUPERINTENDANT'S REPORT

Mr. Schell said that he has received one other bid and one verbal bid for the boiler at the restaurant and that the original bid was by far the low bid.

Mr. Schell discussed the Oak Hills Golf Course responsibility statement and said that he is a certified supervisory pesticide applicator, and that his assistant is also a licensed applicator, and is trained in all the safety practices. He said that he takes the role of protecting the environment in a professional and responsible manner very seriously, and that he follows the industries best management practices and that all regulations that pertain to the use of pesticides. He reported on chemical use and safety, and that the highest standards are held in maintenance through integrated pest management or (IPM) and most are directly from what the Audubon sanctuaries require golf courses to do. He said that almost all the chemical use reduction safety items that are on the Audobon International list are already being done, and that all State and Federal regulations for chemical storage handling application and disposal are met, and that maintenance staff has been trained. He said that the IPM includes maintaining the greens, tees and fairways and that mowing heights will be kept at levels that can be reasonably maintained on a day to day basis without continually stressing turf. He said that the fertilizer application is based on soil results, and that key staff is trained in plant health and pest population as part of the IPM program. He said that all potential control methods are evaluated including changes in cultural management, and that the environmental impact on pest control measures are considered. He continued to say that the IPM plan includes maintaining records of treatments and their effectiveness, and to use them to guide future pest control decisions. He said that employees and cliental will communicate regarding the IPM to maintain a dialogue in relation to the environmental quality.

Mr. Schell discussed the best measuring practices for chemical use and that they are applied by a professionally trained licensed applicator as directed by the law, and that there are current Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are for each chemical at the facility, and that all the label directions are read and flowed when using chemical products. He said that problems are treated at the proper time and under the proper weather conditions that maximize effectiveness and minimize harmful environmental impacts. He concluded by saying that the chemical storage is secure and well ventilated and allows limited personnel access to himself and his assistant.

Ms. Obuchowski said that she had received a letter from a pest management specialist from SAVATREE which stated that any chemical that has a potential to damage the environment. It depends on if they are used as directed. They are safe, otherwise their use wouldn't be allowed. The letter at least implies that Audubon doesn't allow the use of any chemicals to maintain greens. His response is that that is completely unrealistic to maintain a lawn, that there is going to be weeds, cinch bugs, various fungal diseases, and to control those there are chemicals that are needed. She continued, "He said this is very likely being done at any golf course. The majority of these chemicals can be bought by homeowners to control everything from carpenter ants to Japanese beetles, and indeed I did a little bit of Internet research and I found that, of this list, at least four of them can easily be bought by anybody from Home Depot or Agway and that a UConn report for 2013 mentions the use of at least six of these chemicals." She said she had talked to Recreation and Parks Department Director Mike Mocciae. "One thing he mentioned is that the state has recently banned the use of all

Oak Hills Park Authority
Regular Meeting
July 17, 2014

pesticides and chemicals on all elementary schools and middle schools on the play fields,” Peterson Obuchowski said. “As a result, they are having to put in artificial turf because you just have mud and weeds otherwise. If you are concerned about the environment, the idea of putting down artificial turf strikes me as counterproductive because you’ve got plastic, which is a petroleum product, and you’re not even getting the benefit of the grass and it’s interaction with the air and so forth.”

Ms. Obuchowski said that she had emailed University of Connecticut Pesticide Safety Education program coordinator Candace Bartholomew, and that her response was that every chemical mentioned in “Fore! Poison” letter are registered for use in Connecticut and are commonly used on golf courses. “She said that only two, Dylox and Cholorpyrifos, require certification as a supervisory applicator to purchase. “Dylox does not require the presence of the supervisor for the application”. “On the other hand Chloropyrifos were discontinued in 2001, however use on golf courses was kept”. “All the other pesticides on the list can be purchased by anyone but they must follow the label”. “If the label restricts the use of the product on their home lawn”. All pesticides are claimed to be safe when used according to the label directions. However if someone applying or directing the application of the pesticides has been certified as a pesticide applicator they have demonstrated an understanding and knowledge of the risks involved in using pesticides and how to use them safely to protect humans, wildlife and the environment. “There are restrictions on how often and how much and where all these pesticides can be used. Each product label has these specifications listed. “Remember almost anything is toxic, the dose makes the poison and even table salt can be toxic in high enough doses. “The Exttoxnet database is very good, but when taken out of context, or simply misunderstood can be misleading.

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Guyer reported and said that the GPS units have been installed in the golf carts, and that the feedback has been very positive and that there was no cost for the units. Mr. Mount asked why they were given at no cost. Mr. Guyer said that the company is trying to get the units into golf courses, and they make the money from their advertising, and the OHPA is permitted to receiving 10% of advertising time and it needs to be decided on what to put on the carts for advertising.

Mr. Guyer reported on the sales for the month on June and said that they are 11.9% ahead of last year, and for fiscal year 2013 the total rounds was 32,441 and for 2014 were 36,020, for an increase of 11%.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Tennis / Restaurant Liaison Committee

Mr. Cifatte reported and said that things are good with tennis program and that the courts are in very good condition. He said that office staff is doing a great job with scheduling and taking in new prospective players.

Mr. Cifatte reported on the restaurant and said that the number of events and the lunch crowd is up. He said that the weekend dinners are good but the weeknight dinners have low attendance. Mr. Mount asked how the morning breakfast is doing. Mr. Guyer said they do minor business but they

Oak Hills Park Authority
Regular Meeting
July 17, 2014

don't do anything to promote it. After further discussion it was decided that Mr. Guyer would speak to the restaurateur regarding stocking the carts better. Ms. Obuchowski asked if there has ever been any demand to have the courts open earlier in the morning so people can play before they go to work. Mr. Cifatte said that will ask if there has ever been a request for that.

B. Operations Ad Hoc Committee

Mr. Mount asked how the bag drop is going. Mr. Ruiz said that its going very well and is now available every day. He said that the carts are being better managed and it has created more summer jobs for kids.

C. Finance Committee

Mr. McKenna distributed and reviewed the June P&L sheet and noted that a couple items will need to be adjusted before the end of the month including the tennis payment, the agriculture and chemical line and rents reserved on the balance sheet. He noted that the June year to date numbers are accurate, but that the full audit has not yet been completed but that the overall revenue is up over \$113,000 from the prior year.

D. Legal Committee

Mr. Kendy said that he is still available to do seminars, and that he does have some comments on the employee manual and he will send them to Ms. Obuchowski to review and then to the full committee. He said that his changes should be reviewed by counsel, but that is should be a minimal expense.

E. Marketing Committee

Mr. Mount circulated the newsletter and said that it will be printed and distributed.

Mr. Mount said that the 9 and Dine will be held on August 8, 2014, after 4:00PM. Mr. Guyer said that he will meet with the restaurateur for pricing and then will post the information.

Mr. Mount said that Mr. Waters is continuing communications with Bob Duff and the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation regarding installing signage on highway and state roads.

Mr. Mount reported on the prizes for the Mayor's round and discussed looking at advertising options.

F. Human Resource & Policy Committee

No discussion

G. Master Plan Committee

Mr. Mount said that the reason the master plan was pulled from the Planning Commission was because there was a document in the master plan stating that if a commission does not approve a plan, it automatically approves, and there were questions that were not going to be answered for the Planning Commission for their meeting. He said it was pulled because the OHPA does not want to force them to deny the plan nor does he want to have the plan auto-renew. He said that it was approved through the Zoning Commission, and is now scheduled to go to Finance Committee and Parks and Recreation for approval.

Ms. Obuchowski said since it was voted approve the master plan draft one of the provisions was to for a committee for the Nature Center, and asked what form that committee would take. After further discussion it was decided that Ms. Obuchowski would head the committee and bring back suggestions at the next meeting.

9. OLD BUSINESS

A. Oil Tank Update

Mr. Mount advised OHPA that oil tank is capped and will be removed as a part of the reconstruction. Ms. Obuchowski asked how much the dirt will cost. Mr. Mount said for the nine truck loads of dirt it will cost \$33,000

B Mayor's Trophy Update

Mr. reported on the Mayors Trophy and said that it will be a great event. so far.

10. NEW BUSINESS

No new business was discussed.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

****MR. CIFATTE MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**

****MRS. OBUCHOWSKI SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,
Dilene Byrd
Telesco Secretarial Services

Oak Hills Park Authority
Regular Meeting
July 17, 2014