

**OAK HILLS PARK AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES
April 19, 2012**

PRESENT: Bob Virgulak, Chairman; Mike Corsello, Vice Chairman; Paul Cifatte; Pat Williams; Ralph DePanfilis; Bill Kementzides; and Clyde Mount.

ABSENT: Shannon Giandurco.

STAFF: Shelly Guyer, Executive Director; Tom Vorio, Superintendent; Adam Schauer, Assistant Superintendent and Gloria Raymond, Office Secretary.

INTERESTED PARTIES: Walter Englert, CPA

CALL TO ORDER

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

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Mr. Virgulak asked the Authority Members to review the February 23, 2012 special meeting minutes (excluding the executive session).

****MR. DEPANFILIS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 23, 2012 SPECIAL MEETING.**

****MR. CIFATTE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Virgulak asked the Authority Members to review the March 15, 2012 meeting minutes.

****MR. CIFATTE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 15, 2012.**

****MR. KEMENTZIDES SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Virgulak asked the Authority Members to review the April 11, 2012 special meeting minutes.

****MR. CIFATTE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 11, 2012 SPECIAL MEETING.**

****MR. CORSELLO SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED. MR. DEPANFILIS ABSTAINED.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Frank Bisceglia stated that this season he'd played 109 rounds of golf in 110 days. He noted that he's heard a lot of negative comments but he honestly believes that Mr. Vorio is doing an outstanding job and course has improved significantly in a short period of time. Mr. Bisceglia advised the Authority that Mr. Guyer has great computer and decision making abilities. He stated that encounters with golf course staff have been much more pleasant than in past years. Mr. Bisceglia stated that he feels the Oak Hills needs to improve and increase golf course marketing because he thinks that course play should be 3x its current rate.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Mr. Vorio thanked Mr. Guyer and Mrs. Raymond for their support and noted that their continued communication has led to unified management approach. Mr. Vorio reported that he and his staff have been extremely busy and he appreciates their hard work.

Mr. Vorio advised the Authority that so many things have occurred on the course over the last month

that he felt the need to put it on paper. Mr. Vorio distributed and reviewed his report which detailed general work on the course; announced aerating the greens on May 8th & 9th, provided course conditions, updated the Authority on current and completed projects, discussed the scheduled rehabilitation of the sewer wet well and pump system as well as installing a new sewer discharge line. **(see attached report).**

Mr. Vorio reported that he has had to buy potable water to water course due to the shortage of rain this year.

Mr. Virgulak inquired whether the 2nd District Water Department responded to Mr. Vorio's request to reduce the 25% rate increase of water to Oak Hills. Mr. Vorio stated that Mr. Hitchcock at the Water Department had not responded.

The Authority discussed the sewer system being offline between April 30th and May 2nd. The Authority asked that Mr. Cifatte to advise the restaurateur that they cannot operate the restaurant during that time. The Authority and Mr. Vorio discussed where and how the new sewer line would be installed out to Twin Ledge Road. Mr. Vorio reported that Alexis, the Norwalk Conservation Officer, plans to view the course to review both the grant project and the area proposed for the new sewer line area and she will provide assistance to get maps and permitting required by the Wetland Commission.

The Authority, Mr. Guyer and Mr. Vorio discussed the project and costs of both the sewer renovation and new sewer line. Mr. Vorio stated that a few contractors have viewed the project but he is still waiting for them to provide estimates.

Mr. Virgulak thanked the Norwalk DPW for providing the labor to replace the curbs at the entrance to the Park.

Mr. Vorio advised the Authority that his crew would go back and fill in with top soil.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Guyer introduced Gloria Raymond the new office secretary and noted that she is doing a phenomenal job organizing the office.

Mr. Guyer stated that the March weather was terrific as reflected in the March 2012 financials numbers as which are up compared to 2011: the golf rounds 134% higher than last year; the cart revenue up 1,000% and the I.D. cards up 120% over last year. He advised the Authority that March revenue closed the year to date revenue gap to only a 5% shortage. He stated that so far the month of April 2012 look as though they will surpass last year.

He stated that all the major bugs have been worked out and the Chelsea system is fully functional. Mr. Guyer reported that 20 or so of the current carts are out of commission and in order to be prepared for the weekend play he rented 20 carts from company in Hartford recommended by Easy Go. He expects the new carts to be delivered on April 30th.

Mr. Guyer reported that he has scheduled Terminex Pest Control to apply a treatment to get rid of an abundance of flying subterranean swarmer's (pre-termites) that invaded the office this week. He reported the service would cost \$900 with a 1 year guarantee and as many treatments as needed.

Mr. Guyer advised the Authority that he is in the process of changing phone and internet provider from Earth Link (\$505 a month) to Cablevision (\$233 a month) and expects the change to save Oak Hills approximately \$3,000 a year. He stated that the work would be done on April 30th.

Mr. Guyer stated that he has started to hear a lot of complaints from the golfers that the restaurant is not open. He reminded the Kathy Ricci by email on April 17 that restaurant lease requires them to

provide food service whenever the golf course is open starting April 15. He stated that they opened the snack bar on the 10th hole the next day. Mr. Virgulak inquired about the breakfast shack.

He reported that there are 120 golfers signed up for the official open day on May 7, 2012. He stated that last week a golfer wanted to buy a glove and asked for a rain check when he found out that the pro shop wasn't open. Mr. Corsello asked if Oak Hills should sell balls, tees and gloves. Mr. Virgulak stated that the office has enough to do and cannot manage pro shop sales. Mr. Mount commented that a budget must be prepared so that Oak Hills knows what they can offer a golf pro so that the golf course revenue isn't negatively affected.

Mr. Guyer stated that the course is in unbelievable condition and the greens rival country club greens. He congratulated Mr. Vorio, Mr. Schauer and the crew on their hard work. Mr. Vorio reported he and Mr. Guyer attended the Ladies' Golf Association spring meeting and heard comments and requests for things that he hadn't heard before but could have easily been done.

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND DISCUSSION

Tennis / Restaurant Liaison Committee

Mr. Cifatte stated that Mr. Vorio completed the exterior work to the sprinkler system. He advised the Authority that Mr. Gock's crew has started work on the Har-True courts and opening day is scheduled for May 1st.

Mr. Cifatte reported that he spoke to Kathy Riccio this week and regarding open the restaurant on April 15, she was firm that she didn't want to do too much at this time. He noted that they are not adhering to the lease.

Mr. Virgulak stated that he is fed up with the restaurant not meeting their lease obligations and offered to arrange for a food truck in the parking lot of Oak Hills during the morning. Mr. Corsello noted that to do so would be in violation of the lease but he noted that Quattro Pazzi is currently in breach of their lease.

Mr. Cifatte commented that he suspected that Kathy Riccio would not object to Oak Hills making this arrangement. Mr. Virgulak asked Mr. Cifatte to ask the restaurateur if they intend to open the breakfast shack and if not he will arrange for a truck.

****MR. CORSELLO MADE A MOTION TO AUTHORIZE MR. VIRGULAK TO ARRANGE FOR A FOODTRUCK IN THE MORNING HOURS FOR GOLFERS IN THE EVENT THAT CURRENT LESSEE DOES NOT ADHERE TO THEIR OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE FOOD DURING ALL THE HOURS OF OPERATION AT OAK HILLS PARK GOLF COURSE.**

****MR. CIFATTE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Greens, Facilities & Water Use Committee

Mr. Kementzides reported that the course looks fantastic and congratulated Mr. Vorio. He stated that the money was well spent and now Oak Hills has to focus on upkeep and continued improvements. Mr. Virgulak noted that even the rangers are saying it hasn't looked this good in years.

Finance Committee

Mrs. Williams noted that she provided a cover letter which summarized the financial reports to the Authority Members (**see attached cover page**). Mr. Mount commented that the account lines for heating fuel, gas and diesel fuel are up 100% which appears to be an error. Mrs. Williams replied that she will take a look at the gas/diesel fuel line but felt the heating fuel looked reasonable. Mr. Mount asked her to check it because last winter was cold and price was lower but this winter the price was high, the temperatures were above normal but the fuel companies sold less fuel. Mr. Englert stated that adjustments made in December 31, 2011 to correct prior months and 2011 invoices

unpaid until recently could be the cause. Mrs. Williams stated that the 2011 bills would be reviewed. Mr. Mount asked if this year's agricultural and chemical account was correct. Mrs. Williams replied that they were. The agricultural/chemical expenditures and how varied delivery periods affect the account were discussed further.

Mrs. Williams advised the Authority Members that before the budget is finalized they will vet out these issues. Mrs. Williams stated that she is working on completing the 2011-12 budget using actuals and will review a forecast from Mr. Vorio and Mr. Guyer on Saturday to determine the budget needs which will determine where to apply the revenue. Mrs. Williams stated that the costs of the sewer pump project will be paid against the 2013 \$80,000 capital project budget line and she needs to know the cost of the sewer line installation because it will also be charged to the 2013 capital budget. Mr. Guyer and Mr. Vorio stated that they have decided to give the contractors a deadline for estimates and if not received they would seek estimates from other vendors. The Authority discussed whether to go to an RFP to get estimates for the sewer line work. Mr. Virgulak advised the Authority that upon advice of counsel Oak Hills will not prepare an RFP. Mr. Englert stated that Oak Hills is not required to use an RFP to get estimates.

Mrs. Williams advised the Authority that she has spoken to Mr. Barron about the cost of the emergency sewer pump project and the upcoming sewer line project expenditures.

Legal Committee

Mr. Corsello asked that the Authority go into executive session to discuss pending lease negotiations. The Authority agreed unanimously. The executive session started at 8:40 p.m. and ended at 9:30 p.m.

****MR. CORSELLO MADE A MOTION TO AMEND THE APRIL 19, 2012 MEETING AGENDA BY ADDING THE DISCUSSION OF THE DURATION OF THE LEASE BETWEEN THE CITY OF NORWALK AND OAK HILLS PARK.**

****MR. CIFATTE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

****MR. CORSELLO MADE A MOTION TO AUTHORIZE MR. VIRGULAK TO REQUEST THE CITY OF NORWALK TO EXTEND THE EXISTING LEASE WITH OAK HILLS PARK FOR A TIME PERIOD COMMENSURATE WITH THE NEW LOAN OBLIGATIONS, THE GOLF CART LEASE OBLIGATIONS AND ANY FUTURE LEASE OAK HILLS MAY ENTER INTO WITH A POTENTIAL RESTAURANTEUR.**

****MR. CIFATTE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Marketing Committee

Mr. Mount advised the Authority Members that Mrs. Giandurco provide him with a marketing update which reported that the Norwalk Hour would publish an article on Oak Hills next week; ads would run in the Greenwich and Stamford Advocate the weekend of April 21, 2012 and May 5, 2012; and she plans to put out a press release about the new carts and opening day.

Mr. Mount inquired whether Mr. Guyer has any new email blast planned from Constant Contact. Mr. Guyer replied that he is getting ready to send a new email with information about the new three tier system and other updates. Mr. Mount suggested he announce that the huge response to opening

day. Mr. Virgulak, Mr. Mount and Mr. Corsello agreed that more marketing of the reduced non-residents rate is needed.

Mr. Corsello stated that New Canaan and Wilton residents tend to read their local papers more than the Advocate. He noted that ads in local papers would be cheaper and reach more seniors than the Advocate or an online paper. The Authority discussed a free golf for free advertising deal offered by WEBE radio station, marketing in the Chamber newsletter and contacting Wells Fargo or First County Bank to discuss advertising on the golf carts. Mr. Guyer advised the Authority that Golf Smith holds evening events which he would arrange to promote the Oak Hills logo for a free golf round with a tee reservation for four golfers. The Authority discussed the golf pro, the golf shop and marketing further.

Human Resource & Policy Committee

Mr. Mount advised the Authority that he supports finding \$50,000 in the budget to hire a golf pro. Mr. Corsello stated that the future of the golf course is junior golf, introducing under privileged youths to the game and continued success of junior golf clinics. Mr. Guyer stated that he would be talking to a prospective golf pro who is interested in running junior golf clinics and would consider it if Oak Hills cannot hire a golf pro this year.

Master Plan Committee

Mr. DePanfilis had no new information.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Kementzides reiterated that Uncle Joe's tournament is on June 4th and costs \$185.

Mr. Mount asked Mr. Guyer to request that the members of the Men's club submit letters to the newspaper or commenting on the improvements and what great condition the golf course is in.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:59 p.m.

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

****MR. CIFATTE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,
Sheila Dravis

ATTACHMENTS:

Tom Vorio's report

Pat Williams cover page summarizing the March 2012 financial reports.