CITY OF NORWALK
OAK HILLS PARK AUTHORITY
FEBRUARY 19, 2015

ATTENDANCE: Clyde Mount, Chairman; Paul Cifatte; Ernie DesRochers (7:33 pm) Joseph Kendy (8:10 pm) John McKenna; Elsa Obuchowski; Bill Waters.

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

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Mount called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and stated members were in attendance as listed and there was a quorum present.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Mr. Waters noted corrections as follows:
Page 2: Chairman's Report- paragraph 1: change Mr. Mount Mount to Mr. Mount.
Page 5: Finance Committee – line 9: Change Mr. Ciafatte to "Paul"
Mr. Guyer noted that he would make the corrections as noted.

**** MR. CIFATTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 15, 2015 MEETING AS AMENDED.**
**** MR. WATERS SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Paul Cantor: Mr. Cantor read his statement outlining issues with the $1.5 million grant and how it should be spent. He stated that rather than use it to reduce the size of the course and to eliminate unnecessary grounds, it is being used to prepare grounds for a driving range and to demolish the rest of the cart barn. He explained that this is misuse of taxpayer grants to make improvements to the park rather than capital expenditures for expansion. He stated that there is not sufficient demand for an 18-hole golf course in Norwalk and certainly no demand for expansion and a driving range, and further evidence of the conveyance of mistrust to the public.

Public Comment – continued

Yvonne Lopaur: Ms. Lopaur spoke of on-going environmental concerns and inconsistencies with not following the master plan intent. She stated that there are issues as outlined by Mr. Cantor with the $1.5 million grant and how it should be spent. She said that using it as window dressing is misleading and ignoring the importance of preserving trees. She spoke about how this is not the intention of the master plan and is actually counter productive with work plans for the Rose Garden. She added that it is not just the trees in the nature area, people care about all the trees in the park. You cannot justify cutting down trees by saying you are not cutting trees somewhere else. She added that the cart barn is to be taken down to make room for driving is not the intended use of the grant.

There were no other members of the public who wished to speak, and Public Participation was closed at 7:10 p.m.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Mount encouraged members to come to the Common Council meeting this Tuesday at 7:30 in support of the grant approval. He noted that the scope of work is tight and detailed, and the state knows the details and has approved the work.

Mr. Mount noted that lots of exciting things are on the horizon when new systems and renovation improvements.

PRO'S REPORT

Mr. Ruiz reported that merchandise will be in the first week of March. They are preparing for the transition to new software solutions that will help in the long run with procedures.

He presented a mock up of the new brochure and there was a discussion on pricing and printing options. Mr. Mount suggested that reverse type is hard to read and when it comes to important areas such as directions, regular bold should be used. It was also suggested to check all numbers and directions to "proof" the copy before going to print. There was mention of a slot at the state visitor's center and this is good part of the reach strategy.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Schell reported that tree work has come to a halt due to the snow and will hopefully resume mid March. He reported the new truck is very reliable and a real asset when it comes to plowing. Regarding software, he reported that they need to upgrade the tower for support of HP Windows 7 to have capability to adequately run all programming and maximize interface with EZLinks.

He then distributed the following report of improvements:

Tennis House and Grounds Improvements:

Rest Rooms:

- All fixtures and partitions shall be removed from restrooms.
- Floor shall be retiled and walls shall have tile to 48”, then green-board to ceiling, painted with interior latex paint, satin finish, color TBD.
- Siphon-jet toilets with elongated bowls shall replace old toilets.
- Small vanities with new sink, mirror and new faucet shall replace old sinks.
- New soap, toilet paper and paper towel dispensers shall be installed.
- New energy efficient light fixtures shall be installed.

Grounds:

- New slightly elevated Belgian block lined asphalt walk paths from between men’s room and garage around building and to each doorway(3) to courts and parking lot. Paths to be 4’wide except where extra width is need at entries to courts.
- Parking lot shall be repaved with new curbing and lines.
- Old arborvitae shall be removed and replaced with improved, deer-resistant variety, green giant.
- Exterior doors and wood trim shall be painted with exterior latex paint, color and finish TBD.
- Fence fabric shall be removed; poles straightened if needed and painted black, and new black vinyl fabric reinstalled.
- Two bocce courts installed with north-south orientation with stone dust surface on field north of two court battery.

Tee Improvements:

- Rebuild white and blue tee on 12, giving it elevation and proper drainage.
- Rebuild white tee on 14, giving it elevation and proper drainage.
- Rebuild blue tee on 18, increasing the size and improving the soil characteristics.
- All other tees will have sod removed, laser leveled, expanded where possible and rounded, to make cutting more efficient. Short cut Kentucky bluegrass will be used on tee tops and turf-type tall fescue will be used in rough.
- One tee and two blue tees shall be built according to golf course architects specs.

Halfway House Improvements:

1. Frame East wall after removing window, and install an in—wall energy efficient, quiet air conditioner Face interior with sheet rock. Side the newly framed exterior with like shakes.
2. Remove remaining windows, frame walls to above counter height (30”), and install new energy efficient sliding windows. Face interior with sheet rock. Side the newly framed exterior with like shakes.
3. Replace South facing door sized to existing opening with half glass exterior door to open out and with heavy duty spring-hinges, left hand open, kick-plate on interior.
4. Replace North facing door sized to existing opening, with like half glass exterior door to open out and with heavy duty spring-hinges, right hand open, kick-plate on interior and storm/screened door to open in.
5. Paint exterior with Exterior Latex Paint, color and finish TBD.

Bunker Improvements: (P) = priority

1. New sub-base and sand in both bunkers.
2. Rebuild bunker to the right of green. (P) Rebuild bunker to the left of green. (P)
3. Remove both short bunkers.
4. Rebuild fairway bunker (P), greensides shall get new sub-base and sand.
5. Rebuild fairway bunkers, remove or move short left greenside bunker (P), new sub-base in right bunker (P).Replace sub-base and sand bunker edge of fairway; replace sub-base and sand at greenside bunkers (P).
6. Move second fairway bunker to short side of first fairway bunker, a similar distance away and new sub-base and sand in greenside bunker.
7. Move left fairway bunker to pinch fairway (P), rebuild right fairway bunker, and rebuild left and right greensides (P).
8. Rebuild right side bunker (P) and new sub-base and sand in front and rear (P) bunker
9. Remove short left bunker and rebuild right side greens bunker.
10. Remove first bunker and rebuild second (P).
11. New sub-base and sand in all bunkers.
12. Rebuild short left bunker (P) and new sub-base and sand in left greenside bunker.

Drainage Improvements:

1 – Replace piping from right side of 1 approach crossing fairway diagonally to left of 1 gr section in middle of fairway.

2 – Add slit drainage to right of 1 approach.

3 – Improve drainage in 2 approach, add slit drainage in rough short of cart path, and rur swale down 2 fairway to pond.

4 – Extend drainage on 6 fairway to include left rough (slit drainage).

5 – Install drain line on right edge of 8 fairway to connect with large slit drainage system directly in front of 9 tee and exit into existing basin between 8 & 9.

6 – Install drain starting at left rear of 9 green continuing down swale in front of green ar existing bunker drain exit.

7 – Extend French drain on left of ten fairway to capture excess water.

8 – Install slit drainage left of ten approach to connect with basin at rear of nine tee.

9 – Add slit drainage to the right of 11 fairway at the turn and in rough.

10 – Repair/replace basin left of 11 approach and repair pipe right of 11 approach.

11 – Install/repair drain line in swale surrounding 12 rear tee.

12 – Drain area short of 13 old fairway extending to base of 7 hill.

14 – Interceptor drain installed left of 14 tee.

15 - Add slit drainage to left fairway/rough at beginning of 14 fairway.

16 – Increase pipe size from first two basins and under road crossing from 14 to culvert.

17 – Drain the end of the fairway at 14.

18 – Slit drainage in rough short of 17 fairway

19 – Interceptor drain left edge of 18 rough and slit drainage in rough if necessary.

20 – Drain line around back of 18 green.

21 – Drain around and below chipping area at large putting green.

There was discussion on equipment replacement and if an RFP was needed. Mr. Schell indicated that there was one item that is needed and he would work up a list. It would be determined with Gerald Foley the next steps, but it was noted than and RFP would not be required.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Guyer noted that the Cart Barn is not part of the $1.5 million grant and the Tees are approved as a part of improvements. He noted that the first tee allows golfers to see the Tee and it is not longer a blind tee, so this is a key improvement. He added that an over the water tee is aesthetically pleasing, makes for a nicer tee, and is another key improvement.

He spoke about the Tower and reported that the Chelsea system is also XP so the upgrade will improve that as well. He discussed a recent virus and the impact on the system, and explained that this makes the new software even more important and the transition should make things better. He noted that all requested data has been provided for EZLinks, except for those that have renewed.

He reported that photos won't open up with the data base and explained that Tennis relies on us to generate photo ID cards for them. He explained that EZLinks can't print a photo ID, and noted that they'll get an ID card with a bar code. It was suggested that new photos will have to be taken when members come in and this should expedite the process.

There was discussion on the issue and need for photo IDs. Mr. Guyer stated that they will know the week of March 9 when training is done if there is a need for an auxiliary camera and if photos not on ID cards presents a problem. Mr. Ruiz noted that there is a camera in the pro shop and may have to be used regularly to take more photos. It was noted that first the new system has to be in place and will see how everything works with the transition.

Mr. Guyer reported that the January sales numbers are dismal as revenue for IDs came in December not January. He noted that through yesterday $1,700 came in as revenue. The restaurant paid on time and ½ will be collected tomorrow for February. There was discussion on weather predictions that are inconsistent with any long term pattern, and Mr. Guyer stated that as we all know this is not in our control.

Mr. Guyer reported the employee meeting is scheduled for Monday at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall in the Community Room. Items on the agenda include EZLinks, and operations and organizational changes. There was discussion on clarification of the organizational chart as it pertains to the Charter.

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND DISCUSSION

Tennis / Restaurant Liaison Committee

Mr. Cifatte reported that the Restaurant has been quiet except for a few parties. He noted that there was need to have a few areas cleaned up and that was a done. There was discussion about lights and how dark it is to go out into the parking lot after events, which is a liability. Mr. Schell explained that the timer was not reset and Mr. Mount suggested looking up the make and model to get instructions

Mr. Ciafatte stated that there are no problems with the roof so far, but there is a lot of snow and ice built up. It was noted that there is no room for a solar panel on the roof, but maybe it can be done as a solar field, and this will be looked into.

Mr. DesRochers entered the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Operations Ad Hoc Committee

Mr. Guyer noted that they will identify issues at Monday's meeting concerning operations. Mr. DesRochers indicated that he wanted to make sure it was clear on the Charter as to reporting. There was discussion and Mr. Guyer stated that it was not a Charter issue, only organizational structure.

Finance Committee

Mr. McKenna reviewed his oral report on the January P&L sheet. He noted that on an adjusted basis, OH is ahead overall over the prior year revenue and similarly on a year to date basis. He reported that it was a slow January with total revenue of $8,647 YTD over last year by 4% and expenses were down versus prior year, with net income $143,000 versus $169,000 prior year. He reported the $20,000 loan to cover expenses is in and the burn rate is tracking at the projected calculations to the $40-$50,000 needed in March.

Legal Committee – Tabled until later in the agenda pending arrival of Mr. Kendy.

Marketing Committee

Opening Day Event

Mr. Waters reported that the date is proposed as April 4, which is a Saturday at 9:15 a.m. and has been cleared on Mayor Rilling's calendar and Larry Cafero's. He indicated that there is a possibility of having Governor Malloy also. He noted that they need to have food, refreshments and giveaways to make this an event and he is working on a publicity program to generate excitement.

There was discussion on this being Easter weekend and an exchange of comments and general consensus that this was a good weekend as most people are around.

Mr. Waters provided a proof of a promotional mailer, (attached as addendum) to be sent as an e-mail blast to 46,000 addresses. There was discussion on how they can call by phone and it was asked about using EZLinks. Mr. Guyer reminded that they can't process call on what we charge for.

Mr. Waters distributed the following as a marketing program outline:

I read an article last night on the 8 things you need to do for a successful business. It appears, for the most part, we are pretty much doing the proper things. Here are some of the things they listed.

- Get a New Logo
    - I tried. Maybe next year.
    - At least the new Road Signs look better than the old ones
    - The premise states that a new logo shows you are reinventing your business model
- Network
    - Chamber of Commerce Events. Clyde and I went to one. Perhaps others should attend as well.
    - Talk up your business to anyone who will listen
- Partner with Other Businesses
    - We are working on this. Amar needs to partner with us better. Spark's Restaurant want to offer a free (first) beer to anyone who brings in their scorecards from Oak Hills.
    - We can probably approach other businesses as well
- Social Networking
    - We can probably do a better job here. We have FB and Twitter, but we do not have a lo of followers
    - The Hearst campaign offers lots of social media sales, banners and posts
- Offer Freebies
    - Not rounds of golf – we can't by charter
    - Offer free Tees
    - Offer free Ball Mark Fixers
    - Give free Oak Hills Logo plastic cup so people can refill the cup while on the course and take it home with them
    - Free beer can koozies
- Develop Customer Relationships
    - Ed already does a great job of this
    - Our new Player Assistance Representatives (a/k/a Rangers) are a key to friendly patron relationships. People will always remember a friendly staff member
- Sponsor Events
    - Wine Tastings
    - Host Chamber of Commerce meetings
    - Putting Contests
- Donations/Involvement
    - Have several donation events
        - Folds of Honor
        - Mother's Day Breast Cancer donation box
        - Father's Day Prostate Cancer donation box
    - This shows a dedication to community service

Marketing -- continued

There was discussion on using local media, the Hour and local radio. Mr. Waters explained how Cumulus Radio operates and the opportunity for joint media campaign with Cablevision. . Mr. Waters stated that there has been discussions with Cablevision about creating a commercial, and that we may not be there yet, but it is something done the road

Mr. Waters will come back with a more detailed media plan recommendation.

Mr. Mount emphasized the need for involvement for Opening Day and asked Mr. Waters to coordinate volunteer efforts, publicity and event planning to make this a success.

Human Resource & Policy Committee

Mrs. Obuchowski reported that she and Mr. Kendy have corresponded on updating and clarifying the employee handbook. There was discussion on distributing this at Monday's staff meeting Mr. Guyer discussed having this e-mailed to employees electronically as a PDF rather than printing 35 copies. He noted that he would have a signature receipt scheduling a sexual harassment training class for supervisors.

It was agreed by general consensus that it was good to have this e-mailed to employees prior to the staff meeting.

Master Plan Committee

Mr. DesRochers encouraged members to come to the Common Council meeting this Tuesday, February 24 at 7:30 p.m. in support of the grant approval. He noted that the Finance Committee approved it 5-0 and the state has signed, and the next step will be to meet with Gerald Foley on the RFP. He stated that the Golf Course Architect should be able to make changes and establish a priority of projects including the Welcome Center improvements.

Nature Center Advisory

Ms. Obuchowski reported that the group is very cooperative and supportive and they have creative ideas. She spoke about the Old Leaf Dump area and the need to prevent this from being developed and incorporated into the boundaries of the park. She presented a letter that has been drafted on the recommendation to the City to have a designated area as non-developed boundaries. There was further reporting on recommendations for natural habitat, out door gathering areas and expansion of the woodland trails.

There was discussion on the drafted letter and the next steps to present to the City's Land Use Committee (attached, as follows):

Honorable Mayor Harry W. Rilling
Mayor, City of Norwalk
City Hall, 125 East Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06851

Dear Mayor Rilling:

On behalf of the Oak Hills Park Authority, I am writing to ask for your leadership in helping the OHPA fulfill part of its master plan for the park during 2015. As you know, a major part of our approved plan includes the construction of a Nature Learning Center on the wooded land behind the restaurant and along the 18th fairway. This area is designated for passive recreation uses that will include walking paths, adequate trail signage, and signage for flora and fauna that will help educate people of all ages of the environmental diversity the center has to offer.

The OHPA established the Oak Hills Park Nature Advisory Committee (OHPNAC) in January 2015 to assist it in planning the Nature Center. The group is made up of Authority members and Norwalk citizens truly interested in creating a learning center at Oak Hills.

Their review of the park map and surrounding properties indicates that there are two parcels of city owned vacant land that are adjacent to the eastern and southern boundaries of the park. Parcel one is a 10.73999 acre parcel that is located on North Taylor Avenue and is known as the "Old Leaf Dump". Parcel Two is 6.273 acres and is addressed at 194 Scribner Avenue. That parcel is also known the "Niblick" property. Maps and field cards are enclosed for your reference.

We seek to add these properties to Oak Hills Park to expand the woodlands areas within the Park and to permanently include these parcels as part of our Nature Center. This will allow the OHPA to promote increased passive recreational use while permanently maintaining the natural state of these parcels as designated park land. We intend to designate these two areas as well as the well Nature Center parcel east of the restaurant parking lot as designated permanent no build areas.

We respectfully request that you reach out to the Common Council, in particular Richard Bonenfant, Land Use and Building Management Committee Chair, to begin discussions of our plan. We might suggest that this process include commissioning a survey of all three pieces of land to determine their exact boundaries.

We encourage you to remain in contact with Oak Hills Park Authority and Oak Hills Park Nature Advisory Committee as this process progresses, and to let us know what we can do to facilitate the attainment of these goals. We look forward to your taking up this timely effort to protect these precious areas of open land in Norwalk, and are committed to working together so that we can do this expediently.

Sincerely,

Elsa Peterson Obuchowski, Chair, Oak Hills Park Nature Advisory Committee (OHPNAC)

cc: Richard Bonenfant, Chair, Common Council Land Use and Building Management Committee

There was discussion on the next steps of the City zoning procedures with surveys and land records. Mr. Mount suggested that an environmental study be included in the recommendation to make sure there are no areas that could result in remediation. He referred to the issues surrounding oil tank removal and emphasized the need for an environmental study to document conditions.

A discussion ensued on whether this is a City function and it was agreed that this should be included in the letter as standard protection.

Mr. Kendy arrived at the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

<u>Legal</u>

Mr. Kendy stated that with regard to the letter on the survey of park boundaries, he cautioned on protection for remediation costs. He shared similar situations with another client that resulted in costs for remediation.

Mr. Kendy recommended that insurance indemnity be looked into to protect the members with an officers and directors liability policy Authority. He agreed to look into other authorities (WPCA, Parking Authority) and best legal practices and come back with a recommendation.

Mr. Kendy stated that he was in agreement with changes to the employee manual and saw no reason why it should not be emailed to the staff. He suggested that a receipt be signed to have an acknowledgement on file.

Mr. Guyer pointed out that at the beginning of the work year, all employees mush fill out new forms W-4 federal and state income reporting, and he will include the manual receipt acknowledgement.

NEW BUSINESS - No new business was discussed.

<u>ADJOURNMENT</u>

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

****	MR. DESROCHERS MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**
****	MS. OBUCHOWSKI SECONDED THE MOTION.**
****	THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Knox,
Telesco Secretarial Services

Attachments – Promotional Flyer.

For a limited time, Oak Hills Golf Course is offering Membership ID savings

Non-Resident ID Card: $125 ($25 Savings) • **Non-Resident Senior ID Card:** $95

With your ID Card, 2015 Greens fees are: **$30 weekdays ($10 Savings) • $35 Weekends ($20 Savings)**

You can also make tee times 7 days in advance

Hurry! Offer ends March 31st

To get your Membership ID, visit the Oak Hills Pro Shop or call ***203-838-0303*** to *order-by-phone*

10:00am – 3:00pm Daily (Closed Monday's)

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