

**OAK HILLS PARK AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES
September 20, 2012**

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

STAFF: Shelly Guyer, Executive Director and Ed Ruiz, Golf Pro.

ABSENT: Tom Vorio, Superintendent and Shannon Giandurco.

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 minutes from the August 16, 2012 regular meeting and the September 5, 2012 Special meeting.

****MR. CIFATTE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 16, 2012 AND THE SEPTEMBER 5, 2012 MEETINGS.**

****MRS. WILLIAMS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Steve Bentkover stated that he believes the course has been turned around, is in terrific condition and the Park Authority hired a very good golf pro who is an asset to the course. He addressed his concern that Oak Hills Park Authority has not marketed the course to the extent necessary to increase rounds and take the burden off the resident golfers. He suggested that Oak Hills run specials in the fall and advised the Authority that he approved of the driving range proposal. He commented on the Chairman's comments that appeared in the Norwalk Hour a couple weeks ago.

Mr. Virgulak stated that the letter he sent to the Norwalk Hour made no mention of any name(s) and the Hour decided to add that information to the article.

Leon Seulti stated that he is a member at Rye Golf Club in Rye, N.Y. and attended the meeting tonight to advise the Oak Hills Park Authority that the RM staffing is the restaurant contractor at the Rye club. He stated that RM Staffing recently charged the Rye Club for overtime staff hours and the club found out recently that a lien was placed on the property for delinquent taxes of \$127 owed by RM Staffing.

Jane Walters read the letter Marianne Capiello, President of the Women's Oak Hills Golf Association wrote because she couldn't attend. The letter relayed the association's thanks to the Oak Hills Park Authority, the golf Superintendent and pro and the restaurant for improving the golf course condition. In particular she noted that the staff addressed the association's concerns about the red tees and have remained open to suggestions and have provided great service at the golf tournaments.

PRO'S REPORT

Mr. Ruiz thanked Mrs. Walter for the positive comments from the Women's Association and thanked the Oak Hills team for making the improvements to the facility and the overall operations.

He noted that the first season has been a whirlwind but with the support of his friend and fellow golf

professional he garnered 130 participants in the junior golf program through summer camps and ongoing clinics. He stated that he will work to double/triple the number and plans to institute an online registration system next year.

He commented that he hoped that the effort he displayed to organize and run tournaments will increase interest in membership to Oak Hills associations. He stated that he appreciates that the staff made his transition as the new pro easy and reported that the staff is supportive, responsible and diligent.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Guyer advised the Authority that the Mayor Trophy golf tournament attracted 96 golfers making the tournament a big success. He stated that Oak Hills is glad to have the tournament up and running again. He reported that it netted \$5,000 which will be used to make course improvements.

Mr. Guyer stated that 140 rounds were booked through the GolfNow.com generating over \$5,200 in revenue. He stated that it is a good marketing tool that has helped book golf rounds. He stated that they had 175 golfers for the Wednesday golf special on September 11th and compared to the average 124 golfers on Wednesday's in September 2011 and the 126 average on Wednesday's in August 2012. He noted that the restaurant ran a \$10 special menu and he plan to run the special again after the greens heal.

Mr. Guyer stated that Oak Hills will make about \$600 to let Waterdog Golf recover approximately 15,000 golf balls from the ponds.

He reported that he has spoken with two golf cart marketing companies who have offered \$5,000 and \$6,000 respectively to Oak Hills to procure the sponsor and the marketing signs. Mr. Corsello suggested that the Authority Members may be able to procure sponsors themselves so that Oak Hills reaps all the marketing revenue. Mr. Guyer noted that the marketing company creates the signs and maintains them as well. Mr. Virgulak noted that he would pass the suggestion on to the Marketing Committee for review. Mr. Corsello asked that Members pass on suggests for corporate sponsors to the committee.

Mr. Guyer reported that the CSGA contacted him and he has agreed to hold the State Amateur Qualifying tournament on May 28th at Oak Hills. He advised the Authority that the players won't pay green's fees but are allowed to use carts on the day of the qualifier and will pay for practice rounds. The Authority agreed that the free marketing from the players and the prestige of holding the tournament will greatly benefit Oak Hills.

Mr. Guyer noted that Trackside Team Center approached Mr. Ruiz about scheduling their tournament on June 17, 2013 at Oak Hills instead of Silvermine Tavern.

Mr. Guyer reported that he received a number of emails from members of the Men's Golf Association saying they were very pleased with the way Mr. Ruiz conducted the Men's Club Championship tournament and that he provided services that they hadn't been given in the past.

Mr. Virgulak noted that the results were published in the paper.

Mr. Guyer reported that the August 2012 golf numbers were pretty good this month. He advised the Authority that compared to August 2011 golf rounds were up 7%, the cart sales were up 16%, and the revenue was up 10.5%. He noted non-resident golf rounds were up 16.7% in August 2012 but the resident adult golf rounds were down 7%, the resident juniors rounds were down 40% and the 9 hole rounds were up over 300%. Mr. Guyer noted that on a year to date basis the revenue is down 3.8% compared to 2011. The Authority discussed the decrease in the adult resident round. Mr. Guyer reiterated that he believes the decrease in adult resident rounds was due to the non-renewal of 500

residents ID cards. Mr. Virgulak commented that based on the continued improvement in the course condition and if the economy improves he expects to find that the sales of residents ID cards will increase.

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND DISCUSSION

Tennis / Restaurant Liaison Committee

Mr. Cifatte reported that the Oak Hills 2013-2015 tennis lease is ready and he plans to give it to Attorney Avery to review as advised by Mr. Foley. He reported that the Kings Highway Partners the current tenant will assume another three year lease at a substantial increase in rent. He noted that Kings Highway Partners has closed for the season but some players continue to play with the permission of Oak Hills and help from Mr. Vorio.

Mr. Cifatte stated he has lunch at the Terrace Grill restaurant weekly and from his vantage point business is going well and the staff is great. Mr. Virgulak noted that when the new restaurateur took over the lease he had to repair equipment such as the dishwasher.

Mr. Guyer stated that the restaurant is now providing egg sandwiches in the morning.

Greens, Facilities & Water Use Committee

Mr. Kementzides reported that the greens were aerated Monday and today, new drainage was installed on the low part of the 13th fairway, the fairways are scheduled to be aerated October 9th, 10th, and 11th, the new lightening system was installed, the new pump has been installed but not running as of yet and the temporary line will be installed. Mr. Kementzides noted that the greens are still in good condition but a couple of fairways are stressed because there isn't enough topsoil on ledge for the roots to take hold and retain water. Mr. Guyer stated that Mr. Vorio plans to reseed with bent grass and fescue which are heartier grasses.

Mr. Virgulak reviewed a list of capital projects: installation of the sewer lines between October 1-15th, the staff to finish landscaping and seeding, the staff to install a drainage line from the bunker on the 8th hole to the rough on the 9th hole from October 16-30th. He stated that on the capital project list Mr. Vorio notes that the entrance house roof can be replaced in November if the sewer line project doesn't go over budget, in December if funding allows he will purchase materials to continue drainage the line on the lower part of the 1st fairway, the annual tree work will be conducted in January and February by the arborist and staff, the roof will be replaced on the starter shack in April and the entrance house (if not in November), the above ground oil tanks would be installed, a new boiler and hot water heater replaced. Mr. Virgulak stated that the Superintendent has a full schedule and project completion is based on weather conditions and available funding

Finance Committee

Mrs. Williams stated that she and Mr. Englert have been working to finalize the audit and will have the June financials closed with one more entry and then they can start to roll forward the financial numbers into the 2012-13 financial year.

She has a draft of the July financials and the audit financial statement to review. She stated that they would be caught up soon and should have a copy of the last three months of financials for the Authority.

She noted that Oak Hills presented the 5 year budget to the BET at the September meeting and would present the plan to the Finance Committee in October. She stated that as a part of the 5 year plan the Authority will need to discuss and authorize the new equipment lease agreement.

Mrs. Williams stated that it appears at this point that the cash flow can sustain the payroll and expenses through the winter months to March 2013 with excess funds. Mrs. Williams discussed how she made this determination.

****MRS. WILLIAMS MADE A MOTION TO SUSPEND THE RULES.**

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

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

****MRS. WILLIAMS MADE A MOTION TO ADD AUTHORIZATION OF THE EQUIPMENT LEASE TO THE MEETING AGENDA.**

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

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Corsello asked if the lease had been reviewed by Attorney Avery. Mr. Guyer replied that Attorney Avery had reviewed the lease. Mr. Corsello stated for the record that the Oak Hills' Attorney had reviewed the lease and determined its terms to be typical and fair.

Mrs. Williams explained that the Authority will make six payments for the next five years on the equipment lease.

****MR. MOUNT MADE A MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE CHAIRMAN TO SIGN THE MASTER LEASE AGREEMENT.**

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

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Legal Committee

Mr. Corsello stated that his understanding from Attorney Avery is that ongoing discussions with the restaurateur regarding the new lease have continued. Mr. Virgulak noted that Attorney Avery forwarded emails to him regarding the matter and asked that Mr. Corsello review them if he hasn't yet. Mr. Guyer noted that he emailed a story on RM staffing so that everyone is aware of the situation.

Marketing Committee

Mr. Mount commented that the weather impeded 2 of the 3 Wednesday's golf specials so he recommends that the Authority continue to market and test special offers so that it knows what specials will work this spring. The Authority and Mr. Guyer discussed the upcoming 3-day special, a press release regarding volunteerism at the course, and a Columbus Day parent /junior golf special.

Mr. Virgulak noted that the Chamber of Commerce did not mention Oak Hills' golf course in their September newsletter. He stated that he would like the Chamber to support Oak Hills and hold a second tournament here.

Mr. Mount noted that the restaurant did an outstanding job on the day of the Mayor's Trophy Tournament. He stated that the tournament was a great success. Mr. Corsello suggested that the Authority form a committee to organize and market the tournament to increase the number of players in 2013.

Human Resource & Policy Committee

Mr. Mount reported that he will give his report under executive session.

Master Plan Committee

Mr. Virgulak stated that due to illness Mr. DePanfilis has resigned and the committee will resume over the winter with a new chairman.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Virgulak introduced Mr. Jim Downing from Total Driving Range Solutions who discussed the new proposed area for a driving range at Oak Hills. He stated that they can construct the range in newly

proposed area which is bigger and wider but it will be more expensive to construct and very expensive if they have to chip away rock ledge.

Mr. Virgulak explained the new location and the plan to have the developer or vendor manage the driving range for the Authority. The Authority, Mr. Englert, and Mr. Downing discussed the proposal, the potential value to the community and the Park, and the City's requirement in order to proceed with construction of a driving range. Mr. Downing was asked to provide financial information to determine the potential revenue the range would derive. Mr. Downing reported that Total Driving Range Solutions is in midst of the approval stage to build a range in Fairfield County.

Mr. Virgulak commenced with the approval of the restructured bond note with the City of Norwalk. Mr. Guyer noted that he checked past meeting minutes and didn't find that the Authority had voted to give the chairman authorization to approve the restructured note. Mr. Mount found the approval in the August minutes.

Mr. Corsello stated that he would prefer the City of Norwalk to forgive the loan or grant a moratorium instead of restructure the loan because the Park is not just a debtor it is a very valuable asset to the City. He stated that until added revenue can be tapped, possibly from a range, Oak Hills Park Authority cannot continue to afford the expense to fix the Parks 43rd year old aging infrastructure and still run a quality golf course on a shoe string budget. The Authority agreed and Mr. Virgulak noted that after many discussions in recent years it appears that the City though helpful, will not help pay the costs to repair the Parks infrastructure.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

****MR. MOUNT MADE A MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION.**

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

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Authority went into executive session to discuss an employee request at 8:50 p.m. and returned at 9:06 p.m. from executive session having taken no action.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 p.m.

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

****MR. MOUNT SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,
Sheila Dravis