

**OAK HILLS PARK AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES
August 16, 2012**

PRESENT: Bob Virgulak, Chairman; Bill Kementzides; Shannon Giandurco; Paul Cifatte; and Clyde Mount.

STAFF: Shelly Guyer, Executive Director and Tom Vorio, Superintendent.

ABSENT: Mike Corsello, Vice Chairman; Pat Williams; Ralph DePanfilis and Ed Ruiz, Golf Pro.

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 July 19, 2012 meeting.
CORRECTION(S): Mrs. Giandurco, Mr. Spremulli.

****MR. MOUNT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 19, 2012 AS AMENDED.**

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

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Mr. Vorio noted that the last four weeks have been very busy and have flown by. He stated that the course is in great shape and the crew has been working extremely hard and are preparing for the Tournament Championship and the Mayor's Trophy tournaments. He stated that he continues to get many compliments on the course condition. Mr. Vorio reported that the difference this year has been less rain, the capital project expenditures and the course maintenance programs are starting to mature and the results are noticeably positive such as the fertility and seeding programs as well as the buffer strips and water treatment in the pond at the entrance way.

He noted that volunteers continue to help with gardening and filling divots. Mr. Kementzides asked if the high school golf players had volunteered at the course this season. Mr. Guyer replied that he would contact the coaches to make the request.

Mr. Vorio report that the greens would be aerated the Monday after the Mayor's Trophy.

Mr. Vorio noted that the capital projects that the Authority presented to the BET would save money in the future by avoiding costly emergency infrastructure repairs. He advised the Authority that the local contractors had given Oak Hills very good quotes and generous payment terms to help make the projects more affordable. He asked if the Authority Members had any questions on the changes to the capital project list.

Mr. Vorio advised the Authority that the crew would expand the blue tee box on the 7th hole and the

tee box on the 14th hole. Mr. Kementzides suggested that the same be done to the tee box on the 2nd hole. Mr. Vorio stated it would require a lot of material and irrigation to complete and there is a hold on additional spending. He noted that he has leftover materials to complete some small drainage projects.

Mr. Vorio stated that the State DEEP grant project is in the final approval stages and will bring a good deal of positive publicity for Oak Hills. The Authority and Mr. Vorio discussed the grant project, the installation of the new lightening system, and converting the 1977 septic line at the 10th tee snack bar to a sewer line. The Authority and Mr. Vorio discussed the current schedule to start the sewer work. He advised that the contractor is making a new bracket for the new sewer panel and planned to install it a week from Monday.

PRO REPORT

Mr. Guyer advised the Authority Members that Mr. Ruiz was sick and could not attend the meeting.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Guyer noted that the \$150,000 for capital projects had been approved.

Mr. Guyer reported that they had only one tournament held in July and it had 104 players less than typical. He stated that reservations through Golf Now are increasing slowly and now have had 16 in total.

Mr. Guyer reported that the employee meeting and picnic was attended by 25-30 employees and Authority Members. He noted that they provided an update on the course status and answered employee questions so the event was well timed and provided an opportunity to build moral.

Mr. Guyer advised the Authority that he was approached by a marketing professional, Simon Little from Darien, who plays golf at Oak Hills. He noted that Mr. Lake offered his assistance on a volunteer basis to review Oak Hills' current marketing approach and systems. He plans to discuss it with Mr. Ruiz and Mrs. Giandurco and possibly schedule a meeting.

Mr. Guyer noted that he updated the Facebook page with the results of the women's club championship and produced a graph that showed a jump in viewer response to the single posting e.g. the posting attracted 70 people & a number of people talked about it as well, which demonstrates the marketing potential of Facebook.

Mr. Guyer stated that the July 2012 golf sales were not as good as he would have liked. He reported that golf rounds compared to July 2011 were down 15%. He noted that the downward trend continued in the resident adult golf rounds category, less tournaments and one less July weekend day may also have been factors. He noted that he can only attribute the general decline in resident rounds to the events of the past 10 months.

Mr. Mount inquired whether the Authority could offer the 500 residents that did not renew ID cards this year a card at half price. The Authority discussed the suggestions. Mr. Guyer advised the Authority that he plans to prepare and send a survey next week. Mr. Mount suggested that Oak Hills offer one round of golf at resident rate without an ID card for filling out the survey.

****MR. MOUNT MADE A MOTION TO AUTHORIZE MR. GUYER TO OFFER ONE ROUND OF GOLF AT THE RESIDENT RATE IN RESPONSE TO THE SURVEY.**

****MRS. GIANDURCO SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Guyer advised the Authority that there are only about 10-11 groups of four that have committed

to play in the Mayor Trophy at this point. Mr. Virgulak replied that he now thinks number that has increased to 16-17 groups. The Authority discussed additional ideas on how to market the tournament.

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND DISCUSSION

Tennis / Restaurant Liaison Committee

Mr. Cifatte reviewed the three bids that were received in response to the RFP for the 2013-2015 tennis lease. He reported that the Kings Highway Partners was the highest bidder and the best choice as the tennis lessor. The Authority discussed the Kings Highway bid and its management over the current lease period.

He stated that they have Mr. Foley review the current tennis lease and have it ready for Mr. Virgulak to sign in September.

****MR. CIFATTE MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE KINGS HIGHWAY PARTNERS BID FOR \$200,088 FOR THE 2013-2017 LEASE PERIOD.**

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

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Cifatte stated that the Terrace Grill restaurant is overcoming their growing pains and is doing a great job. Mr. Virgulak reported that the Terrace Grill will operate under the current lease and the Authority will not entertain a long term lease until corrections are made.

Mr. Guyer stated that they are providing a good lunch and dinner but that breakfast from the shack is unacceptable noting that the breakfast is not hot food nor is it fresh and the coffee is not very good. He noted that he understands that it is a money issue but the restaurateur needs to open the grill room and offer hot breakfast to make the golfers happy.

The Authority Members discussed the new restaurant, the importance of offering food consistently, and the hot dogs at the 10th tee snack bar. Mr. Virgulak noted that a long term lease will require the restaurateur to provide a fresh breakfast at the time the golf course opens in the morning.

Greens, Facilities & Water Use Committee

Mr. Kementzides had no new information to report. He noted that he will ask area suppliers for donations if Mr. Vorio can provide him with a list of materials needed to extend the 2nd tee box.

Finance Committee

Mr. Mount noted that Oak Hills would present the 5 year budget to the BET at the September meeting .

Legal Committee

No report.

Marketing Committee

Mrs. Giandurco reported that the Mayors Trophy Tournament on September 10th was included in the Chamber of Commerce mailing in early August and she planned to follow up with a select mailing to certain businesses next week. She noted that Mr. Mount plans to ask the Mayor for a VIP list. Mr. Virgulak asked the Mayor to invite the mayor of Wilton, New Canaan and Darien in hopes that in invite will result in some residual positive effects on Oak Hills.

She stated that she has placed an ad in the Norwalk Hour, the Wilton Villager and the Stamford Times to announce new golf pro and the carts. She noted that she is working to get the Hour to agree to run a story on the Mayor's Trophy Tournament for free.

She suggested that Mr. Guyer add the golf cart rate to the current Golf Now offer to mimic what other courses are doing. Mr. Guyer he would ask is Golf Now to update the information and noted that Oak Hills' players walk 50% of the time which is why it wasn't displayed initially.

Mrs. Giandurco mentioned that the Marketing Committee would like to add Mr. Ruiz as a member and plans to discuss it with him soon.

Human Resource & Policy Committee

Mr. Mount reported that the Oak Hills employee appreciation dinner was a success and appreciated meeting everyone and hearing their concerns.

Master Plan Committee

Mr. Virgulak stated that due to illness Mr. DePanfilis has probably resigned and the Mayor has someone in mind to fill the vacancy.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Virgulak requested permission from the Authority take steps to determine the feasibility of building a driving range at Oak Hills. He noted that Oak Hills does not have the money to build and manage it nor does it want to borrow money from the City, therefore he plans to provide local contractors with maps of the area to the right of the restaurant which angles to the back of the building that he believes is the best place to build a range. He reported that he would come back with a report and estimates next month. The Authority and staff discussed the request and private financial management of a driving range at Oak Hills.

****MR. MOUNT MADE A MOTION TO AUTHORIZE MR. VIRGULAK TO START THE PROCESS TO**

OBTAIN PROPOSALS FOR A DRIVING RANGE.

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

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Virgulak requested that the Authority give permission to him to sign the new lease with the City which is basically an extension of the current lease except the term is a five year lease with a five year option to renew. In addition, he requested permission to sign restructured note with the City at some point in the near future, possibly after the five year plan has been approved.

****MR. MOUNT MADE A MOTION TO AUTHORIZE MR. VIRGULAK TO EXECUTE BOTH DOCUMENTS AS LONG AS IT'S APPROVED BY COUNCIL.**

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

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Mount advised the Authority and staff that he sent a note to all the City officials who assisted Oak Hills during the recent budgetary process.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

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

****MR. GIANDURCO SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,
Sheila Dravis