

**OAK HILLS PARK AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES
January 30, 2013**

PRESENT: Bob Virgulak, Chairman; Pat Williams; Paul Cifatte; Shannon Giandurco; Ernie Desrochers and Clyde Mount.

STAFF: Shelly Guyer, Executive Director.

ABSENT: Mike Corsello, Vice Chairman; Stephanie McLaughlin; Bill Kementzides and Ed Ruiz, Golf Pro.

INTERESTED PARTIES: Walter Englert, CPA .

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Virgulak called the public hearing to order at 7:03 p.m. He asked anyone wishing to give public comment on the proposed 2013 golf rates to sign up to speak. He reminded the audience that the Oak Hills Golf Authority was holding a public hearing to hear comment on the subject of the proposed 2013 golf rates and asked everyone to comment only on the subject and to keep their comments to three minutes.

Mrs. Giandurco provided copies of the proposed 2013 golf rates to the public. Mrs. Giandurco reviewed which rates the OHPA had proposed changing for the 2013 golf season.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Suzanne Stellerese inquired whether the rate increase represents the cost of running the course and servicing the debt owed to the City of Norwalk. She stated that she doesn't believe that Oak Hills Park Authority knows why the course is not successful at this time. She suggested that OHPA eliminate the hurdles to play at OH and waive card fees and instead raise the greens fees to everyone until OHPA can meet its financial responsibilities; aggressively market OHPA; and forget about a driving range saving the course. She recommended that Oak Hills Park Authority conduct a forensic audit. She noted that golf is a game she loves and she loves Oak Hills but playing golf is an option.

Frank Bisceglia stated even with the increase in a non-resident cart to \$275 after 10 rounds a non-resident will pay the same rate as a resident and feels that most non-residents can afford to pay more. He stated that rates for seniors who mostly live on a fixed income were not decreased at all.

Chris Olden stated that she has spent many hours over the past 15 years at OH as a mother of a golfer. She stated that she is pleased with the proposed rates and believes that OH is trying to encourage residents and non-residents to play at OH by offering competitive greens and card fees. She thanked OHPA for continuing to promote golf in the area.

Nick Pisano stated that rates were raised last year and doesn't think OHPA should lower the rates for residents by a dollar. He feels that if OH keeps the 2012 rate it would generate \$8,000 - \$10,000 and be used to improve the course. He thinks that \$1 less won't entice residents to come back and play. He suggested that the ID card expiration date expire in January and February instead of expiring on December 31, 2013.

Paul Cantor stated that he finds OHPA lack of financial transparency maddening. He'd like to know Oak Hills' operating costs, capital costs, all sources of revenue and believes the information should be online. He noted that with that information he has a better idea of how much revenue it needs from fee's to cover operating costs and debt. He stated that the public should know how much money OHPA expects to raise with the proposed 2013 rates.

Jane Walters stated that the rates look good and supports whatever it takes to have a financially healthy course. She had only one comment regarding the proposed tournament rates which are fine for outside tournaments but she would like to see consideration given to the Men's and Women's Oak Hills Golf Associations who support the course with 3-4 invitational tournaments a year.

Marianne Capiello stated that the rates are reasonable compared to area fees and course conditions. She asked that the OHPA consider a senior rate for renewal. She listed the tournament rates at the other courses and stated that \$60 is higher than most and more than the regular rate they would pay to play. She reiterated that the Women's golf association would like OHPA to consider giving the association a discount for their tournaments because the association holds at minimum 3 tournaments a year with 50 to 80 players. She asked that OH plan and announce via email blast Shotgun Golf Specials 2 weeks in advance of the date.

Scott Kimick suggested that OHPA reduce the rates further and change the course to a nine or twelve hole golf course. He stated that the nine holes of golf is a national trend and has been advocated by Jack Nicklaus. He stated that golf, among others sports, is not a growing sport.

Mike Beatty noted that overall the rates are good but disagreed with a \$75 fee to purchase a new resident ID card, felt OH should offer the non-resident seniors the same rate as resident seniors, does not want to see OH change to a 9 hole golf course and believes walkers should pay to walk.

Diane Cece noted that it would have been helpful if OHPA had published a list of the current rates versus the proposed rates. She wondered if the proposed rates were predicated on the installation of the driving range this year. She asked if OHPA anticipated lowering rates mid-season or next year if a driving range is installed. She stated that publishing the rates themselves doesn't constitute a marketing program and is interested in hearing specific marketing program that OHPA will institute this season to ensure stabilized or increased revenue, and other amenities that would encourage public attendance and generate revenue.

Bill Wren gave OHPA an article with creative suggestions on how to raise revenue for the course and park. He stated that the rates are reasonable compared to the national average of \$36 a round. He stated that the problem that OH as well as other courses is that people don't have the time to play 18 holes of golf. He advocated reducing the course to nine or twelve hole golf course which he believes will increase the number of rounds and people playing golf. He noted that in doing so OHPA would open up more space in the park for walking trails, ice rink and paddle tennis. He noted that a driving range would not solve the revenue problem.

Lisa Thompson stated that she is an occasional golfer and plays with the New Canaan ladies golf league. She commented that it was good to see the rates coming down and mentioned that OH should charge for a resident card. She noted that OH lost 36 women players from the New Canaan league because OH doesn't have a 9 hole rate so now they play at Fairchild Wheeler. She is happy to see any attempt to encourage golf and youth programs and with Norwalk residents aging it will need recreational facilities to attract new buyers. She used the tennis facility as an example of using an outside management company to successfully attracted players from area towns.

John Sharkey commented that not offering a senior non-resident rate is discrimination. He suggested that if OHPA considers breaking up the golf course then it should consider offering 9 hole night golf under the lights.

Gene Kaufman stated that he plays with a group of seniors and travels to Fairchild Wheeler to play golf for \$36 but would like to play at OH. He asked the OHPA to consider a special rate that allows non-resident seniors play three times.

Mrs. Giandurco thanked the public for their statements and with no other public comment she ended the public hearing at 7:37 p.m.

SPECIAL MEETING

Mrs. Giandurco called the special meeting to order at 7:38 p.m.

Mr. Guyer commented that the proposed tournament rates are the same as rates two years ago and OH has already booked 3 new tournaments for the 2013 season. He asked for the OHPA to allow him the authority to negotiate private outing rates.

The Authority discussed the public comments, marketing golf specials to meet requests and non-resident senior rates. Mr. Mount stated that if OHPA doesn't go with the proposed rates they will have to submit and present a new 5 year plan because the current 5 year plan approved by the BET is based on rates similar to the proposed 2013 rates.

****MR. MOUNT MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSED 2013 RATES AS PRESENTED WHILE ADDRESSING CONCERNS WITH THE USE OF GOLF SPECIALS.**

****MRS. GIANCURCO SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn the special meeting at 7:45 p.m.

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

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

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,
Sheila Dravis

Oak Hills Park Authority

Rate Card for 2013 Season

ID Cards

	<u>Now to 3/31</u>	<u>4/1 to 8/30</u>	<u>After 8/30</u>
Resident Card new	\$75.00	\$80.00	\$50.00
Resident Card Renewal	\$70.00	\$75.00	n/a
Junior Resident Card	\$30.00	\$40.00	\$25.00
Resident Family	\$140.00	\$150.00	\$100.00
City Employee/Prop Owners	\$120.00	\$130.00	\$80.00
Non-Resident Discount	\$275.00	\$275.00	\$175.00
Non Resident Jr. Discount	\$30.00	\$40.00	\$25.00

ALL ID CARDS WILL EXPIRE 12/31/2013

Greens Fees

Start t-times	
Resident over 17	
Resident Senior 62+	
Resident Junior Under 18	
City Employees	
OHPA Employees	
Non Resident w Card	
Non Resident w/o card	
Non Resident JR w card	
Non Resident JR w/o card	
*Resident 9	
*Senior 9	
*Junior 9	
*Non Res 9 w card	
*Non Res 9 w/o card	

Cart Fees

All Carts except OHPA employee	
OHPA Employee	
9 hole	

Tournament Play

Mondays Shotgun or t-tme	
Thursday afternoon after 2pm	

	<u>Weekday</u>		<u>Weekend</u>	
	<u>Open to 4pm</u>	<u>4pm or later</u>	<u>Open to 4pm</u>	<u>4pm or Later</u>
	\$26.00	\$18.00	\$27.00	\$18.00
	\$17.00	\$14.00	\$27.00	\$18.00
	\$14.00	\$12.00	\$15.00	\$13.00
	\$26.00	\$18.00	\$27.00	\$18.00
	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$27.00	\$5.00
	\$26.00	\$22.00	\$27.00	\$22.00
	\$53.00	\$26.00	\$53.00	\$26.00
	\$14.00	\$12.00	\$15.00	\$13.00
	\$20.00	\$14.00	\$20.00	\$15.00
	\$20.00	\$16.00	\$21.00	\$16.00
	\$14.00	\$12.00	\$21.00	\$16.00
	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$11.00	\$11.00
	\$20.00	\$16.00	\$21.00	\$16.00
	\$33.00	\$24.00	\$33.00	\$24.00
	\$16.00	\$16.00	\$16.00	\$16.00
	\$8.00	\$8.00	\$8.00	\$8.00
	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$10.00
	\$60.00		\$60.00	
	\$60.00		\$60.00	

* 9 hole rounds are offered daily during the first 90 minutes of scheduled tee times or after 4pm.