

**CITY OF NORWALK  
OAK HILLS PARK AUTHORITY  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – NOVEMBER 20, 2025  
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL CONFERENCE**

**ATTENDEES:** Alan Dutton, Denise Brown, Gary Leeds, Richard Dellinger, Jennifer McAllister, Mary Verel, TJ Trimboli.

**STAFF:** Jim Hollyday (General Manager), Jim Schell (Superintendent), Mark Gartner (Controller).

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Dutton called the regular meeting of the Oak Hills Park Authority to order at 7:00 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Mr. Dutton conducted the roll call. A quorum was declared.

**III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

**A. Regular Meeting: October 16, 2025**

Mr. Dutton noted several corrections: Jim Schell should be listed under staff rather than others; the reference to tennis court resurfacing on page 1 should be changed to tennis center operations; and certain financial language on page 4 regarding range fees and trail fees should be deleted as it was inaccurate. Ms. Brown noted that the minutes should reflect that Paul was not in attendance. After discussion of all corrections, the minutes were accepted as amended.

**\*\*MR. LEEDS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 16, 2025, REGULAR MEETING AS AMENDED.**

**\*\*MR. TRIMBOLI SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No public participation.

**V. REPORTS**

**A. Chair**

Mr. Dutton reported that the Golf Pro Search Committee has nearly completed the request for proposal and job description, is working with the City of Norwalk and the Metropolitan PGA, and the RFP will be issued shortly. He noted that a vote to increase the capital expense budget will occur later in the meeting under new business. The tennis contract recommendation is being tabled until the next meeting after additional work with finalists.

**B. Restaurant: John Lloyd**

No report was given as Mr. John Lloyd was not present.

**C. Nature Advisory: Mary Verel**

Ms. Verel reported that the Two Roads grant application outcome is still pending and appears unlikely to be awarded. The Goodman Foundation granted approximately \$4,000 for the food forest project. Leaves and wood chips are being collected and placed on the great lawn area to prepare for the food forest and to smother invasive species. Mr. Gartner has begun removing vines behind the dumpsters. Monthly events continue; a forest bathing event led by Bill Wren is scheduled for November 29, 2025, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Educational programming, including a January composting seminar with a master gardener, is being planned, possibly at Odine's on closed days. A BioBlitz citizen science cataloging effort in the woods will be assisted by Sarah Cruz and interns. Ms. Verel asked about coordinating with city contractors for additional wood chips.

**D. Tennis: Denise Brown**

Ms. Brown reported that interviews for the tennis center operator have been conducted, finalists identified, and additional work is needed before presenting a contract recommendation at the next meeting. Lastly, she mentioned that the courts have been officially closed for the season.

**E. Supporters of Oak Hills Park: Jerry Crowley**

Mr. Crowley reported that, as of the end of the third quarter, the Supporters of Oak Hills Park held total funds of \$30,857.57. Of that amount, \$26,247.65 is restricted cash, the majority of which is designated for tennis, and \$4,609.92 is unrestricted cash available for general use. He stated that additional details are available upon request. Mr. Dellinger asked for clarification on the difference between restricted and unrestricted funds. Mr. Crowley explained that donations given specifically for tennis become restricted to that purpose. Mr. Gartner added that general donations with no designated purpose go into the unrestricted fund and may be used for tennis, nature, the golf course, or any other park need.

**F. Long Term Planning: Gary Leeds**

Mr. Leeds stated that long-term planning is currently on hold pending the selection of the new First Tee and tennis concessionaire. He reported that Mr. Hollyday is working on structures and Mr. Schell is evaluating the golf course to determine future long-term capital needs. That concluded his report.

**G. Golf Professional**

No report was given.

**H. Superintendent: Jim Schell**

Mr. Schell reported that the golf course is in excellent condition heading into winter, with effective leaf removal completed by the crew despite recent weather challenges and no significant damage. Bunker construction is fully completed, all bunkers are roped off and expected to establish well over the winter, and the contractor and crew were commended for their neat, high-quality, and rapid work completed in under one month. The tee on hole 11 has

been shifted to the right to encourage golfers to aim away from the tennis courts and reduce the risk of errant shots striking players, with additional fairway area to be mowed on the right side next season after drainage improvements. Greens aeration has been successfully completed despite wet conditions, with the crew willingly working overtime to finish the task. Mr. Schell stated that projects are being wrapped up and the course looks great. Mr. Dutton and Mr. Dellinger praised the bunker work and the tee adjustment on hole 11, noting positive feedback received from golfers. Mr. Leeds inquired about fairway expansion on the right side of hole 11, and Mr. Schell confirmed that the area will be improved and mowed as fairway in the coming season.

#### **I. Controller: Mark Gartner**

Mr. Gartner reported that October produced net operating income approximately \$35,000 above budget, driven primarily by continued strength in greens fees and cart rounds. Year-to-date performance remains strong, with cash on hand at \$1.15 million, which is \$175,000 higher than the prior year and among the highest levels in recent history. He noted that the recently completed bunker project will result in a large payment leaving the account soon, and the transition to the off-season will quickly reduce the cash balance from its current level. Full financial statements will be distributed the following day.

Mr. Leeds inquired about the status of the annual audit report. Mr. Gartner stated that fieldwork was completed at the beginning of October, but the final report has been delayed by the audit firm's partner review process. He indicated that he had escalated the matter and that the report is now undergoing a second peer review and should be delivered within the coming week. Mr. Gartner expressed frustration with the recurring delay in final report issuance despite satisfaction with the quality of the audit work itself.

Ms. Brown asked whether the Authority is charged extra for the delay. Mr. Gartner confirmed that the audit fee is fixed by engagement letter and no additional charges are incurred unless unforeseen issues arise. Mr. Dutton suggested including a late-delivery penalty clause in future engagement letters, to which Mr. Gartner responded that previous chairmen had made the same recommendation.

#### **J. General Manager: Jim Hollyday**

Mr. Hollyday reported that an agreement has been signed with NV5 to perform a full property condition assessment, with on-site work beginning the following Tuesday. He and Mr. Gartner spent considerable time preparing the proposed 2026 golf rates. Meetings regarding the new tennis operator contract and head golf professional search continue and remain very positive. Mr. Hollyday and Mr. Dutton met with the restaurant owners to discuss 2026 outings and reported productive discussions with interesting ideas. The recent employee golf outing was a major success, and on behalf of all staff, Mr. Hollyday thanked the Authority for authorizing the course closure so every employee could participate together. He noted that the replacement of the Pro Shop HVAC unit, originally scheduled to begin November 24, has been delayed due to equipment delivery, and that the restaurant kitchen/dining room dual HVAC system deposit check is ready pending Authority approval later in the meeting.

Mr. Dellinger asked about the anticipated January installation timeline for the restaurant HVAC work, and Mr. Hollyday responded that the restaurant is likely to close the first two weeks of January and that exact dates will be confirmed at the December 18 meeting. Mr. Dutton praised the employee outing and stated it should become an annual event, noting minimal revenue loss and strong staff appreciation.

## VI. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Dutton brought forward, as old business, a requested increase to the current fiscal year capital budget for unanticipated HVAC replacements. He explained that two additional restaurant HVAC units failed and require immediate replacement at a total cost of approximately \$115,000. After deferring cart path paving, realizing \$20,000 in savings on the well project, and accounting for prior minor overruns on the halfway house roof and patio screens, the net additional capital required is \$41,500, which would increase the total capital budget from \$344,500 to \$386,000 while preserving \$18,500 in contingency. Mr. Gartner confirmed the revised total would be \$386,000.

**\*\*MR. DUTTON MOVED TO INCREASE THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR CAPITAL BUDGET FROM \$344,500 TO \$386,000 TO COVER THE REPLACEMENT OF TWO RESTAURANT HVAC UNITS.**

**\*\*MS. BROWN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Leeds asked whether bundling next year's planned cart path, tennis court, and parking lot paving projects could yield volume pricing discounts. Mr. Gartner and Mr. Schell both confirmed that larger combined projects typically result in lower per-square-foot costs and better overall pricing.

## VII. NEW BUSINESS

### **A. Oak Hills Tennis Contract Committee Recommendation**

As noted under the Chair's report, action on the tennis contract recommendation was tabled until the December meeting.

### **B. Pro Shop Inventory**

Mr. Dutton reported that the Executive Committee (Ms. Brown, Mr. Dellinger, and himself) recommends purchasing the remaining pro shop inventory from the former golf professional, Paul Alexander, for a total of \$9,600. The inventory is divided into three categories: non-logoed accessories such as balls and gloves that can be sold immediately, Oak Hills logoed apparel to be purchased at cost, and approximately \$2,000 in non-logoed ancillary golf-related items such as jackets. Mr. Dutton stated that the Authority would sell the merchandise until the new golf professional is in place, at which time the remaining inventory would be offered to the new professional.

Mr. Leeds inquired about the retail value of the inventory, and Mr. Gartner responded that the retail value is approximately \$13,900. Mr. Gartner confirmed that Steve Shepard and Haika conducted a complete inventory and that sales of non-logoed items have already begun through the Authority's point-of-sale system. He explained that a new merchandise inventory account and corresponding sales and cost-of-sales lines will be established for tracking purposes, with the goal of exiting the merchandise business once the new professional assumes responsibility. No objections were raised, and the Executive Committee was authorized to proceed with the purchase for \$9,600. No formal vote was required or taken.

### **C. Proposed Golf Rates For 2026**

Mr. Gartner presented proposed 2026 golf rates. Extensive discussion ensued regarding daily fees, discount cards, cart fees, and unlimited annual passes. The authority agreed to hold resident discount card rates (adult and senior) with no increase, to increase non-resident discount card rates by \$10 instead of \$5, and to increase cart fees as originally proposed. Mr. Gartner agreed to perform a detailed analysis of the 2025 unlimited pass usage (similar to prior years) to determine revenue impact and to circulate results to the full authority before the December vote. The authority directed that resident unlimited pass rates also remain subject to adjustment pending the analysis. Final action on 2026 rates will occur at the December 18, 2025 meeting after proper public notice.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\*MR. DELLINGER MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**

**\*\*MR. TRIMBOLI SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:13 p.m. Members wished each other a Happy Thanksgiving.

Respectfully submitted,  
Courtney Baldwin  
Recording Secretary