

**Deerfield Park District
Golf Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
July 8, 2021**

Meeting came to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Brian Bradford, Sharon Edwards, Terry Levy, Bob Neary, Joe Cohen, Jeff Nehila, Jason Mannina, Kris Oldeen, Derek Domaleski, Joe Martinez

Absent: Kevin Butler, Casey Kremer

Review of Meeting Minutes

A review of the April 8, 2021 minutes revealed no changes or comments.

Matters from the Public

No public comment was received prior to the meeting.

Staff Reports

Learning Center

The spring season of youth classes was very successful and the trend continues with our summer youth programs. We had more than 75 participants in our summer camps. We hope the demand continues for the rest of the summer.

Our June and July adult classes filled quickly with wait lists. Calls are coming in for the August session of classes. Staff continues to field calls from beginner golfers and those that haven't played in a long time as well as those that want to improve their game.

A couple of demo days were held recently. The range is extremely busy with people waiting to hit balls.

Staff is looking forward to the upward trend in golf to continue and remains available for instruction.

Dan asked if Derek would consider offering a group lesson program for the senior golf league. Derek responded that he would be happy to create a program for the group.

Brian asked if people are complaining about having to wait to hit balls since more areas are blocked off for instruction. Jason responded that he hasn't heard any complaints so far. During the week we aren't seeing issues but when the high school teams return it could create some issues.

Dan asked if we have any female instructors. Jason responded that we don't currently have a female instructor on staff, but we do have someone we can reach out to if anyone specifically requests a female instructor.

Golf Operations

The course is extremely busy. We are seeing 250-300 people a day.

Our passholders and resident players can book tee times 7 days in advance. This allows for them to have first access to the course. Our pre-pay to play is working out well as people will contact us to cancel their tee time instead of being a no show.

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The course is at 90% capacity on a daily basis. We are beginning to host some small groups and outings. Per board directive we are able to host shotguns every other Friday in the morning.

Grass tees and short game areas are withstanding a lot of wear and tear which leads to higher staff and product costs as those areas have to be seeded over regularly.

Baskets of 50 balls for \$10 are available for sale at the range. A small bucket is available if passholders come into the pro shop.

It is still challenging to get golf gloves. We are having more success getting balls, golf clubs and apparel.

We did a digital golf guide this year. COVID forced us into this, but it has helped us achieve our green initiatives.

Staffing has been adequate for our needs. We are always looking to fill openings as people leave for school, need time off, etc. We try to create a work-life balance for our staff.

We will have two simulators in the dining area this coming off-season. This will hopefully lead to leagues continuing to utilize the facility and dining options after the golf season. Staff is excited about this as we have never had large off-season banquet and rental use.

Dan asked what was happening with scorecards. Jason responded that the supply chain is still being impacted due to COVID. We will have scorecards arriving next week. One great feature of the mobile app is that it has a digital scorecard to use.

Paul asked if Jason has reached out to CDGA to rate the course. Jason did inquire but doesn't like their method. They want 16 golfers to play early in the day and for free when we are busy with public play plus we have to buy them lunch. We will probably hold off until things slow down so as to not impact our users. Brian asked how the GPS gets updated. Jason explained that Mike takes photos of the changes and sends them in for our GPS to be updated.

Golf Maintenance

Mike reported that the first 3 months of the season were dry, draught conditions that required staff to water often. This took up a lot of staff time in April, May and parts of June. Then a couple of weeks ago we had 7.5 inches of rain in a week and had to squeegee water off of greens, tees and fairways. This is important so we don't have water sitting on turf in the heat. Mike commended his staff for doing a great job.

With July being the hottest month of the year, it's always a busy time on the golf course. Throw into the mix seven inches of rain in ten days prior to the 4th of July, and it turns an already challenging month even more challenging. Staff has spent countless hours installing additional drain lines in low-lying/water collecting areas in fairways on holes 3, 6, 11, 12, 14 and 15. The main objective, move as much water off the property as quickly as possible after heavy downpours before saturated soils damage the turfgrass. Spraying fungicides to prevent diseases common during stretches of hot, humid

and wet conditions has also been a weekly task. Growth regulators are also applied as well as insecticides to help prevent damage from warm weather insects.

Despite the weather variations, turf remains strong with average root depths around 9 inches. We take samples of root depth in the summer looking for shorter root depths. The wet weather provides an opportunity for staff to see how well the drainage improvements are working. We only had to minimally pump out water from bunkers due to all of the bunker renovations. We continue to add drainage lines in fairways that have standing water. Under normal temperature conditions the heavy rain doesn't have such a negative impact as the water combined with extreme heat.

Despite the wet weather conditions, staff has been able to keep up with the mowing demands and our spray program.

Staff has been working on tee improvements on holes #14 and #16. There are a lot of bronze tees that need to be elevated. There are quite a few silver tees that need to be stripped and leveled out. The plan is to continue with the tee expansions and improvements throughout the season and beyond.

Staff also continues to work on buckthorn eradication throughout the course. Staff has planted many beautiful annuals and perennials as well as wildflowers to attract pollinators and butterflies.

We are on track to start our bunker renovation on hole #3 after the Club Championship in October. Staff will do as much work in-house to help with time constraints. We have 3 holes remaining in the bunker renovation project, #3, #11 and #14.

We are so fortunate to have a great crew that return year after year. Our golf course mechanic Jim Nicholson retired in June. Jacob Sonders will be filling in for Jim and hopefully will transition into a full-time role.

Jason read a couple of comments from golfers on current issues. First, the bridge between 5 and 6 is slippery when damp. Mike responded that the mats on the bridge were just replaced and should help with the slipperiness.

Second, the chillers do not seem to be working well in the water fountains. Staff will investigate to see if it is a freon issue or something else.

Terry mentioned that the water coming out of the fountains, especially on hole #7, tastes horrible. Mike responded that the water did sit in the line for over a year, but staff ran a bunch of water when they were turned back on but will look into what the cause may be.

Jason mentioned that he sent an email to Mike regarding tree trimming on the course that could speed up the pace of play. Mike will look into the recommendations.

Sharon asked if the new bronze and gold tees on holes #14 and #16 were open yet. Mike responded that we hope to have them open by the end of summer. Staff is in the process of cutting the grass down to get it to the correct height.

Sharon asked if there was a speed of the greens that staff tries to achieve. Mike responded that we use a stent meter to measure ball speed. During the drought speeds were probably 11 or 12. With the amount of rain we've had recently it makes it more challenging to keep an average speed of 10 to 11 range.

Sharon commended the golf maintenance staff for the amazing job they did moving water off the course with all the rains we've had recently.

FORE

- Staffing for 2021
 - o New Front of House & Back of House Faces
 - Spotlight on Yanelys & Terry
- Healthy Menu Items
 - o Hummus and Tortilla Chips
 - o Vegan Pizza (Banza Chickpea Crust, Marinara & Soy Cheese)
- Starting up outings and banquets again
- "Keeping things simple" for 2021, tackling unstable pricing while maintaining a full menu
- Sourcing locally to maintain lower prices and top quality, Sysco was suggested but sustainability and minimums don't work for us. Local – less impact, cost effective
- Specials & Updates – Fan Faves
 - o House Smoked BBQ
 - o Wisconsin Cheese Curds
- Addressing concerns
 - o Monday night ladies, will try new order system to speed things up overall
 - o Vegan options added to menu to appeal to broader audience
 - o Fish fry vs Friday night dinners

Dan mentioned that he would like to see the Friday Fish Fry improve and could see attendance increase with improvements. Jason commented that we are seeing larger crowds on Friday night with the overflow from the course, so we switched to frozen pre-battered fish because doing hand battered fish right now isn't feasible. We will get back to the hand battered fish during spring 2022. Paul commented that he has attended the Fish Fry and thinks the fish is fabulous.

Jason shared a couple of comments from Kevin. First, when the ladies league comes in all at once and orders food, things get backed up and it slows food coming out. Jason commented that they tried to get the ladies to preorder, but they weren't on board with it.

The second comment is about when draft beer will return. Jason responded that our sales are not being hurt by not selling draft beer. Our beer sales are up almost two-fold over 2019. We are looking into not bringing draft beer back but may bring in a few microbrews to offer more variety.

Jason commented that more healthy options have been added to the pro shop Grab-n-Go. Protein bars and granola bars seem to be more popular than the hardboiled eggs and fresh fruit.

Sharon asked if the larger bottles of wine will be returning. Jason commented that we will probably increase the varieties we offer in the small bottles but to be honest, the heavy pouring is a problem and the small bottles eliminate that issue.

2022 and Beyond – Planning & Projects

Brainstorming Ideas for Course and Facilities Improvements

The district has a 7-year capital plan for big ticket items such as irrigation and mowers. Staff is looking for committee input on things that would make golf quicker, more customer friendly, etc.

Golf Course

Kevin suggested, (via email), to add more yardage markers in the fairways. The discs in the ground are only good if you hit in the middle of the fairway.

Paul commented that for the number of rounds being played the course is in fabulous shape and commended the maintenance staff for a job well done.

Sharon asked if there was a plan to transition to electric carts in the future. Jason responded it is something that has been discussed but it would involve a very large financial expense. Board Liaison Cohen commented that in order for us to have electric carts we need a cart barn. The good news with the gas carts is that they get quieter and more fuel efficient every year. Electric carts can be revisited in the future.

Bob gave his highest compliments to the course and the entire staff.

Jason shared comments that Brian had previously mentioned such as sprucing up the parking lot. Work on the parking lot is part of our 7-year capital plan.

Brian had also mentioned enhancements to the on-course bathrooms. There is nothing in the 7-year plan that addresses the bathrooms, but it can be discussed in the future. Board Liaison Cohen commented that it is impossible to get sewer and water out on the course.

Brian mentioned that his wish list would include getting rid of asphalt cart paths and convert them to something like pea gravel. Jason responded that asphalt paths are more durable and last longer.

Dan suggested that the starters remind people to repair ball marks and divots on the course. Bob asked if the reminder could be put on the GPS. Jason commented that it can be added.

Sharon asked if we had thought about putting seed on the carts for golfers to use. Jason commented that it is something that could be investigated.

Learning Center

Board Liaison Cohen asked if we were going to go back to offering different size buckets. Jason responded that we are going to keep it for now and will re-evaluate this fall.

Pro Shop/Clubhouse

Paul asked if anyone has explored the possibility of turning the locker rooms downstairs into usable or rentable space. Jason responded that we did look into putting simulators down there, but the concrete floor and low ceiling prevents that. Staff is looking into determining the best use of that space that could also be revenue generating.

FORE Restaurant & Bar

Paul commented that he loves coming into FORE and thanked Chef Joe for the great job he's doing.

Sharon commented that she was surprised at the low number of people that come into FORE after the Wednesday league compared to the smaller Monday league. She wanted to know if staff could do some promotions and food specials to capture those golfers. Jason responded that the leagues are different. The Monday league is more focused on the after-golf time where the Wednesday league is more interested in playing extra holes than coming into FORE. We can certainly discuss with the league coordinators to help promote FORE.

2021 Important Dates and Events

Important dates and events include:

- Pro-Am Scramble – Saturday, September 18
- Moonlight Golf – Friday, October 1
- Club Championship Weekend – Saturday, October 9 & Sunday, October 10
- Bunker Renovation – October 11 (tentative)

The next meeting is scheduled for September 30, 2021, 7:00 p.m., at the Deerfield Golf Club.

There being no further discussion, meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.