

**Deerfield Park District  
Golf Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
April 14, 2022**

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

Present: Jack Butler, Kevin Butler, Paul Franson, Seth Howard, Robert Klein, Casey Kremer, Dan Mazur, Joe Cohen, Jeff Nehila, Jason Mannina, Kris Oldeen, Derek Domaleski

Absent: Sharon Edwards, Mike Bavier

**Welcome & Introductions**

New members Jack Butler, Seth Howard and Robert Klein were welcomed to the committee.

**Review of Meeting Minutes**

A review of the September 30, 2021 minutes revealed no changes.

**Matters from the Public**

No members of the public were present.

**Staff Reports**

**Golf Operations**

The golf simulators were well received during the off-season. We were able to get competitive with pricing to bring people in.

Staff is busy booking leagues and golf outings. The Monday and Wednesday evening in-house leagues are sold out. All of the evening leagues have returned this year. There are no leagues on Friday, but we see more activity on the course as well as the restaurant.

We continue to see growth in our permanent tee times. Tee times are running 5:51am to 9:15am Saturday and Sunday.

We do have golf gloves, balls and hats available for sale this year, but are still seeing supply chain issues for clothing. Staff advises to purchase early if there's something you want.

Club fittings will be held during the season for TaylorMade, Calloway, Tour Edge and Titleist. The Pro Shop has clubs available to demo at any time.

Golfers will be coming into the clubhouse to pay and check-in. There is no more pre-paying online this year. We will continue to gather credit card information to reduce the number of no shows. This increase in Pro Shop traffic will help to increase merchandise purchases.

Tee time intervals were at 10 minutes last year and will be at 9 minutes this year. Hopefully this will maximize the number of golfers we can get out while still having a good pace of play.

90% of new and returning staff have participated in mandated harassment training, safety training, emergency operations training, blood borne pathogens training, review of the park district personnel policy manual and have signed off on their seasonal work assignments and job descriptions.

Some off-season advertising took place, but we don't have to do a lot of marketing and promotions since the course is already busy. Some promoting of the new senior rates Monday through Thursday will be done through email blasts.

The mobile app will be promoted through the GPS units and signage on the 8<sup>th</sup> hole. This is a great tool for golfers to utilize when the halfway house isn't open to order food from the restaurant.

Email blasts will promote camps, leagues, permanent tee times and instructional programs as well as the driving range.

The range is still mats only. We are hoping the grass tees will be open by the end of the month. We are returning to the 3 bucket sizes of range balls as well as the range ball pass. Manufacturers are not selling range balls at this time, so we are happy to have balls for the range. Staff is getting phone calls from other ranges asking if we are interested in selling our used balls. Staff anticipates a range ball order to arrive this summer. We will be selling the used balls after our new balls arrive.

Outings are still limited, but we are working on increasing the number of outings with the parameters that have been set by the park board. We have had to change our outing menus due to cost increases and supply chain issues. These increases hurt charitable organization's ability to raise funds.

Since adult programming has grown, staff is creating a new golfer league in hopes of converting participants in those programs into regular golfers.

GPS units are back in the golf carts with enhanced mapping that will alert a golfer if they come too close to the green. Staff reminded committee members that if they see anything happening on the course that shouldn't be to please report it to the Pro Shop.

Board Liaison Cohen asked when the new carts are arriving. Jason responded that we are being told in the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of this year and possibly not until 2023.

Many trees have been cut down and it is noticeable especially on hole 17. We do have a replacement plan for replanting trees, but growth won't be seen for some time.

Casey asked for information on purchasing memorial trees. She commented that the memorial tree program seems to have disappeared. Jason responded that it still exists, but benches have been more popular lately. Jason stated that he can do marketing for the memorial tree program.

Committee member asked about walkers using the inclement weather shelters. Jason stated that the policy is to have everyone clear the course not to seek shelter on the course. There is no replacement plan in place for the shelters. Staff drives the course to make sure golfers are aware that the siren has sounded. Jack asked specifically what walkers are supposed to do if they can't get back to the clubhouse in a timely and safe manner. He suggested doing inexpensive repairs to the shelters to provide for safe shelters for walkers. Staff will work on getting repairs made to the shelters.

### **Golf Course Maintenance**

Kris read Mike's report.

#### **End of 2021 maintenance recap:**

- The weather was accommodating at the end of the 2021 season for completing various maintenance and renovation projects. Hole #3 renovation project was completed "in house" by the end of November. The left-side green bunker was redesigned with new drainage and sand added. The right-side green bunker was completely removed; grass depressions were added along with new drain lines. Eventually the right-side will be widened into an approach. Both areas on #3 are open without ground under repair restrictions.
- Raising and expanding of silver and bronze tees on holes 6, 8 & 11 were completed and sodded by the end of November. Scalping is currently underway to eventually cut at tee height. Future bronze tee raising projects – holes 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12 & 17.
- Beginning of December, completed deep-tine aerification on greens, tees, and fairways. Unlike standard ½ inch diameter solid tines penetrating 3 to 4 inches into the soil used during the aerification process in August, the deep-tine process uses 5/8 diameter tines that penetrate 8 to 9 inches into the soil. The result is an increased benefit of alleviating soil compaction and improved water and nutrient movement in the soil promoting a deeper, healthier root system. Also, the late season timing of this project disturbs less play compared to previous aerifications scheduled in April.
- Follow up deep-tine aerification with spreading and brushing in 75 tons of topdressing sand on the greens and tees with the intent of filling-in the aerification holes while leaving a blanket of sand over the grass to help provide insulation over winter. The main long-term benefit of incorporating sand into the soil is better drainage - allowing surface water to penetrate through the soil profile.
- By the end of December, completed installing drain lines in fairways on holes 6 and 10 and installed drain lines in front of greens on holes 2, 3, 6 & 17. Fairway drainage improvements will continue this year on various holes throughout the golf course. It is critical to have a properly functioning drainage system not only from a maintenance standpoint but from a playability standpoint resulting in less damaged turf.

**Current Golf Course conditions/winter and snow mold damage concerns:** After a mild beginning to last winter, snowfall and cold temperatures settled in by the end of January and with that increased the threat of snow mold and ice damage. However, with numerous drainage improvements and snow mold prevention applications made at the end of last season, turf damage has been very minimal, the golf course is healthy and in great shape transitioning to spring (WE ARE JUST WAITING FOR BETTER WEATHER!). Currently, mowing has been limited, but that will change once the average daily low temperature increases. Other course conditioning practices have been completed or have begun:

- Verti-cutting greens, tees and fairways has been completed. This is an important process of removing the winter coat of grass and opening the top layer of turf allowing better penetration of water and nutrients into the soil. This procedure is completed twice a year.

- Annual bluegrass “Poa” seed head suppression applications have begun. When the weather cooperates, we have started applying growth regulators to greens, tees and fairways to suppress annual bluegrass seedhead populations. Annual bluegrass or “poa” is weak cool season grass with shallow roots that thrives in cool, wet weather and grows rapidly from seed. With the arrival summer and hot weather, poa is usually the first species of grass to show signs of stress because of its shallow root system. The use of growth regulators suppresses seedhead growth, limiting future germination and allowing stronger varieties of cool season grass to fill in. Other recent chemical applications include fungicides to prevent leaf spot, herbicides to prevent crabgrass, and insecticide applications to prevent and control future grubs.
- We have spent a considerable amount of time with golf course cleanup and conditioning landscape beds. Course clean-up consists of tree removals, branches and debris accumulated over the winter months. Landscape beds have been cleaned as well as a granular herbicide applied to prevent weed growth. We will continue to work on landscape beds throughout the spring rototilling and spreading mulch in preparation for the upcoming planting season. Plants arriving by mid-May include a variety of annuals and perennials for the golf course, front entrance and clubhouse.
- Bunker sand has been added to green side bunkers that have not been recently renovated, providing more cushion between the top layer of sand and the bunker’s drainage system.

**Capital project updates:**

- The pump equipment for the deep well (#7 lake) that provides water for the irrigation system was pulled for inspection in January. After 14 years since the last service, some of the equipment was found to be in good working condition while others required replacement. The impeller section of the well was the big-ticket item that required complete replacement. Manufacturing of this part is scheduled to be completed by next week. Remobilizing of the entire pump equipment back to #7 lake is planned during the first couple weeks in May.
- Bunker renovation project scheduled to start October 3. Project will include the final two holes of bunker renovation on the golf course – holes 11 and 14. Maintenance staff will work with the awarded contractor, Hollembeak Construction, to remove and reshape various bunkers and install new drainage lines.

The Golf Maintenance Department is experiencing a reduction in staff this year due to the increase in minimum wage as well as merit increases for the returning staff. As chemicals and fuel costs increase, staff is being proactive in reducing staff and making staff more efficient.

Jacob Sonders has been hired as the new full-time Equipment Technician. Jacob started in the Pro Shop and transitioned to Golf Maintenance working close with Jim Nicholson prior to his retirement.

Committee member asked about putting sand on the carts. Jason responded that with the different types of grass on the course and after discussion with area superintendents, staff determined that there is no cost savings as they still have to send staff out for divot repairs, etc.

Committee member asked if there was any discussion on fixing the area between 6 and 7 where the paths come together. It is a real eye sore. Jason will discuss with Mike to clean up the area.

Committee member commented that he likes the native area at the front of 17 and suggested more native areas be added to beautify the course. Director Nehila responded that there is an added benefit of adding native areas in that it reduces emissions since they are no cut areas. Committee member stated that we could possibly add native plantings to the area between 6 and 7.

Committee member asked where we stand with the auxiliary tee on hole 2 due to balls going in the neighbor's yard. Jason responded that we are shortening the hole and will be using the tee that was located up and left.

Committee member commented that the walk-over bridge on 17 is very narrow. If you are pulling a cart, it's difficult to navigate.

Committee member commented that the bridge between 5 and 6 is very slippery and asked if a sign could be posted on the bridge stating "Slippery When Wet."

As a follow-up, Jason asked committee members if the current locations of the weather shelters are the best locations for them. Committee member commented that the locations are fine if there could be some basic repairs made to them.

### **Learning Center**

Derek reported that the goal for the instructional programs is to continue to build off of what has been done the last two seasons. Staff had to change several things due to COVID and some of the changes worked out well especially with the Junior Camps. These changes will be continued this year. Staff is always looking at what and how we do things to determine the best method. Staff wants to make sure our programs have a continuous path especially for children so that parents can follow the progression. One addition will be a beginner class for middle and high school students new to the game of golf. Adult Beginner classes were hugely popular last year, and we will be adding a Saturday session this year.

Derek explained the progression of the children's classes. Registrations are down slightly at this time, but staff feels that when the weather improves registrations will increase.

Casey asked about the free Tuesday afternoon sessions for women golfers. Jason responded that we could look into doing them again, but they would probably not be offered in the middle of the day.

The same group of core instructors is back this year along with a team of assistants made up of college and high school students that assist with setting and the camp programs.

A short game class consisting of chipping and putting will be offered over a 2-hour timeframe. Derek will confirm cost of the class. Committee member commented that he would like to promote this program to the senior group and asked if some dates and a senior rate could be set. Derek responded that this is definitely something that can be done.

Committee member asked for an explanation of why resident and non-resident fees are the same. Jason responded that for the programs that are taught by independent contractors there is no differential

since the independent contractors pay rent to the district. When a program is taught by an instructor that is paid hourly, the classes will have a resident and non-resident rate.

Derek mentioned that if anyone is interested in a club fitting, Paul from Titleist is phenomenal. Derek also mentioned that he has access to a launch monitor.

### **FORE Restaurant & Bar**

Betsie Brown has returned to manage the restaurant and will be the lead line cook. Anthony Cruz has been hired and will be a great asset to the restaurant. He will be helping on nights without leagues and will be setting up different theme nights. Humberto Landeros is returning as well. We will probably be hiring one more kitchen staff.

Over the winter, staff was busy deep cleaning the kitchen and the walk-in refrigerator was repaired. Staff is working on getting the dishwasher to the appropriate water temperature to meet health department standards.

Staff has procured most of the staples and proteins. Staff is busy organizing the freezer and getting as many items as possible in place in the event there are more cost increases and/or shortages.

Jason shared the April menu with the committee. We will be offering specials throughout the season.

We have changed over to using a Keurig for our coffee service as we aren't serving as much coffee since people started bringing their own during COVID.

The banquet and special events menus have been updated. We have typically done buffets, but COVID changed that practice to serving everything in closed containers. We are going to leave it up to the banquet organizer how they would like the food served.

One change for the weekends will be the utilization of the halfway house instead of having the kitchen open. The restaurant does better during the week with the leagues but doesn't see as much business on weekends.

Committee members commented that the price of wine and spirits seems low compared to restaurants. Jason commented that our margins are where they need to be, so we aren't trying to ding anyone on the price. By changing to mini bottles for wine and spirits and eliminating draft beer it's easier to manage waste and control of inventory.

### **2022 Upcoming Projects**

Bunker renovations are planned for hole 11 and hole 14 this season. Committee members reviewed the plan. This will complete the bunker renovation project.

Upcoming capital projects include HVAC work, ball washer elevator replacement, clubhouse new siding and a new roof, the deck will be replaced with composite flooring, and an outdoor covered patio will be added to the deck (no more tent).

Committee member commented that in the past golfers have skipped holes that were under renovation, but with holes 11 and 14 being done we might want to consider setting up a temporary tee. Jason commented that staff is looking into options.

Board Liaison Cohen asked about the irrigation system work. Jason responded that we are waiting for parts to come in for the pump repairs, but the underground irrigation line work will not take place for another 3-5 years.

### **2022 Important Dates and Events**

Upcoming important dates and events include:

- May 1 & 2 – Spring Instructional Programs Begin
- June 6 – Junior Golf Camps Begin
- June 21 – Illinois Open Qualifier
- September 24 & 25 – Club Championship Weekend
- October 3 – Bunker Renovation (Holes 11 & 14)
- October 3 – Clubhouse Exterior & Deck Renovation
- October 22 – Chili Open & Deerfield Township Food Pantry Drive

### **Other Items for Discussion**

Committee member asked for the final number of rounds played in 2021. Jason responded that course had 43,500 rounds played in 2021.

Jason polled the committee for the preferred July meeting date. The next meeting is scheduled for July 7, 2022 at 7pm.

There being no further discussion, meeting adjourned at 9:09pm.