



WILMETTE PARK DISTRICT
Golf Operations Committee Meeting
Monday, January 31, 2021
6:30 p.m. – Mallinckrodt “Big Room”

AGENDA

- I. Meeting Called to Order
Members of the Committee:
Commissioner Lindsay Anderson, Chair
Commissioner Julia Goebel
Commissioner Patrick Duffy
Staff:
Director Steve Wilson
- II. Approval of Minutes
A. December 15, 2021
- III. Communications and Correspondence
- IV. Public Comment/Recognition of Visitors
- V. Manager Reports
- VI. Unfinished Business
- VII. New Business
A. Golf Financials through December 31, 2021
B. Golf Club Restaurant Proposal - *Update*
- VIII. Next Meeting – TBD
- IX. Adjournment

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WILMETTE PARK DISTRICT Golf Operations Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 15, 2021
Mallinckrodt "Wood Floor Room"

Present

Commissioners/Committee: Chair Lindsay Anderson, Patrick Duffy and Julia Goebel

Staff: Executive Director Steve Wilson, Adam Kwiatkoski and Nick Marfise

Visitors: Sue Salay, Tim Boudos, Kerri Haskins and Bill Zigmond

Absent

None

I. Meeting Called to Order

Meeting called to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

A. November 15, 2021 Golf Operations Committee Meeting

Commissioner Anderson noted a minor typo on page four to be changed to "trunk" instead of "truck". Commissioner Goebel moved and Commissioner Duffy seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2021 Golf Operations Committee meeting.

By a unanimous voice vote; **motion carried.**

III. Communications and Correspondence

Commissioner Anderson acknowledged that one e-mail from Tim Boudos was received in support of the current restaurant vendor, A La Carte. Commissioner Goebel advised that she had received a similar e-mail in support of A La Carte.

IV. Public Comment/Recognition of Visitors

Commissioner Anderson facilitated public comment. The Attendance Record will become part of the permanent record.

Kerri Haskins, 2241 Chestnut Avenue – Mr. Haskins stated he has been a resident of Wilmette for 56 years and has been a member of the Wilmette Golf Club for 35 years. He believes the horseshoe bar shape in last month's packet would create a cumbersome route for servers and is not in favor of this design. As far as the outdoor patio is concerned, Mr. Haskins believes the notion of placing the patio north is ill conceived due to its close proximity to cart traffic. He prefers the patio be on the southern end of the clubhouse. He suggested composite deck to protect the oak tree there in lieu of concrete. He is in favor of the patio door replacement and suggested the door open automatically for the server's convenience. He also contemplated taking the wall out that separates the kitchen from the patio so servers have direct access to the patio and do not need to go through the dining

room. He also gave future consideration to any lease the Board intends to make with a new restaurant vendor by stating the Board should not cap the overage rent. He noted that he and other Gold Club members are unhappy with the 10% reduction given in 2022 and believe it is not fair.

V. Manager Reports

Nick Marfise (Golf Course Superintendent) reported on the following:

- Superintendent Marfise reiterated that due to the early closure of the course, staff has been able to accomplish many projects. The golf course is in good shape for next season due to lack of divets, ball marks and traffic.
- All of the plain surfaces have been treated for snow mold. Snow mold is a cold-weather fungus that is caused by heavy snowfall. The key to treating snow mold is prevention which is why staff treats the grass prior to snow falling.
- All of the plain surfaces have been top dressed with sand to protect the grass from the harsh winter winds and bird migration.
- Staff is still working on leaf clean up but the majority of that work is done as the leaves have all now fallen.
- All of the rough has been sprayed preventatively for weeds.
- Staff is in the process of laying a dormant fertilizer down on the tees, rough and greens.
- In the beginning of January, staff will continue to put sand in bunkers and work on any remaining course clean up. Superintendent Marfise advised he prefers to put the sand in during the winter as it helps the sand settle. In the spring, the Club does not have to use extra labor to pack the sand down further.
- The bunker faces have been sodded.
- Staff has begun to work on tree trimming. There were some dead trees that needed to be removed. Their stumps have been ground. Over the next couple weeks, staff will fill those holes with dirt. Come spring, staff will plant seed or sod over the dirt depending on the need in relation to play.
- Seed that was planted at the beginning of fall is coming in nicely.

Commissioner Anderson asked what the overall condition was of trees on the course and whether Superintendent Marfise has a plan or resources for replacing dead trees. Superintendent Marfise advised that tree planting on the golf course has been on hold since he took the position. He believes this relates to the Memorial Tree policy. None of the trees that have been removed are a golf course feature in the way of play or defending a hole. Superintendent Marfise added that an updated inventory and an overall landscape plan moving forward would be beneficial. Commissioner Goebel asked Superintendent Marfise what he believes he can accomplish in the spring with respect to decorative plantings. Superintendent Marfise advised that staff has planted perennials around the clubhouse and the sign. Commissioner Goebel suggested collaboration with the Men's Club such as a Day of Service to help

continue to beautify the clubhouse as there are many stakeholders who care about the Golf Club.

Adam Kwiatkoski (Golf Course General Manager) reported on the following:

- Manager Kwiatkoski advised that Will Cruz started on Monday as the new Golf Course Mechanic. It was hard getting through last season without a mechanic but staff is excited for Mr. Cruz to begin the offseason maintenance of the equipment.
- Jamie Locke is officially retired and Cole Hyland has been promoted to Head Golf Professional. The Golf Operations Supervisor position has been posted and applicants are currently being screened.
- Staff has been working on camp programming for next year. The Golf Club intends to offer some new adult classes on Monday nights and Junior Golf instruction on Saturdays throughout the summer.
- Staff continues to meet with vendors and order product for the golf shop.

Commissioner Duffy asked if staff expects to experience product shortages for the golf shop due to ongoing supply chain shortages. Manager Kwiatkoski advised that the biggest concern is a range ball shortage. However, the Park District is in a good position currently. Men's polo shirts are on back order until June but staff will be able to obtain everything else in a timely manner. Score cards and essential items for operation are taken care of.

VI. Unfinished Business

A. Golf Cart Path

Superintendent Marfise advised that after the path was dug and course gravel laid, the contractors put a top layer of fine gravel followed by asphalt. The asphalt process began around the time of last month's Committee meeting. All of the asphalt is now completed throughout the golf course. Staff is also pleased with how the curbs turned out. They are smaller and thinner compared to other courses. While carts can go over the curb, they are functional and aesthetically pleasing. The restoration part of the project has not been completed by the Contractors and there are still large areas that need to be sodded or seeded. Every hole needs restoration work in some capacity. Commissioner Duffy asked what conversations have been had with the Contractor regarding the restoration work. Manager Kwiatkoski advised that the Contractors targeted completion date was December 4th and they worked into the night on December 3rd. After December 3rd, the Contractors cleared their equipment offsite and have not returned since. Staff has discussed with them as to when they will start the restoration but there has been no progress thus far. As it stands right now, the project manager and the construction company will reconvene sometime in February and determine when the Contractors intend to complete the restoration. Commissioner Duffy asked if the restoration work were part of the contract for the project and whether there were any penalties in the contract for not meeting the deadline. Manager Kwiatkoski

confirmed the restoration work was part of the completion deadline and there were penalties. Commissioner Duffy then asked if staff is comfortable waiting until spring to address the restoration work. Superintendent Marfise stated staff intended the project to be fully completed on time. Come spring, the course will be open again for play and the restoration work will conflict with play. Commissioner Duffy suggested that a letter be sent advising the Contractors that they are in violation of their contract and warn them of the decrease in pay. Director Wilson stated this is most likely what the Contractors expect. Commissioner Duffy then suggested that staff not wait for the Contractors and start working on the restoration work now if the Contractors do not intend on completing the restoration work. Director Wilson added that their noncompliance has been fully documented. Manager Kwiatkoski advised that the amount of restoration work that needs to be done far exceeds what staff is able to do. Five staff members cannot restore all eighteen holes in time for play. There was a brief discussion as to the daily penalty for the construction company and what would be the most advantageous to the Golf Club. Commissioner Goebel noted that Park Board Attorney needs to be involved in these discussions. Director Wilson advised that the legal department for Gewalt Hamilton would handle any correspondence to the Contractors. Shifting back to the cart path, Commissioner Anderson asked if the public may now come and walk the path. Superintendent Marfise advised that the path is already being used by the public as a walking path. Commissioner Anderson and Commissioner Goebel suggested a celebratory announcement. Commissioner Duffy noted the course is also used for cross country skiing during the winter. Manager Kwiatkoski advised he met with marketing yesterday and that staff intends to send an e-mail announcement prior to the end of the year.

At this time, Commissioner Anderson allowed resident Tim Boudos the opportunity to provide additional public comment. Mr. Boudos suggested that staff at the Golf Club provide a presentation to the public as to why certain decisions were made to the course because of the cart path implementation as to give the public a better attitude with respect to those changes. He suggested residents will like the changes but may be initially shocked. Commissioner Goebel suggested a newsletter in lieu of a meeting. Commissioner Anderson thanked Mr. Boudos for his input.

VII. New Business

A. Golf Financials through November 30, 2021

Manager Kwiatkoski stated that with the course being closed, the revenues haven't increased and there aren't any significant changes from last month. The financials remain in a good condition considering the course closed on October 3rd. Commissioner Goebel observed that retail sales haven't been a large focus these past two years given the pandemic and ongoing supply chain issues. She expressed a desire to see merchandise sales boost in 2022 related to the 100-year anniversary of the Golf Club. Manager Kwiatkoski agreed and stated staff is meeting internally with marketing to capitalize on the anniversary.

There will also be events and giveaways related to the anniversary.

B. Consideration of Golf Club Restaurant Proposals

Manager Kwiatkoski initiated the discussion by advising that through e-mail and social networking, the Park District informed the public that the contract for the Golf Club's food service will terminate at the end of 2021. Through this social networking and e-mail campaign, there were fourteen potential vendors who expressed interest and toured the space. In comparison, the last time the Golf Club initiated a RFP for food services, there were only three interested parties. Ultimately, staff received six RFP proposals. The first proposal was from A La Carte catering which is the current vendor. They have operated the space the past four years and have made great strides in the catering business. Their operation has been extremely profitable for them and the Park District, making significant contributions to the Club's bottom line. Their proposal for the upcoming three years is very well done with numerous reference letters from patrons and residents of the community. Their plan for the next three years is essentially a continuation of the same menu items operated by many of the same staff members. A sense of familiarity would be brought with the staff they have. The A La Carte financial offer is the highest bid of the six proposals and most profitable. It is the highest month over month with an aggressive sales bonus for sales over \$600,000. This is similar to what is established with A La Carte currently.

The second proposal to come in was from Open Kitchens. Open Kitchens operated the space prior to A La Carte. Open Kitchens runs the food service operations at numerous other golf courses including the Mt. Prospect Park District, Northbrook Park District and the Park District of Highland Park. Their proposal was well done and well organized, but low when looking at the financial component.

The third proposal was from a professional caterer, Jordan's Food of Distinction. Their concept was to create a supper club feel in the restaurant. They provided an interesting menu but their focus appears to be on banquet and restaurant service as opposed to providing for golfers at the course. Their financial preference is strictly a percentage of gross sales without any guaranteed money to the Wilmette Park District, an agreement that the Golf Club has never entered into previously. It is possibly the lowest of all bids.

The fourth proposal was from the Fat Shallot, which currently operates the concession space at Gillson Beach. They also had some interesting menu options but did not completely provide all of the required documentation. No specific financials were provided making the proposal less than complete under the criteria of the RFP.

The fifth proposal was from The Lawn. This particular proposal has significant ties to the community, golf and the Wilmette Park District as users of the

District's programs and facilities. The proposal describes a specific vision for the space. Ideas are current, modern and could be very successful with golfers at the facility. The menu has positive changes and would provide for different quality options for patrons. The Lawn would likely operate as much as a bar as any proposal received. There would still be restaurant and event service and restaurant seating but expand on the bar concept. To accomplish this, the proposal outlines significant changes to the space, which are being considered in Capital Improvements for 2022, but maybe not to the extent The Lawn is envisioning. This vendor could change the vibe of the facility and draw more people to the golf course, which in turn could result in golf revenue in the pro shop, on the range, or in greens fees. The direct financial considerations are moderate and capital expenditures could be significant.

The last proposal was from Oak Kitchen & Bar which currently operates out of The Oak in the Glen. Their proposal includes the same menu and concepts that exist at their current restaurant, which is very well reviewed. They are looking to expand and view the Wilmette Golf Club as an interesting option. Their proposal outlines some changes to the dining space and kitchen equipment and they indicated a willingness to spend their own money to make some of these changes. Their financial considerations were excellent, being the second highest of the six proposals.

Manager Kwiatkoski advised that there was specific criteria established in the RFP that staff used to evaluate each vendor. The two vendors that met the majority of the criteria along with the food service experience and golf course knowledge were A La Carte and The Lawn. That being said, their concepts were very different.

Selecting A La Carte would provide the benefit of knowing what to expect. There would be a sense of familiarity because of what has been done the past four years. There would be the same menu, same staff and same operation for the next three years. Capital Expenditures could improve the experience for patrons, but are not required for operation of the space by this vendor. Their proposal is also the highest revenue generator for the Park District.

On the other hand, The Lawn is an opportunity to improve the space and make the facility different from any other Golf Club on the North Shore. Capital Improvements are paramount as this particular vendor is not interested in operating the restaurant in its current form. There is risk and expense with this option, but there may never be a better time for both within the popularity of the golf business.

While the proposal from The Oak at the Glen did not grade out as high as the prior two, it is another option worth considering as it provides a high revenue to the Park District and has a proven success rate nearby in Glenview. The concern here is their understanding of the golf course side of the business and

ensuring golfers come first. Staff's goal is that the needs of the golfers are being met first.

All other proposals do not merit further consideration unless all of the above options do not pan out.

Director Wilson advised that procedurally, the Committee cannot negotiate with multiple proposals simultaneously as one would in the corporate realm. The Committee must choose the proposal that they believe is the one they want to pursue first and negotiate it either to a successful or unsuccessful end. If negotiations are unsuccessful, then the Committee may move onto the next proposal. Staff needs guidance as to which proposal to negotiate and would require that guidance as soon as possible because the current contract expires at the end of the year. There was a brief conversation regarding Coarse Italian and concerns over golfers being pushed out of the restaurant. Director Wilson stated a commitment to prioritizing golfers. Commissioner Goebel asked if The Lawn had specific experience operating a golf club restaurant. Manager Kwiatkoski responded that The Lawn is a group of four partners and one of the four does have experience operating food service at a golf club. All four partners are also avid golfers. Commissioner Goebel asked Manager Kwiatkoski to confirm the partners of The Oak do not have the same experience. Manager Kwiatkoski advised that the primary owner is a golfer and has membership at a private club but has not operated food service specifically for golfers. He stressed that this does not exclude The Oak from operating food service at the Wilmette Golf Club but familiarity with the Wilmette Golf Club and the Wilmette Park District were two specific criteria staff utilized in evaluating each proposal. Commissioner Goebel then asked if A La Carte had operated in other golf clubs prior to moving into the space. Manager Kwiatkoski confirmed that A La Carte had operated out of other golf courses. Commissioner Anderson asked why the prior Committee had switched from Open Kitchens to A La Carte. Manager Kwiatkoski advised the switch had been made due to financial considerations. Director Wilson added that many golfers had also expressed dissatisfaction with Open Kitchens. A La Carte has contributed almost double than the previous vendor.

Commissioner Goebel acknowledged there is a need for golfers to obtain food on the 9th hole and continue their round. In her observations, this has been a challenge. Director Wilson stated that two vendors expressed they would be open to an app or integrating with the carts GPS system to address this issue.

Manager Kwiatkoski warned that if the Committee chose to move forward with The Lawn, the Board must be willing to also move forward with Capital Improvements. In this scenario, the Board must also be open to The Lawn's concepts for improvements. Otherwise, this proposal is not worth pursuing further. Commissioner Duffy noted that the Park District is only offering a three year contract. As such, the Park District would need to provide these Capital

Improvements to a potential tenant because with the cost of the improvements and a limited three year lease, it would be difficult for the tenant to recoup their losses. Commissioner Duffy suggested that these improvements be done in stages and asked if The Lawn would be open to that. Commissioner Duffy noted The Lawn has requested hard line gas lines for fire pits, a sliding glass door, and a half window for the bar. While the Committee has already discussed some of these improvements, it would not be possible to complete all improvements at one time. Additionally, Commissioner Duffy suggested that The Lawn pay for some of these improvements themselves and that the Park District would reimburse them by taking whatever was spent off their rent payment. Director Wilson clarified that the Park District is not bound to a three year lease. There is flexibility to negotiate.

Commissioner Duffy expressed a preference for moving forward with The Lawn. He envisioned a year-round restaurant that would entice residents in the offseason as opposed to going to Downtown Wilmette. He cited the lack of restaurants in that area and the benefit to the Park District for it to be open and generating revenue year-round. If a Capital Improvement agreement could not be reached, he is comfortable moving forward with A La Carte. For background purposes, Commissioner Anderson stated there is not a number associated with any improvements The Lawn is proposing. Furthermore, the Park District is looking to make improvements regardless of which vendor is selected. Director Wilson clarified that the Committee has been discussing certain improvements but has never finalized anything because the Committee has made it clear they would like to obtain input from whomever they decide to partner with. Commissioner Goebel stated The Lawn's design finishes were very specific. She suggested the Park District take a step back and initiate a middle ground between The Lawn's desired ideal restaurant buildout as opposed to a public facility with a three year lease.

With respect to the other vendors, Commissioner Goebel agreed with the two that were rolled out as the frontrunners. It made sense to her that Jordan's Food of Distinction wasn't as interesting from a financial perspective. She would like to understand if there is anything that could be strengthened about Oak Kitchen & Bar. Her primary concern of any vendor is are they going to be able to operate in a way that is conducive first to golfers and secondly to restaurant patrons. She advised she was pleased with The Lawn's proposal as it was well considered, designed and presented. She did observe they were the only vendor who noted claims for breach of contract and stated this needs to be explained. She does appreciate an honest answer and the price point seemed appropriate. There is also something interesting about having a local restaurateur which A La Carte offers as well. However, The Lawn offered a unique proposal.

Commissioner Anderson stated she agrees with her fellow Commissioners in that The Lawn was the strongest proposal for the reasons already mentioned.

She would also want design selections somewhat neutral and a better understanding of the claims made against The Lawn. She asked if the menu prices The Lawn presented were too high for golfers. Manager Kwiatkoski believes what they proposed is appropriate for the quality they offer. Commissioner Anderson asked what the current use of the facility is and how The Lawn would fit in with overall goals of the District. Manager Kwiatkoski stated when the clubhouse was initially built, the maximum capacity was designed for 140 people because that is the maximum amount of people in a shotgun. It was purposefully downsized from a bigger room to avoid weddings and larger events. This is also why the kitchen is so small. At the time, the thought process was to satisfy golfer's needs and offer simple fare. Over time, a different group has begun to utilize the facility. There are more women and families at the Golf Club. The pandemic has driven golf revenue up. Competitors have changed their approach and if the Wilmette Golf Club would like to do so as well, The Lawn provides an excellent opportunity to do so. He cautioned that The Lawn's proposal is also very much a bar approach and asked that the Committee consider this fully prior to exploring this vendor further. He stressed that there will be a bar component that currently does not exist and some people may not appreciate that. Competitors are also including a simulator in their facilities. As to Commissioner Anderson's initial question, The Lawn seems to resonate with the newer crowd to the facility. It seems to fit a need of potential restaurants west of the expressway. Commissioner Anderson asked if any of the respondents were minority or women owned businesses. Manager Kwiatkoski advised A La Carte is owned by a woman and there is a woman a part of The Lawn's restaurant group, however, there is a special certification one must obtain and no one indicated this in their RFP.

Commissioner Goebel asked whether A La Carte is aware of potential renovations to the facility. Manager Kwiatkoski advised A La Carte is aware, however, their RFP is not reliant upon renovations. They are interested in renovations and support them.

There was Committee consensus around pursuing negotiations with The Lawn dependent upon an agreement on Capital Improvements. If negotiations with The Lawn fell through, it was agreed that A La Carte would be the second best option.

VIII. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Golf Operations Committee is scheduled is to be determined.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further discussion, Commissioner Duffy moved and Commissioner Goebel seconded a motion to adjourn the Golf Operations Committee meeting at 8:45 p.m.

By a unanimous voice vote; **motion carried.**

Minutes Approved TBD

Respectfully Submitted,

Catherine A. Serbin

Catherine Serbin
Executive Administrative Assistant

Unofficial



Wilmette Park District
 Revenue and Expense Statement
 Golf Operations

For the Month Ending December 31, 2021 - Preliminary

Total District					YTD Variance		Total Year Budget 2021
	Actual 2019	Actual 2020	Actual 2021	Projection 2021	Actual to Budget		
					\$	%	
Revenue							
Daily Fees	824,305	1,351,850	\$1,253,564	\$1,239,788	13,776	1.1%	1,295,000
Fee Revenue	205,027	170,554	237,474	236,361	1,113	0.5%	201,267
Membership Fees	209,429	151,624	312,285	312,645	(360)	-0.1%	213,888
Rental Revenue	185,953	282,890	284,274	275,978	8,296	3.0%	268,000
Retail Sales	114,557	98,312	98,988	98,000	988	1.0%	98,000
Miscellaneous Revenue	<u>84,958</u>	<u>51,666</u>	<u>79,534</u>	<u>73,941</u>	<u>5,593</u>	7.6%	<u>69,600</u>
Total Revenue	\$1,624,229	\$2,106,896	\$2,266,120	\$2,236,713	\$29,407	1.3%	\$2,145,755
Expenses							
Salaries & Wages	730,051	\$761,634	\$776,486	\$760,623	\$15,863	2.1%	\$809,244
Employee Benefits	95,520	109,782	71,886	79,056	(7,170)	-9.1%	101,975
Contract Services	129,470	129,629	152,827	162,244	(9,417)	-5.8%	142,704
Utilities	80,636	100,514	92,125	85,888	6,237	7.3%	85,814
Supplies	337,144	260,387	325,515	316,269	9,246	2.9%	293,942
Repairs	<u>80,417</u>	<u>96,088</u>	<u>115,194</u>	<u>98,408</u>	<u>16,786</u>	17.1%	<u>102,053</u>
Operating Expenses	\$1,453,238	\$1,458,034	\$1,534,033	\$1,502,488	\$31,545	2.1%	\$1,535,732
Operating Surplus (Deficit)	\$170,991	\$648,862	\$732,087	\$734,225	(\$2,138)	-0.3%	\$610,023
Non-Operating Revenue							
Bond Proceeds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Reimbursement	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>
Total Non-Operating Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0
Non-Operating Expenses							
Capital	0	0	30,000	30,000	0	0.0%	30,000
Debt Service	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	0
Transfers (Capital/Overhead)	<u>198,000</u>	<u>198,000</u>	<u>198,000</u>	<u>198,000</u>	<u>0</u>		<u>198,000</u>
Total Non-Operating Expenses	\$198,000	\$198,000	\$228,000	\$228,000	\$0	0.0%	\$228,000
Net Non-Operating Surplus (Deficit)	(\$198,000)	(\$198,000)	(\$228,000)	(\$228,000)	\$0	0.0%	(\$228,000)
Total Expenses	<u>\$1,651,238</u>	<u>\$1,656,034</u>	<u>\$1,762,033</u>	<u>\$1,730,488</u>	<u>\$31,545</u>	1.8%	<u>\$1,763,732</u>
Net Surplus (Deficit)	(\$27,009)	\$450,862	\$504,087	\$506,225	(\$2,138)	-0.42%	\$382,023