

Minutes of the Waukegan Park District
Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners

Golf Advisory Meeting

December 5, 2024

6:00pm

The Board of Commissioners of the Waukegan Park District and staff met for a Special Meeting to hold a Golf Advisory Committee Meeting on December 5, 2024, at 6:00pm at the Bonnie Brook Club House, 2800 North Lewis Avenue, Waukegan, Illinois.

I. Call to Order

Michael Jesse called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and directed the roll call.

II. Roll Call

Michael Jesse and Chairman Johnson were present and welcomed those in attendance: Tim Miles, John Miles, Greg Benson, Joe Cervantes, and Ellie Gerdt. The staff and members present introduced themselves. Waukegan Park District Board Member and Golf Chairman Jeremiah Johnson was present along with Waukegan Park District staff member Michael Jesse. Since there was no quorum of park district board members, no official business was conducted.

Good evening. Thank you everyone for coming out and signing in. I'm going to call this meeting to order at 6:00pm and roll call has been completed. I'll now turn it over to Mr. Miles, Joe and Ellie for the Bonnie Brook update and outlook. Since there is no quorum of commissioners, no business will be conducted.

GolfVisions Update

Speakers

Tim Miles- President of GolfVisions

John Miles- Senior Vice President with GolfVisions

Joe Cervantes- General Manager

Greg Benson- Golf Course Superintendent

Ellie Gerdt- Director of Food and Beverage

John Miles- Golf rounds remain high in the Chicagoland area. Rounds in the area are starting to stabilize since Covid. Bonnie Brook financials have stayed up since Covid. Some of the things we continue to face are vendor pricing continuing to increase. Fertilizers, insecticides, and herbicides have come down a little. Will be facing the minimum wage increase starting Jan 1, 2025, to \$15. Bonnie Brook is in good shape going into 2025.

Joe Cervantes- We had a decent year; we were open in February which was great, but March and April were not that great. Overall rounds were good, we implemented some new things thanks to the Waukegan Park District. We got the Club Championship back and the Turkey Shoot Outing went well. Bring some new events was discussed with the pass holders. Possibly bringing back the BitterBrook Cup, which is a two-day event between players from Bonnie Brook and Bittersweet. As far as the Maintenance side, hope everyone was happy with the site lines which were brought up at the April meeting. I think it improved the look of the course. We fixed some of the cart path transition areas where they needed improvement. We do have a few more to complete before spring. We did a dumpster day to clean out the basement which was long needed. Very organized now looks much better. We added the Perry Weather system for the course and hope the players liked it. We have added more signage to the building and carts about Perry Weather. It was brought to Joe's attention about the pace of play from the 9-hole league, he is on board on getting their pace of play a little faster, and he had a meeting with them to discuss three different playing methods to help that while still allowing them to have fun. Outings were brought up because pass holders felt they were missing out because when they were not allowed to play 4 weekends due to outings starting before noon. Joe put a big calendar in the hallway so all players can see upcoming events and plan accordingly. Joe will be meeting with the Waukegan Park District marketing team to put a plan together that would help them use the marketing platforms better. Joe Chess asked Jon Miles if the outing rounds are in the total rounds numbers and he said yes, we are at about 27,000 rounds. Greenshire was made available this year to book tee times online. About 10% of rounds came from online. It is possible to start a glow in the dark golf event back at Greenshire, it was done in the past and went well. Rounds at Greenshire were 6155, just a little bit down from last year. Greg Benson will be retiring; the course was outstanding this year. Thank you to Greg for his many years of service. There have been 50 season passes sold already.

Ellie Gerdt- With bringing on Melanie she was able to do a lot more sales of the banquet room. So far this year we have had 84 events. We have 39 booked for next year. We stopped fish fry because we are overwhelmed with Christmas parties. We brought new items to the Turn Menu that did well this year, like the brisket sandwich. No big changes to the Turn Menu. Chillin' and Grillin' will be back from May through September and they are always successful. Easter brunch, Mother's Day brunch, and Christmas with Santa were also held and were well attended

Greg Benson- Early year opening in February. It was a little wet in the beginning of the season. The end of the year was nice and dry. Got rid of some trees that we due to be removed. Had SavATree do injections on some of the oak trees on hole 5 that we are trying to save. Completed all fall cultivation as the weather allowed. The WPD planted some trees this year they received from a grant program. With capital funds, we purchased a new fairway mower and the other two we have are 15 years old. The top dresser finally arrived, we are still waiting on the utility vehicle it attaches to. We found an off lease rough mower we are going to get for half the price of a new one. Next, we have a greens mower requested and budgeted for in capital program.

Mike Jesse- As far as capital improvements, Greg updated us on the vehicle already. I spoke with Ellie and Joe, and we are going to order some new banquet chairs and an ice machine. Fiscal year 25/26 is in the works and will be approved at the 2025 Waukegan Park District board April meeting.

Commissioner Johnson- The big project is the Carnegie Museum which is planned for completion in February 2025.. Bevier Park is almost finished, we had to dredge the pond removing a large amount of sediment. There will be 4 feet of depth added next year. If we didn't do this in the next ten years, it would not be a pond anymore, as it would become very shallow and filled with sediment. They are relocating the dirt into the BMX Park, it will later be used as fertilizer. Upton Park just was completed. Roosevelt Park by the Adaptive Recreation Center is done. Dugdale Park is on the schedule for renovations next.

III. Questions and/or Comments

Bill Biang asked why other GolfVisions courses give five free rounds when buying a season pass and why Bonnie Brook does not do that. Debbie Shields asked if we get a lot of new players buying season passes. Joe said yes, in fact two were purchased today. Joe Chess asked about why there is not a resident and nonresident daily fee price. John Miles explained that was changed before GolfVisions took over the course. I explained that our daily fee rate is lower than competition in the local area, so raising the non-resident rate would scare away customers, in my opinion. John Miles talked about how we cannot ask for daily fee player information because people like their privacy. People aren't even entering their information online. It's the most frustrating thing in the industry, but we must deal with it. Tim Miles talked about how right now we are only doing about 28,000 rounds a year when back in the day, golf used to do about 40,000 rounds a year so we need every round we can get right now to maintain budget. Tim Miles talked about how demographics and competition have changed dramatically, and that has a huge impact on pricing. Commissioner Johnson thanked Greg Benson because he hears from locals and people from Chicago that come here just to play Bonnie Brook because it is a destination now.

IV. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 4, 2025, at 6pm.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:42pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Jesse
Acting Secretary