

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

Golf Advisory Meeting

May 2, 2024

Start time- 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 May 2, 2023, at 6:00pm at the Bonnie Brook Club House, 2800 North Lewis Avenue, Waukegan, Illinois.

I. Call to Order

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

II. Roll Call

Michael Jesse was present and welcomed those in attendance: Tim Miles, John Miles, Joe Cervantes, and Ellie Gerdt. The staff and members present introduced themselves. Waukegan Park District staff present was Michael Jesse. There was no commissioner from the WPD board present, so there was not a quorum.

GolfVisions Update

Speakers

Tim Miles- President of GolfVisions

John Miles- Senior Vice President with GolfVisions

Joe Cervantes- General Manager

Ellie Gerdt- Director of Food and Beverage

Transcript

All right. Good evening. Thank you everyone for coming out and signing in. I'm going to call this meeting to order at 6:00pm on the dot, I have completed roll call of Commissioners, Waukegan Park District staff, and GolfVisions staff. I'll now turn it over to Mr. Miles, Joe and Ellie for the Bonnie Brook update and outlook.

John Miles- Going back to the December meeting, there were only three (3) people, but it was very productive. They took what the attendees said about the Club Championship and the high grass by the creeks. They noted how they will be maintaining the high grass better this year and there will be a Club Championship this year with prizes of season passes. As far as fiscal year 2023-24 end on April 30, 2024, Bonnie Brook had 32,150 rounds with \$1.73 million in revenues. Greenshire did 7,156 rounds with revenues of \$102,500. Both courses are in great shape, and Joe and Greg have done an outstanding job.

Joe Cervantes- Thanks for attending the meeting. This is Joe's second year managing Bonnie Brook Golf Course. We had great weather this year, less than 10 rainouts. It was a very good year for golf. It was brought up about years past of having many rainy days. Mike Jesse gave information that since COVID, we have had 30,000 rounds a year. Prior to COVID, we did around 24,000 to 25,000 rounds each year. Joe talked about how Bonnie Brook is host to many leagues, and at his previous location, they did not have as many leagues. The leagues are very supportive of the food and beverage side. Talked about adding the Men's and Women's' Club Championships back, as well as the Senior Championship going into this season. Winners in the Men's and Women's' in the Club Championships will win a season pass which was donated by the Waukegan Park District. The winner of the Senior Championship will receive \$750 for their pass next year. Something new this year, we will be hosting an Open House on June 5th to showcase the facilities for the community. The program is geared towards local families and the youth of Waukegan, and it is open to everyone. Attendees will get a tour of the facility, snow cone truck refreshments, putting game, 5-minute lesson on the range. They will also receive a free round at Greenshire. This year, we will add the Perry Weather system, a lightning detection system, on the golf course. With this system, you will be allowed to update the website, sound the siren when the lightning is close, use the speaker system to alert golfers, and it gives information to the Superintendent. Ed Holm talked about the asphalt on the south side of the building, and that we should upgrade that. Joe has obtained a quote for the work to be done on the patio, either using pavers or concrete. Mike Jesse will be providing private lessons this year. Joe would like to personally thank Ellie and Greg for their hard work over the last year, Greg with the great course condition and Ellie for the remodel of the banquet room and hosting 8 parties in the last 9 days.

Ellie Gerdt- We did a lot of renovations during the off season even though it didn't feel like an offseason since it was busy. Easter brunch did better than last year with an attendance of 201. Mother's Day brunch they had 120 reservations. There has been a big push for private events, that's why they have removed the Friday Fish Fry from being in the dining room and sell 2 meals out of the bar on Fridays. Plan is to have it back in the dining room in the fall. The turn menu has some new items and prices did go up. Liquor and beer prices remained the same as last year. Chillin and Grillin will start next week, an email was sent out with all bands for the season listed and menus for the month of May. We were also able to bring in a Bar Manager so Ellie can get some help and focus on events.

Greg Benson- This is the earliest he has ever had to open the course due to the nice weather. The course came out of winter looking good. We did some late season tree pruning on the oaks south of the course, but still need to finish some on the north end. He is going make sure he works on keeping the high grass on holes 1,11,12, and 16 low for the players. Bill Biang talks about how back in the day the high grass areas were kept to fairway height. They made one equipment purchase that they are still waiting on, which is the spreader.

John Miles- We introduced a new point of sales system which is Golf 365. Staff did a great job learning the new system quickly. Greenshire went live in October and Bonnie Brook went live in November. As far as the state of the game, it is currently very strong. They see every facility going up in pricing due to expenses rising and minimum wage going up every year. Talks about how on the north shore most courses are hitting the \$100 per round. Doesn't mean Bonnie Brook will hit that, but just show prices will increase moving forward. Most local courses have cancelled season passes and raised rates to \$90. Joe Chess asked why we do not have resident and nonresident daily fee rates. John Miles says we will

investigate that before next year's pricing comes out. Tim Miles says let the other courses go up in price, Bonnie Brook rates are in a great spot. Tim Miles also speaks on how the carts have doubled since COVID and all the machines needed to keep the course in great shape have gone up by an average of 30%. Same with all the food, costs have gone up dramatically. He wants to keep his portfolio to look good, keeping prices down and having well maintained golf courses. Tim Miles says golf is in a great place if we can keep Bonnie Brook doing 32,000 to 35,000 rounds at a reasonable rate it will do just fine. The pandemic was great for golf and has helped the numbers of players, every day the courses were packed. We are looking to be a high-quality golf operator at a reasonable and affordable price. Joe Chess asked again that they might get more players if they have cheaper rates for residents. Tim Miles said again, we will investigate it before prices for next year come out. Bill Biang asked which other courses in Lake County GolfVisions operates which are Lake Bluff, Bittersweet, Midlane, Village Green, Chapel Hill, Fox Ford Hills, and Oak Grove. John Miles had handed out a sheet with trends in golf for them to review.

Mike Jesse- Capital improvements we updated Greg Benson and mechanics office, and the carpet was replaced. Greenshire opened yesterday, the flooring has been replaced. The street sign should be replaced in two weeks. Greg's spreader should be arriving shortly. Going into the new year, Greg will be getting a new fairway mower, greens mower, and possibly a 3-year lease to own a greens aerator. The GolfVisions budget was approved by the board in March. Spoke with Executive Director Jay Lerner and passed on information that the Carnegie Library is due to be finished by the Fall.

III. Questions and/or Comments

Joe Chess asked Greg what he had been doing to keep the geese off the course. Joe talked about how in February there had to be 350 geese on hole 9 on the course. They have been using an air gun. Larry Whitson thanked GolfVisions for bringing back the Club Championship and saying how important it is to the community. Larry Whitson said he knows the golf range was voted down but is it a done deal. Can they put it on a referendum to let the citizens of Waukegan vote on it. Bill Biang asked why season passes are not good on holidays when they used to be honored. Since Bonnie Brook does many outings on the weekends, we used to allow season passholders to play on Holiday since they can't play on certain weekends due to outings. Joe Chess said maybe have a discount for passholders on holidays. Debbie Shields would like season passholders to not have to pay for their outings even though it says in the contract season passes are not good for golf outings.

IV. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Dec 5, 2024, at 6pm

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:38pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Jesse
Acting Secretary

