

MINUTES

City of San Diego
Municipal Golf Committee (MGC)
August 21, 2014

Meeting held at:

Public Utilities Metropolitan Operations
Complex (MOC II Building)
9192 Topaz Way
San Diego, CA 92123

Mailing address is:

Torrey Pines Administration Building
11480 N. Torrey Pines Road
La Jolla, CA 92037

ATTENDANCE:

Members Present

Susan Casagrande
Christian Clews (Arrived 6:21pm)
Doris Cronkhite
Kurt Carlson
Ann Dynes
David Korty
Megan Mahoney
Marc Sorensen
Paul Spiegelman

Members Absent

Albert Bruton
Michael Zucchet

Staff Present

Scott Bentley
Mark Marney
Matty Reyes

CALL TO ORDER

Ann Dynes called meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 12, 2014 MINUTES

A motion was made by Marc Sorensen and seconded by Kurt Carlson to approve the June 12, 2014 minutes.

Motion: **MOVED / SECONDED MR. SORENSEN / MR. CARLSON**

The vote was unanimous.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Ms. Dynes requested a motion to approve adoption of the agenda as presented.

A motion was made by Megan Mahoney and seconded by Mr. Carlson to approve the adoption of agenda in the June 12, 2014 minutes.

Motion: **MOVED / SECONDED MS. MAHONEY / MR. CARLSON**

The vote was unanimous.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Ms. Dynes reminded the Committee that there had been a motion passed at last month's meeting to encourage the City to support a Marketing person and the use of Social Media to increase rounds for the Golf Division. She reported that an email was sent by Mr. Zucchet promptly to the Mayor, City Council, and Park & Recreation Director but that none of the recipients had responded.

STAFF REPORT

Scott Bentley referenced a letter from the City Auditor's Office included in the Committee packets. The Golf Division will be given a performance audit commencing August 25, 2014. The letter highlights the areas concerning which the Golf Division needs to provide preliminary information. Matthew Helm, Audit Manager, was introduced by Mr. Bentley to speak briefly about the performance audit. Mr. Helm gave an overview on how the audit will be conducted with the potential completion date sometime in November 2014.

Ms. Dynes asked Mr. Helm how often a performance audit is done and when the last time the Golf Division had such an audit. Mr. Helm stated that his department operates from an annual work plan which does about 20 different departments each year but that the Golf Division has never been the target of this form of audit. He stated that there are a few City Council members interested in the Golf Operations.

Paul Spiegelman asked if members of the MGC will have an opportunity to review & give comments of the audit before it is presented to the department. Mr. Helm stated that once the report is completed the audit will be sent to the Park & Rec Department. However, each department has the liberty to seek recommendations and feedback from whomever they like.

Mr. Sorensen asked to whom Mr. Helm will be delivering the report. Mr. Helm responded that all the reports are made public. It is presented to their Audit Committee first which consists of two City Council members and three citizen members. Then the audit could be presented to various committees, like the MGC, and finally to the full City Council.

Mr. Bentley's second item was concerning the Farmers Insurance Open contract. The City's Chief Operations Officer and City Attorney are in the process of working on the 2015 Farmers Insurance Open contract.

Ms. Dynes asked if the MGC would have any potential role or influence on the Farmers Insurance Open contract before it is finalized. Mark Marney responded that in the past the Golf Division has provided information about loss revenue, overtime projection, possible dates for the Farmers Insurance Open, etc. Mr. Marney stated that the basic negotiation does not happen with the Golf Division. Mr. Marney mentioned that comments could be forwarded to the party that makes the final decision on the Farmers Insurance Open contract. He did mention that he cannot promise that those comments would be included in the agreement.

Ms. Dynes noted the importance of getting any comments or suggestions in a timely manner to the Golf Division, since there are already ongoing conversations with regards to the Farmers Insurance Open contract. Ms. Dynes asked if the new contract will be a multi-year agreement. Mr. Marney responded that in the past it has been a multi-year agreement.

Mr. Spiegelman asked who negotiates the Farmers Insurance Open contract for the City. Mr. Marney stated that it goes to a higher level of Directors and City Officials. Mr. Spiegelman

wondered if it would be better for members of the Golf Division to be involved in the negotiations because they would better understand the needs of the golf course.

Ms. Dynes noted that this is a very important and timely topic. She suggested the MGC might want to consider creating a sub-committee to draft recommendations.

Mr. Sorensen asked several questions. Do we know how much money the City makes from this contract? What amount goes to the general fund? How much goes to the Golf Enterprise Fund? Mr. Sorensen commented that with the capital improvement projects on the schedule, breaking even would not be a great deal for the Golf Enterprise Fund.

Ms. Dynes wondered if the Century Club, which states that it contributes millions of dollars to the local community, uses the Golf Enterprise Fund to subsidize those payments.

Mr. Marney commented that the decision makers look at the overall impact of having a PGA Tour event at our site. From the economic impact to hotels & restaurants, marketing value of television exposure, to becoming a premier destination course; there is a great value to having this Tournament here at Torrey Pines. The Tournament is generally ranked in the top five most watched events on the Tour. Mr. Marney mentioned that other tournament sites pay the Tour to be at their location. Torrey Pines has been very fortunate that we get paid for the lost revenue when the course is closed during the Tournament.

Mr. Sorensen asked if it would be unreasonable for the Golf Enterprise Fund to receive more money from the Tournament to fund some of the capital improvement projects. Since the golf course brings the Tournament here and generates so much money, then maybe the Golf Enterprise Fund should have a better deal.

Mr. Sorensen, Ms. Cronkhite, & Mr. Spiegelman were appointed to be a sub committee to look into the Farmers Insurance Contract. This topic will be on the agenda for next month's meeting.

COMMITTEE COMMENT

Christian Clews would like to put a new Tee Time system, like Golf Now, on the agenda from next month. Mr. Bentley responded that a new Tee Time system is a high priority and the process to obtain one has already begun.

Mr. Clews also expressed his concern about establishing a dress code. This would set the standards for Golfers who play at the course. Mr. Marney & Mr. Dynes stated that a dress code could be another agenda item for a future meeting.

Mr. Spiegelman commented that the bag drop off at Torrey Pines is doing a great job. Susan Casagrande stated the bag drop will continue to improve.

Ms. Cronkhite pointed out what an excellent job Ms. Mahoney and her staff did during the Callaway Junior World Golf Championship at Torrey Pines. Over 58 countries & 42 states were represented at the tournament.

Mr. Sorensen wanted to know if the City is doing anything about water conservation for the golf courses. Mr. Marney responded that there is a Water Conservation Board working with the Golf Division and it does have a system in place to save and reduce water use.

NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no Public Comment.

ACTION ITEM

101. Pace of Play (Al Bruton)

Mr. Spiegelman spoke on behalf for Al Bruton. Three documents were presented: Argument for Pace of Play Recommendations, potential Pace of Play Sign, and Proposed Recommendations. Mr. Spiegelman stated the specifics on the Proposed Recommendations for Pace of Play. First a Placement of Pace of Play sign. Second, a written set of guidelines for course marshals, Third, a written set of guidelines for each men's and woman's club.

There was an extensive discussion of the Pace of Play sign. Mr. Sorensen expressed the view that course admonitions should not focus on the length of time of play but more on the golfers' positions on the course relative to groups in front and behind. Ms. Mahoney observed that if there are too many signs on the course, golfers would be less likely to read them. David Korty expressed the view that golf is already a difficult and intimidating sport. If Course Managers impose another set of rules, this might further discourage more people not to play. Ms. Sorensen agreed with Mr. Korty about having too many signs on the course but said that there needs to be an education about pace of play before golfers get on course. Ms. Cronkhite liked the idea of the Pace of Play sign, but it needed to be placed on the right spot.

Ms. Dynes, as acting chair, declared that there did not appear to be much support for the Pace of Play signs and asked for input from staff. Mr. Marney gave an overall view of what Maintenance & Golf Staff is doing to help with Pace of Play and customer service. Mr. Sorensen made a recommendation that it should be up to the Golf Course professionals if they want a sign on the course.

A motion was made by Mr. Spiegelman and seconded by Mr. Sorensen to approve the proposed Pace of Play recommendations:

Motion: **MOVED / SECONDED MR. SPIEGELMAN / MR. SORENSEN**

The motion was rescinded. After some discussion, it was the consensus of the Committee to address each of the recommendations separately.

Ms. Dynes requested a motion on the Pace of Play sign. Al Bruton's recommendation was to have the sign on the 1st and 10th tee box. Mr. Clews requested an amendment to the Bruton proposal that it should be up to the Course Manager/Professional where to put the sign.

A motion was made by Mr. Spiegelman and seconded by Ms. Cronkhite to approve the Pace of Play sign and leave it to the Course Manager where to place the sign.

Motion: **MOVED / SECONDED MR. SPIEGELMAN / MS. CRONKHITE**

The vote was 5 to 4 and motion passed.

The next topic was the set of guidelines for Course Marshals.

Mr. Bentley confirmed that the Golf Division already has written documents, it does annual trainings and is working with the Men's and Women's Club on improving pace of play within their clubs. At Balboa Park, pace of play before 8:00 am is less than four hours. After 8:00 am, the pace is four hours and 13 minutes. Then after 11:00 am it is four hours and 15 minutes. At Torrey Pines, pace of play before 8:00am for the South courses averages four hours and North course is slightly lower. Between 8:00 & 11:00 am, pace of play averages 4:30 and 4:20 respectfully. After 11:00am, pace of play for both course averages just over 4:30.

Mr. Bentley expressed the opinion that the courses are already doing a pretty good job with pace especially considering the amount of play at each course. He did mention that it can still always be better and appreciates the recommendations from Mr. Bruton.

Ms. Dynes asked for a motion to table the remaining portions of the Pace of Play recommendations from Mr. Bruton until he can be present to consider the discussion at this meeting and offer more support for adopting them. Ms. Cronkite made a motion to table the second and third parts of Mr. Burton's recommendations. Mr. Clews seconded that motion.

Motion: **MOVED / SECONDED MS. CRONKITE / MR. CLEWS**

The vote 7 to 2 and motion passed.

INFORMATION ITEM

201. Golf Division Business Plan Update

Mr. Marney presented a draft of the Golf Division's Business Plan Update Report to the MGC.

The goal of this business plan is to give the Golf Division a good look where the Division is currently, help set targets and then, concentrate staff efforts on where it wants to be. Mr. Marney expressed his concerns about rising expenses and the ability of the Golf Division to absorb the increased cost without increasing fees. The Golf Division needs to monitor the market and act accordingly in regards to fee increases. At this time in a slow market, Mr. Marney stated it is too early to plan rate increases.

Ms. Mahoney asked how those numbers are selected for a five year target for rounds since they seem somewhat inflated. Mr. Marney explained that those numbers were forecasted to what each golf course could potentially do in rounds in relation to the growth of the market.

Mr. Spiegelman asked if there was a way to attract more senior play to Balboa 9 hole course. Mr. Marney responded that the Golf Division has tried various specials for the 9 hole course without particular success. Staff is trying to find a balance between increasing rounds which is not at the expense of revenue.

Mr. Clews and Ms. Cronkhite had questions regarding the new Mission Bay Clubhouse. Mr. Bentley stated that staff hopes to get started on the demolition of the small and larger building in the next 2- 6 months. The plan is to then to bring in small office trailers as temporary facilities until the Division can bring in larger modular buildings, followed by a permanent clubhouse 5-10 years away. Mr. Sorenson expressed a concern about increasing rates at Torrey Pines to cover the shortfalls at Mission Bay and Balboa Park.

Ms. Dynes suggested more refined data would be helpful in determining rate increases. Ms. Dynes also brought up the free resident card available at Riverwalk and whether such a strategy

should be considered for City courses which are not yielding their potential rounds. Mr. Spiegelman asked if there was a cap on rate increases. Mr. Marney responded that rates could be increased 3% for residents 5% for non-residents without going to the City Council. These subjects will be visited at future meetings should the members so request.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Next Regular Meeting: **Thursday, September 18, 2014, 6:00 P.M.**
Public Utilities Metropolitan Operations Complex
(MOC II Building)
9192 Topaz Way, San Diego, CA 92123

Future meetings are scheduled for Thursday, November 20 and Thursday, January 15, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Bentley
Golf Course Manager, Golf Division

Please Note: This information is available in alternative formats upon request. To request the agenda in Braille, large print or cassette or to request a sign language or oral interpreter for the meeting, call Scott Bentley @ 858.552.1786 at least five (5) working days prior to the meeting to ensure availability. Alternative Listening Devices (ALD's) are also available for the meeting, if requested at least five (5) working days prior to the meeting to ensure availability.