

MINUTES

City of San Diego
Municipal Golf Committee (MGC)
March 19, 2026

Meeting held at:

Balboa Park Club – Balboa Room Building
2150 Pan American Road West
San Diego, CA 92101

Mailing address is:

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

ATTENDANCE:

Members Present

Larry Barron
David Bock
Marty Block (Chair)
Curtis B. Burkhead
Hal Corbin
Stephen M. Shushan (Vice Chair)
Richard Wallace

Members Absent

Dr. R. Lee Brown
Kay McElrath
Britton Nelson

Staff Present

John Howard
Matty Reyes
Gabriella Verendia
Annie Zachau

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Marty Block, Chair.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved/seconded (S. Shushan / L. Barron) to approve the March 19, 2026, Minutes. Motion passed (7 ayes, 0 abstention). The vote was unanimous to approve the minutes.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

A motion was moved/seconded (H. Corbin / S. Shushan) to adopt the agenda as presented. Motion passed (7 ayes, 0 abstention). The vote was unanimous.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairperson Block opened with three requests directed to staff members Matty Reyes and John Howard for their upcoming reports:

1. **Advanced Reservation Program** — Requested a summary of any feedback received and changes made since the program launched.
2. **City Budget** — Asked John to address the ongoing city budget meetings and include an invitation to committee members to attend budget hearings, submit emails or letters to the City Council, and share their perspectives on golf-related budget matters.
3. **AB 1954 Update** — Requested a status update on Assemblymember Chris Ward's bill, which is being advocated for by the Southern California Golf Association.

STAFF REPORT

Matty Reyes, Golf Course Manager

Mr. Reyes provided an update on the Golf Division's adaptive programming. The previous Saturday, Mission Bay Golf Course hosted the second annual Challenge Athlete Foundation Adaptive Clinic, welcoming 15 participants ranging from seated golfers to single amputee players new to the sport. Mr. Reyes met with several attendees, some of whom had traveled from as far as Fallbrook and Hemet, and described their experience as very positive. Mr. Reyes noted the Golf Division and Therapeutic Recreation Service are committed to growing its adaptive programming for the community.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR REPORT

John Howard, Deputy Director

Mr. Howard provided a wide-ranging report covering city finances, golf operations, and key recent developments. On the broader city budget, revenues have come in below projections, particularly from sales tax and transient occupancy tax, pushing departments to find efficiencies, reduce positions, and do more with less. The Golf Enterprise Fund, while relatively stable in rounds and revenue, is not immune to these pressures, with rising labor, water, and maintenance costs squeezing margins.

Mr. Howard highlighted that on February 4, 2026, City Council priorities memo specifically flagged Torrey Pines' advanced reservation fees as a potential revenue tool, with Councilmember Rivera exploring whether golf revenues, including lease

income and booking fees, could be redirected to support the general fund, signaling a shift in how the fund may be viewed going forward.

Mr. Howard expressed the 2026 Farmers Insurance Open at Torrey Pines was a success, drawing strong attendance and national media coverage, but uncertainty looms as the title sponsorship has expired and no replacement has been announced. The PGA Tour itself is undergoing major structural changes under Commissioner Brian Rolap, including cutting the schedule from 43 to roughly 21–26 events, doubling signature events, introducing a two-tier competitive system, and potentially shifting the postseason to match play format.

Mr. Howard noted that a city audit of the leased golf property portfolio found that lease properties generate meaningful general fund revenue, with the Golf Division set to play a more active role in lease management going forward. Mr. Howard concluded the Golf Division assumed maintenance of Tecolote Canyon Golf Course on March 2nd following lease termination with American Golf, with costs covered by the Golf Enterprise Fund pending reimbursement from the general fund, and a new operator RFP process already underway with proposals due April 14th.

Mr. Howard provided a brief update on AB 1954, describing it as legislation aimed at protecting golfer access to municipal golf courses throughout California. Mr. Howard noted the bill is scheduled to be heard on April 7 and reported that early feedback from committee has been positive, with good traction so far. He acknowledged Kevin Fitzgerald of the Southern California Golf Association, who was present at the meeting and has been actively involved in moving the legislation forward. Assemblymember Chris Ward authored the bill.

NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

Larry Sinerka, a San Diego resident and golfer of over 50 years, submitted an email expressing strong concern about the single player booking policy under the Advanced Reservation Program at Balboa Park Golf Course. While supportive of the program and its \$10 fee, he argued that preventing single golfers from booking advanced tee times, unless openings happen to be available, is unfair and discriminatory.

Mr. Sinerka noted that the policy pushes single golfers, both local and visiting, to take their business to other courses without such restrictions. Mr. Sinerka acknowledged that the city prefers foursomes to fill tee times, but pointed out that single golfers represent more than 30% of players, making the policy damaging to a significant portion of the golfing public.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

101. Balboa Park 9-Hole Course Redesign Darren Genova, Project Officer II and Landscape Architect

Mr. Genova provided an update on the Balboa Park nine-hole course redesign. The project was initiated by the Golf Division in December 2022 in response to the Golf Course Drive road improvement project, which cuts through the existing course and affects holes 1, 5, and 9. After going through a design-build procurement process, the contract was awarded to Markon Engineering in December 2025, with Hills Forest Smith serving as the golf course architects. A design kickoff meeting was held in January 2026, and the first design submittal is expected in April.

The scope of work includes reconfiguring holes 1, 5, and 9 to accommodate the new road, converting hole 5 from a par 4 into two par 3 holes, and relocating holes 1 and 9 south of Golf Course Drive. Additional improvements include reconstructing greens, tee boxes, and bunkers, upgrading irrigation, replacing turf, adding storm drainage and a biofiltration basin, building a new practice green, and creating an ADA-accessible pedestrian path connecting the clubhouse to holes 1 and 9. Tree removals will occur, but all trees will be replaced. Design is expected to be completed by end of 2026, with construction running from November 2026 through August 2027. The project is fully funded with a total budget of \$6.4 million.

102. Torrey Pines Golf Course Master Plan Update William Gibson, Senior Civil Engineer and Jacob Rivera, Associate Engineer

Mr. Rivera and Mr. Gibson presented an update on the Torrey Pines Golf Course Facilities Master Plan. In 2024, the city retained services business partnership from Tucker-Sadler/Swaback to develop a comprehensive master plan and bridging documents for what is anticipated to be Phase 1 of the project. The goal is to establish short and long-term facility improvements that meet current codes and city policies while creating a cohesive architectural style consistent with the Lodge at Torrey Pines.

Mr. Rivera stated the master plan is organized around three categories: supporting structures (new clubhouse, maintenance facility, comfort stations, halfway stations, and a potential turn support building), site improvements (parking, wayfinding, signage, technology, and infrastructure upgrades), and driving range and practice area enhancements. The plan was developed through a structured process involving stakeholder discussions, programmatic data gathering, and iterative validation before being formalized into design documents.

Mr. Rivera noted the project is divided into two phases. Phase 1, the primary focus, is further broken into Phase 1A, covering the relocated maintenance facility and driving range improvements; and Phase 1B, covering the new clubhouse, parking garage, and an entrance roundabout to improve traffic circulation. Phase 2 addresses supplementary structures such as comfort stations, concrete paths, and vendor row associated with PGA tournaments. The anticipated schedule calls for design-builder procurement from fall 2026 through summer 2027, followed by an expedited design phase running through spring 2028, after which construction of Phase 1A and then Phase 1B will follow sequentially.

**103. Advance Reservation Program Update – Balboa Park and Mission Bay
John Howard, Deputy Director**

Mr. Howard provided an update on the Advanced Reservation Program launched January 1, 2025, at Balboa Park and Mission Bay Golf Courses. The program, unanimously approved by the Parks and Recreation Board, charges a \$10 booking fee for tee times reserved up to 90 days in advance, separate from green fees, with the goals of better managing course demand, improving customer access, and generating incremental revenue without deterring local players.

Since launch, results have been strong. As of March 15, the program has collected nearly \$165,000 in fees, with roughly 90% of bookings coming from Balboa Park's 18-hole course, reflecting its high demand relative to the 9-hole and Mission Bay courses. The program has also provided operational benefits, giving staff better visibility into tee time demand patterns and improving customer communication, with lessons learned already informing refinements to booking windows and system enhancements.

Looking ahead, Mr. Howard noted uncertainty around how this revenue will be used in future budget cycles, as any redirection toward the general fund would require City Council approval. Overall, he characterized the program as an early success that demonstrates the division's ability to modernize operations, enhance public access, and create sustainable new revenue streams.

Public Comments:

None

Staff/Committee Comments:

David Bach introduced himself as a local real estate and employment attorney with strong ties to the San Diego golf community. Mr. Bach expressed enthusiasm for his new role on the committee and a collaborative approach to contributing to its work.

ACTION ITEM(S)

201. None.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m. by Marty Block, Chair

Next Regular Meeting: **Thursday, June 18, 2026, 6:00 p.m.**
Balboa Park Club
2150 Pan American Road West
San Diego, CA 92101