

Southern Hills Golf Course Advisory Board

Minutes of Meeting October 9, 2023

6:00 – 7:45 p.m. Golf Course Clubhouse

In Attendance: Golf Course Grounds Manager Jason Happe, Club House Manager Jill Loe, committee members Gail Sprentall, Don Olstad, Dave Merrill, Greg Beery, Guest Harold Greene, Guest Rob Fox

Minutes of previous meeting – August and September e-mail updates already acknowledged and on agenda for discussion at this meeting.

Golf Course Operating System – Jill reported that the system is an improvement over the prior operating system. Still working on familiarization. Tracking members vs. walk-in numbers can become challenging when golfers book online and do not check in at the clubhouse. This year to date there has been recorded approx. 13,000 rounds. As we move forward the ability to track members and walk-ins becomes increasingly relevant. Issues during the season have included no-shows (over 400) and people booking a foursome spot for fewer than 4. We need to consider a no-show policy – Jill will communicate with area courses to visit with them about their policy. Dynamic pricing seems to be working well but twilight rate needs to be adjusted to start approx. 4 hours prior to dark rather than starting at 2 p.m. A member cart usage policy needs to be considered for the occasions when members allow family members or friends to use their cart without paying a trail fee. Others (travelers) bring their own cart and avoid trail fees. We may consider initiation of a ½ price trail fee for bringing in your own cart or utilizing a member's cart. Member communication needs to be improved i.e., email updates or web site posting of events and updates regarding course activities.

Flag Pole – The new flag pole has been installed at the northeast corner of the clubhouse. Lighting is in place and will be evaluated for ongoing maintenance. Many thanks to Rob Fox for this project.

Golf Course Logo at Clubhouse Entrance – There is no signage at the clubhouse entry to indicate to visitors where parking is allowed and check-in procedures. Those not familiar tend to block entry and handicap access. There is a need for a welcome sign with the golf course logo as well as directional signs. Also, at the main entry from the highway there needs to be directional signs to indicate where the clubhouse is located since visitors are confused regarding the cart sheds vs clubhouse location.

Score Cards – The course is on the list to be re-rated but no definite understanding of when that may happen. Information regarding utilization of the red, white, blue tee box markers (according to drive distance vs age and sex) is being shared at clubhouse check-in and needs to be made more visible on the score cards.

Tournament Funds for Cart Paths – The Gannon tournament generated additional funds for cart path improvement. Priorities for fall repairs and maintenance include the turn-around on hole #11 and completion of the path on hole #15.

Clubhouse Rock Wall Reconstruction – A contract has been obtained with BTD Enterprises from Rapid City. They plan to commence work in late October and complete work by April 1, 2024. This project does not fix the issues of lack of access to the driving range.

Contract for Stone Tee Ads – Contracts need to be revised and cost recalculated. Presently advertising cost is \$650 for three years for one on front and one on back. The group agreed that it needs to be increased to \$500 per sign per year. It is suggested \$1,000 per sign for a two-year contract to avoid signage change costs.

Grounds Maintenance – Throughout the summer the golf course has enjoyed timely rains which has contributed to our course looking spectacular. Fall projects will include aeration on the course – no greens – and irrigation will be winterized when temps dictate. Play in early morning hours will be delayed for frost when necessary. Cart paths on #11 and #15 will be repaired and replaced thanks to Gannon tournament funds. Increased usage of the golf course has been noticed for dog walking and allowing dogs to run. The golf course allows early morning usage of the course but believes dogs must be leashed and picked up after. Service dogs are welcome and expected to follow usage rules.

Directional Signs – Jason continues to attempt to order appropriate signage so that golfers can understand the layout of the course and where to proceed to the next hole. Clubhouse signage is included in this project.

Hunting on the Golf Course – The committee acknowledges the concerns of residents regarding the background for the allowance of hunting and concerns for the safety of residents and golf course users. Questions submitted to the City prior to this meeting were not acknowledged.

Financial Report – Because of the length of the meeting, a review of the financial outcome for 2023 will be delayed until the November meeting.

Next meeting scheduled for Nov 13 at 6 p.m. at the clubhouse.

Ongoing discussion to be kept on the agenda:

Plans for future improvement/development – Once the clubhouse wall repairs are complete, it is critical that access to the driving range be corrected. Options are being discussed for locating a putting green where the carts are currently parked so that golfers may have a place to warm up prior to their round. Relocating the carts to the parking lot area across the street is a logical solution to the current parking and cart access challenges. Irrigation improvement and repairs to an aging system will continue to be essential. Utilization of the club house as a gathering place for golfers would encourage golfers as well as community members to embrace the facility for activities beyond golf.

Ratus for 2024