

**Sligo Creek Golf Course Task Force**  
November 9, 2009 Minutes

The meeting began at 7:00 p.m.

Tedi Osias identified the material that has already been discussed, including the operating costs associated with Sligo Creek Golf Course and how other golf courses are performing. She informed the group of the topics to be discussed at the upcoming meetings which include options to be considered at the golf course.

Council Staff will have a draft report to the Task Force before Christmas for the Task Force's review and comment. The goal is to develop recommendations that can be the basis of the report. The purpose of the Task Force is to provide recommendations for the best use(s) of this facility. She reminded the Task Force of the need to be cautious about advocating possibilities for the course to outside groups before the report is issued because the Council and the Executive are the only entities empowered to determine the use of the facility. The role of the Task Force is to provide recommendations to the Council. The Task Force should consider the information that is shared at the meetings and determine what additional information needs to be presented so that the recommendations can be thorough.

The Committee unanimously approved the minutes of October 26, 2009. Mr. Brosnan noted that if there are corrections or additions to the minutes, they can be done at a later date. The Chair agreed.

Jeff Zyontz reported the answers from questions that were previously submitted by the Task Force members to Council Staff.

Ms. Jacobs requested that the Recreation Department list Sligo Creek Golf Course under facilities in the Recreation Guide.

A question was asked as to whether the Snack Bar may be operated by a private entity. Due to zoning restrictions in the R-60 zone, the snack bar may not be operated by a private entity; however, if the snack bar is operated as an accessory use to the golf course, it can be operated by private entity. The issue revolves around the relationship between the operator and M-NCPPC. A question was asked as to whether it would be feasible and legal to have a concessionaire operate the facility in exchange for providing capital improvements to the facility.

The Task Force also sought clarification on what obstacles, other than the current lease agreement, may impact the recommendations made by the Task Force. Diane Schwartz-Jones highlighted a possible issue that could be an impediment to seeking a golf course operator other than the Revenue Authority. She explained that when the Revenue Authority entered into the lease agreement with the M-NCPPC, the Revenue Authority agreed to take on the debt of the M-NCPPC golf courses. In order for another operator to assume operations, and the terms of the lease were to change, the Revenue Authority's

bank (M&T) would have to be consulted. David Bushnell requested clarifying information on how debt impacts the recommendations made by the group. The Group will return to these issues at a later meeting.

### Discussion on Capital Improvements

Jeff Zyontz presented the Sligo Creek Golf Course Capital Improvement information to the group. His presentation focused on the current facility needs and the costs associated with those needs. The group will discuss at a later meeting whether there are existing programs to help meet the capital and operating needs of the course.

Mr. Zyontz shared the MCRA survey results that identifies what Sligo Creek golfers thought were the most important improvements to be made on the course. He also reviewed MCRA's Capital Project Needs document (dated October 23, 2009). The project costs are very rough estimates with the exception of the costs associated with the irrigation system. This number was provided by a consultant four years ago.

Mr. Brosnan would like to know if there is another option to complete replacement of the irrigation system. MCRA does not recommend phasing in the irrigation system work because this system is so old that doing the work in a piecemeal fashion could be more costly in the long run.

Ms. Sildon asked what capital improvements have been identified that will make the course a better teaching facility.

Mr. Zyontz report M\_NCCP's estimate for renovating the clubhouse, snack bar, and rest rooms as \$900,000. The Task Force wanted to know the current size of the facility and the facilities size after renovations

Ms. Schwartz-Jones asked how many rounds are needed at Sligo to operate optimally (to be self sustaining) and what would make this a better teaching course. In addition, are there programs that could be brought to Sligo to make it self sustaining?

Ms. Bartko suggested establishing four benchmarks for determining what capital projects should be included and what revenue is necessary to cover this capital investment. The benchmarks should be \$500K, \$1million, \$1.5 million, and \$2 million. Mr. Zyontz will provide the group a break out of what revenue would be necessary to cover capital projects for each benchmark.

Some members of the Task Force also sought to examine what revenue generating improvements are needed and what revenues can be expected from such improvements (e.g. what is the cost of the driving range and what is the projected revenue from the driving range).

Some members of the Task Force agreed that some existing capital projects could generate additional revenue streams if marketed differently. For example, the Clubhouse could be used by the community for weddings, birthday parties, etc...

The Task Force identified the essential capital needs of the course to be:

- A golf course that is green and playable:
  - Irrigation is necessary
  - Clubhouse that is ADA accessible and attractive (snack bar/ rest rooms/ proshop)
  - Bunkers and Tees in good shape (good drainage, good tee)
  - Tree trimming (to allow air and light flow to have the greens grow)
  - Teaching facility in the clubhouse
  - Maintenance Facility (urged by the Revenue Authority for compliance reasons)

Greens (MCRA states this will be an issue but not in the next five years)

Some interested members of the public spoke about several issues, including:

- issuing an RFP for operation of the course,
- why the other golf courses in the system were made ADA compliant but Sligo Creek was not,
- Sligo Creek is an ideal beginner's course. It "plays slow" but it doesn't take long to play the whole course,
- Corporate entities have indicated that they can operate the course profitably, so the only option of the Task Force is to recommend keeping the course open rather than losing such a valuable asset,
- How would Sligo Creek Golf Course's performance be affected if the Little Bennett course were closed instead,
- Why are the parking lot revenues shared?

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.