

Resolution No.: 16-1134
Introduced: September 29, 2009
Adopted: September 29, 2009

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

By: Councilmembers Ervin, Floreen and Leventhal

SUBJECT: Establishment of Sligo Creek Golf Course Task Force

Background

1. Sligo Creek Golf Course is a 65 acre, 9-hole golf course located inside the Beltway in Sligo Creek Park. Sligo Creek Golf Course has been in operation since 1927 and became the County's first public course in 1946.
2. Sligo Creek Golf Course is a valuable public recreational resource. The vast majority of Sligo Creek Golf Course users are County residents and more than half of its users are age 50 and above. Beginning golfers and youth also utilize the course to learn the game of golf. Both Sligo Creek Park and Sligo Creek Golf Course serve a diverse, densely populated area of the County.
3. In October 2006, the Council enacted legislation to allow the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) and the Montgomery County Revenue Authority (MCRA) to enter into a long-term lease agreement, which provided that the MCRA would operate all of the M-NCPPC owned golf courses. This agreement was created to achieve efficiencies associated with a single County golf course system and to improve the fiscal condition of M-NCPPC's Enterprise Fund.
4. The MCRA is an instrumentality of the County and is a public corporation governed by a six-member board. The MCRA was established under County Code § 42-2 to "construct, improve, equip, furnish, maintain, acquire, operate, and finance projects devoted wholly or partially for public use, good, or general welfare." The two primary activities of the MCRA are to operate self-supporting facilities and to finance public facilities.
5. In early 2009, MRCA exercised an option in the golf course lease to return Sligo Creek Golf Course to M-NCPPC on April 1, 2009 with a lease amendment that allowed for MCRA to operate the golf course through October 1, 2009.
6. On September 29, 2009, the County Council will consider a Special Appropriation to M-NCPPC's FY10 Operating Budget, Department of Parks, Enterprise Fund in the amount of \$150,000 to keep the Sligo Creek Golf Course operational until June 30, 2010.

7. While the current economic downturn has negatively affected County revenues and has required budget reductions, Sligo Creek Golf Course serves an important public purpose and closing this golf course would be detrimental to the County and its residents. The current policy of the County Council is that golf courses should be self-sustaining, and this should be the goal for the long-term operation of Sligo Creek Golf Course.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

1. The Council hereby creates a Sligo Creek Golf Course Task Force.
2. This Task Force must consist of no more than 17 members appointed by the Council and include at least one representative from the following: County Council staff; County Executive staff; M-NCCPC, Department of Parks; the Montgomery County Revenue Authority; the County Commission on Veterans Affairs; the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs; the Sligo Creek Golf Association; Friends of Sligo Creek; North Hills of Sligo Creek Civic Association; the Presidents' Council of Silver Spring Civic Associations; the First Tee of Montgomery County; and the Salute Military Golf Association. The County Council will provide staff support for this Task Force.
3. This Task Force must develop a report to the County Council that includes recommendations that will lead to the future self-sustainability of Sligo Creek Golf Course.
4. The Task Force Report must: (1) review course revenues, usage rates, and fees; (2) evaluate the costs associated with operating and managing Sligo Creek Golf Course; (3) identify essential capital improvements required to keep the course operational over the next five years; (4) evaluate what similar jurisdictions have done to manage public golf courses; (5) recommend potential public-private partnerships that would make the course financially viable; and (6) recommend golf course enhancements that may be necessary to make the course financially viable that do not impact the quality of life in the neighboring community.
5. This Task Force must submit its report to the County Council on or before January 19, 2010. This report must recommend an implementation plan that will lead to the self-sustainability of Sligo Creek Golf Course and provide the cost estimates to implement the recommendations of the Task Force. Any recommendations in this report that do not include a self-sustaining plan must identify and justify ongoing cost to the County.

This is a correct copy of Council action.


Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council