

WESTBOROUGH COUNTRY CLUB OPERATING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Date: March 9, 2016

Location: Meeting Room, WCC

Convened: 7:02 p.m.

Adjourned: 8:50 p.m.

Committee Members Present: John Arnold, Earl Storey, Dexter Blois, Jim Willwerth.

Other Attendees: Jack Negoshian, Mike Hightower, Rick Guerard, Gibbs Mitchell, Jessica Thomas.

Open Forum: Westborough Country Club member, Don Bouffard, appeared before the Committee. He mentioned he has arthritis in his hand and his doctor is recommending that he wear a brace. He provided a medical note. Mr. Bouffard was asking for permission from the Committee to use the brace during play. Mr. Blois asked Mr. Negoshian what the ruling is on this matter since Mr. Bouffard was told to ask the Competition Committee. Mr. Negoshian referred to the rule book and noted that medical conditions have precedence. Mr. Negoshian mentioned that there is a ruling against wearing a glove during play; however, he felt that as long as the brace was flexible, there wasn't a problem. Mr. Blois wanted it noted that Mr. Bouffard addressed the Committee and brought it to their attention. The Committee approved use of Mr. Bouffard's brace and no further action was required.

Minutes: Mr. Blois made a motion to approve the amended minutes of December 9, 2015 and Mr. Willwerth seconded. VOTED: 3-0-1 (abstention: Blois).

Greens Superintendent: Mr. Hightower spoke about the condition of the greens. He mentioned the mild winter we had so the greens are in good shape. Mr. Hightower noted that he will be rolling the greens regularly and pointed out the rain that is expected in the upcoming forecast. He will also have the irrigation system running during dry conditions. Mr. Hightower informed the Committee that he attended a conference last week on golf course maintenance and was seeking reimbursement for that expense. He mentioned that he will write up a report. Mr. Hightower reviewed some of the highlights of the conference, particularly those sessions that related to bluegrass and pesticides. He mentioned that the conference will help him in the way he manages the course such as spraying earlier for beetles and irrigating with high PH water. Mr. Hightower noted that a couple of his employees also attended the conference with him. Mr. Blois asked what the cost was for attendance. Mr. Hightower said it was approximately \$570. Mr. Blois made a motion to approve reimbursement for golf course maintenance conference costs in the amount of \$570 and Mr. Storey seconded. Voted: 4-0-0.

Mr. Hightower referred to the new rough mower that was purchased. He would like to reduce the size of the step cut from a 30 foot swath to 10 - 15 feet. Mr. Hightower said that he will tailor the cut to the difficulty of the hole and discuss with Mr. Negoshian first before making any changes. Mr. Blois referenced a recent article in the Wall Street Journal where they mentioned cutting the rough to make the game of golf easier. Mr. Hightower said that he will continue to mow the extended area around the greens to make it more "player friendly". Mr. Negoshian noted that there are many slopes on the course that head in to trees and that we should maintain the rough to slow down the ball, and provided Hole 3 as an example. Mr. Hightower brought up the

shrubbery located around the Clubhouse and said that it was destroyed during the winter of 2014-2015. He asked if the Committee had interest in replacing it. Mr. Blois felt that we should check with the Town to see if they'd like to partner with us on that project. Mr. Storey and Mr. Arnold agreed. Mr. Arnold said that he will speak with Town Manager, Jim Malloy. Mr. Hightower thought that it might cost about \$1,000 to replace the shrubbery. Mr. Storey noted the preferred pricing that the Town receives, which can be as much as a third off the listed price. Mr. Blois suggested that Mr. Arnold also speak with Building & Grounds Supervisor, Frank Cornine.

Mr. Hightower asked the Committee for approval to bring guests without greens fees. His intention would be to play after scheduled league play. Mr. Hightower noted that he has been the Greens Superintendent at the course for a long time and it would help him in viewing the course from a player's perspective. There was some discussion by the Committee. Mr. Blois agreed that it would be acceptable for professional relationships where course maintenance was involved. Mr. Guerard felt that it was also a professional courtesy; similar to what is extended to the Golf Pro. Mr. Storey was concerned with complaints. Mr. Mitchell pointed out that we can't expect Mr. Hightower to go out on the course and play by himself, and by going out as a golfer and not as the Greens Superintendent, provides him with a different view of the course. Mr. Blois asked if a vote was required as a matter of record and Mr. Arnold felt a vote was needed since this issue was brought up. Mr. Blois made a motion to allow both the Greens Superintendent and Golf Pro to use their discretion when bringing guests as a courtesy to play on the course at no charge as long as these guests are playing with them. It was noted that this motion also includes the Assistant Golf Pro. Mr. Storey seconded the motion. Voted: 4-0-0. Mr. Blois asked for more sand in the sand traps.

Mr. Arnold mentioned that he met with the Advisory Finance Committee to discuss the CCOC's article for a new spray tank in the upcoming warrant for Annual Town Meeting. He noted that he did not encounter any opposition. Mr. Hightower said that the old spray tank needs a new solenoid for a cost of approximately \$700. He pointed out that he had to use the large tank to spray the greens today. Mr. Hightower will work on getting everything prepared for the purchase of the new spray tank pending Town Meeting approval.

There was a discussion about the fencing that came down near the Maintenance Building. Mr. Storey clarified that it is considered protective screening, and it was not fully covered under their insurance since it technically isn't a fence. Mr. Storey said that insurance will pay for new netting and poles for a quote of \$24,000. Mr. Blois pointed out that the cost was only \$7,000 to initially install the protective screening. Mr. Storey thought that the actual price may come in around \$14,000. There was continued discussion about increasing the height, re-thinking the size, and the best way to install the netting so it is safer. The Committee agreed to wait to see what the insurance company will cover before changing the design. Mr. Arnold noted that he will wait to have the cart paths finished until the netting is back up. Mr. Storey felt that we should receive a check for \$14,000 from the insurance company less \$1,000 for the cost of the netting. Mr. Blois pointed out that we should not take funds needed in excess of what is received from the insurance company from pending articles since this was an unforeseen event (heavy snow). He mentioned that we can go to the Finance Committee to ask for additional funds if necessary.

Budget/Membership: There was a discussion about members getting their dues in on time. Mr. Blois suggested increasing membership dues based on when payment is received, which would

give an incentive to pay on time. Mr. Guerard wanted to discuss the benefits for being a member. He mentioned that he sent a letter to the Committee where he pointed out the difficulty he experienced in getting playing time on the course. Mr. Guerard noted leagues and high school teams which prevented players from getting out on the course during the week and also the tournament schedule which occurs every weekend. He said that he spoke with Juniper Hills and they said they don't hold tournaments during the weekends. Mr. Guerard also spoke with the Highfields in Grafton and their course is never closed on the weekends due to tournaments. He mentioned that these other courses hold events and tournaments during the week only. Mr. Guerard again asked about the benefits of being a member since members do not receive preferred tee times and it remains difficult to get on the course. Mr. Blois pointed out that members can play unlimited golf. Mr. Guerard felt the timing was difficult. Mr. Blois mentioned that tournaments are only for members. Mr. Guerard noted that not everyone is interested in playing in tournaments. Mr. Blois said that members can call and book tee times. Mr. Negoshian noted that there are no Friday tournaments except for two member/member tournaments and the WASA event that occur during the summer months. Mr. Negoshian pointed out that tee times are available on Saturdays and Sundays, along with holidays, from 6:45-8:30 a.m. and then again after 11 a.m. Any unsold tee times as of Friday are available for non-members to book. Mr. Arnold asked if tournaments are taking away from greens fees, however, Mr. Blois noted that members are playing in these tournaments. Mr. Negoshian added that, even if members don't play in the tournaments, they are able to call and make tee times anyway. Mr. Arnold asked Mr. Negoshian how many people call in for tee times and Mr. Negoshian noted that he has people who call in on Friday and get whatever tee times are left. There was a discussion about moving the day to call for reserving tee times for members from Wednesday to Monday. Mr. Willwerth pointed out the difficulty in accommodating everyone on a 9-hole course since we don't have the amount of tee times available as an 18-hole course. Mr. Negoshian agreed and said that, as a 9-hole course, they are limited to what they can offer for tee times. Mr. Guerard mentioned that the Highfields offers a season's pass with unlimited play. Mr. Negoshian pointed out that the Highfields runs tournaments for their members too. Mr. Guerard thanked the Committee for their discussion on this topic.

Leave of absence requests were reviewed, along with one payment plan request. Mr. Blois made a motion to approve all leave of absence and payment plan requests received to date and Mr. Storey seconded. Voted: 4-0-0.

Mr. Bouffard provided one comment from a member's point of view. He did not agree with having a step up rate if dues were not received on time since he felt that wasn't "member friendly", and noted there were times when it was difficult to get on the course. He suggested mentioning the date membership fees were due and sending out reminders without a penalty.

Golf Professional: Mr. Negoshian informed the Committee that he has been busy. He collected \$960 today and a couple hundred yesterday. The long range weather forecast looks good with rain for tomorrow. He mentioned that he needs to purchase scorecards. He typically buys 40,000 at a time due to the price break and the last time he ordered scorecards was in 2012. Mr. Arnold asked if there were any changes to the scorecards and Mr. Negoshian said there were no changes. Mr. Blois asked if the course was re-rated. Mr. Negoshian noted that a re-rating is usually done every five years. He pointed out that his name, along with Mr. Hightower's, is currently listed on the scorecards, however they only have two years left on their contracts and 40,000 scorecards will last longer than that. Mr. Negoshian reviewed price breaks for buying in bulk quantities. Mr.

Willwerth suggested crossing off their names if anything changes. Mr. Blois mentioned ordering 20,000 scorecards and at the end of that supply they should look at having the course re-rated. The Committee agreed with purchasing 20,000 scorecards.

Mr. Negoshian referred to the letter he received from Millwood Farms. He noted that this course is closing and a league is looking to relocate. Mr. Negoshian mentioned the difficulty in getting on the course on weekday afternoons because of the high school teams. He told the gentleman in charge that he'd bring it up at this meeting. Mr. Arnold felt that if this league could get on the course between 12:30 and 2 p.m. then that was acceptable. He noted that 40 people participate and it is a paying league. Mr. Arnold mentioned that the high school doesn't start until around 2:15 p.m. Mr. Blois pointed out that the tee times for this league would need to start promptly at 12:30 and we could offer ten tee times around that time frame for during the week play. Mr. Negoshian said that he will get back to them with our offer. Mr. Bouffard asked about the revenue impact. It was noted that this league would involve 40 players, plus greens fees and carts, so it should bring in approximately \$20,000, which is tough to turn down.

Old Business: There was no old business.

New Business: Mr. Storey informed the Committee that he is resigning after tonight's meeting as a member of the CCOC. He noted that most of the construction on the course is complete and felt that someone more knowledgeable about the game of golf would be better suited to take his place. Mr. Storey also mentioned other commitments and Committees he is on. He will continue to be available if the Committee needs anything and will remain the contact person at the DPW. Mr. Storey thanked the Committee and the Committee also thanked Mr. Storey for his hard work and vital assistance with construction projects at the Club.

Adjournment: Having no further business, Mr. Blois made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. and Mr. Storey seconded. VOTED: 4-0-0. The next CCOC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 13th. Mr. Arnold will confirm with Mr. Hall that he will be in attendance so the Committee will have a quorum.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Thomas, Administrative Assistant

Approved:

John Arnold, Chairman