



Minutes

Parks, Recreation, Golf and Double Butte Cemetery Advisory Board

December 13, 2023

Minutes of the Parks, Recreation, Golf and Double Butte Cemetery Advisory Board meeting held on December 13, 2023, 6:00 p.m., Hybrid Meeting- Tempe Public Library, 2nd Floor Board Room, 3500 South Rural Road, Tempe, AZ, and virtual through Microsoft Teams.

Members Present:

Susan Carlson – Chair
Lisa Zyriek – Vice Chair
Kara Espino
Elizabeth Hatch
Thomas Klabunde
Shereen Lerner
Gerardo Lopez
Dawn Parker

Members Absent:

Sharon Doyle
Dillon Moore

City Staff Present:

Alex Jovanovic, Deputy Community Services Director – Parks (Staff Liaison)
Lyle Begiebing, Transportation Planner
Joshua Bell, Management Assistant II
Keith Burke, Deputy City Manager
Craig Hayton, Community Services Director
Julie Hietter, Community Services Administration Manager
Lindsay Post, Sr Transportation Planner
Tina Sleeper, Water Resources Manager
Chase Walman, Principal Planner
Mark Weber, Water Engineer Manager
Ruben Wilkinson Jr, Community Services Manager – Parks

Guests Present:

Jake Hoselton, Grass Clippings
Jim Hoselton, Grass Clippings
Mike McBrady, Wilson Engineers
Connor Riley, Grass Clippings

Upon the establishment of a quorum, meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Susan Carlson.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

None

Agenda Item 2 – Approval of Meeting Minutes

November 15, 2023

Motion by Kara Espino to approve the meeting minutes of November 15, 2023, seconded by Thomas Klabunde. Motion passed on a 6-0 vote.

Ayes: Chair Susan Carlson and Vice Chair Lisa Zyriek, board members Kara Espino, Elizabeth Hatch, Thomas Klabunde, and Dawn Parker.

Absent: Sharon Doyle, Shereen Lerner, Gerardo Lopez, and Dillon Moore. Shereen Lerner and Gerardo Lopez arrived after vote; Shereen at 6:10 p.m. and Gerardo at 6:02 p.m.

Agenda Item 3 – 2024 Officers: Vice Chair

Alex Jovanovic discussed with the board the current and upcoming vacancies as of the end of the year. Susan Carlson discussed the vacancy for the Vice Chair for 2024.

Motion by Elizabeth Hatch to nominate herself as Vice Chair, seconded by Gerardo Lopez. Motion passed on a 7-0 vote.

Ayes: Chair Susan Carlson and Vice Chair Lisa Zyriek, board members Kara Espino, Elizabeth Hatch, Thomas Klabunde, Gerardo Lopez, and Dawn Parker.

Absent: Sharon Doyle, Shereen Lerner, and Dillon Moore. Shereen Lerner arrived after vote.

Agenda Item 4 – Annual Report

Alex Jovanovic discussed the annual report for 2023, including updates made since the last meeting and updates that will be added to include the December 13, 2023 meeting.

Motion by Thomas Klabunde to approve 2023 Annual Report including updates from December 13 meeting, seconded by Kara Espino. Motion passed on a 7-0 vote.

Ayes: Chair Susan Carlson and Vice Chair Lisa Zyriek, board members Kara Espino, Elizabeth Hatch, Thomas Klabunde, Gerardo Lopez, and Dawn Parker.

Absent: Sharon Doyle, Shereen Lerner, and Dillon Moore. Shereen Lerner arrived after vote.

Agenda Item 5 – Kyrene/Roosevelt/Farmer Improvements

Lyle Begiebing, Transportation Planner for City of Tempe, presented an update on the Kyrene/Roosevelt/Farmer improvements project, which recently went through a second round of public feedback.

- University Dr to Baseline Rd, connecting Downtown to Kiwanis Park and off-street paths
- Multi-use path from north side of Baseline Road will connect to Kiwanis Park via crossing
- Signage to be posted to make public aware of the new crossing; traffic lights will be present
- Board members asked questions and made comments about:
 - Will there be an enhanced police presence and enforcement?
 - Read in newspaper that intersection of Baseline and Kyrene is identified as having a high number of accidents; anything additional that was considered to make it safer?

Agenda Item 6 – Golf Update

- **Ken McDonald Recharge Wells**

Mike McBrady, Program Manager from Wilson Engineers and Mark Weber, Water Engineer Manager from City of Tempe, presented on recharge wells and the related system.

- Reactivating Kyrene Water Reclamation Facility
- Recharge Wells 1-4 each in various stages of running, drilled, or being equipped
- Working with CourseCo to minimize impact with night work and off-season work
- Board members asked questions and made comments about:
 - Does any of the construction impact course play?
 - Is possible impact or work being communicated to the public?
 - Has RW 1 not been functional this whole time?

- **Grass Clippings**

Craig Hayton introduced Grass Clippings and provided an overview of concerns that had been expressed by the board for discussion with Grass Clippings, including: use of Grass Clippings name, par 4s playing as par 3s on front nine holes, turf reduction, communication, and Tempe resident pricing. Jake Hoselton, Jim Hoselton, and Connor Riley from Grass Clippings were present to discuss and respond to questions and concerns.

Regarding use of Grass Clippings name:

- Tee sheet has been crowded, night golf has been booked, Tempe home to only lighted golf course in the state
- Positive feedback from local and notable golfers; PGA players and Steph Curry played
- Could do better job of communicating construction and related projects
- Want to attract current golfers and new golfers
- Their legal understanding is there is no language prohibiting them from changing name
- Branding assessment, data driven analysis, landed on “Grass Clippings Arizona”
- 35 other “Rolling Hills” golf courses in the US, wanted to separate themselves
- Was not their intention to blindside community with sudden name change; have been formally asked to roll back name change and will go back to “Grass Clippings Rolling Hills”; rollback hopefully temporary; spent approx. \$150k on name change
- Property has not always been called “Rolling Hills”
- Ken McDonald name has more significance than Rolling Hills
- “Grass Clippings at Rolling Hills” was always the proposal on documents, presentations; once awarded lease did analysis on name
- Board members asked questions and made comments about:
 - Would like to see the data from the data analysis used for making name change
 - People working at course are incredibly nice, service-focused
 - Recently tried to make reservation and couldn’t find “Rolling Hills” online; when called staff answered “Grass Clippings” and said course is under new ownership; name should be “Rolling Hills Grass Clippings”
 - Grass Clippings is leasing, not taking ownership
 - Tempe is not used or evident in advertising, marketing
 - If you invest in other courses are you planning to change their names?
 - Felt blindsided, name change was mentioned during previous presentations

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- Is rollback of name meant to be temporary or permanent?
 - Issue appears to be communication
 - Changing name of public course to company's name without public communication is bad decision even if it wasn't required in contract
 - Troon is listed on scorecards, course, golf carts; we don't have contract with Troon, unsure why name appears; why is Troon included?
 - Craig Hayton clarified there is language in contract to work cooperatively; name change is not explicitly prohibited nor was it granted
 - Keith Burke stated City is in communication with Grass Clippings and Mayor and Council are kept informed and communication from both sides is important

Regarding par 4s playing as par 3s on front nine holes:

- Hole 1 temporarily changed to par 3 to allow for temporary food and beverage set-up; clubhouse is being renovated for next 12 months; original proposal was to close down course through construction; City requested course to remain open
- Complied with request to move tee box back and play as par 4
- Hole 3 playing as par 3 currently
- Grass Clippings holds liability and sits between two giant organizations, City of Tempe and Phoenix Zoo; maintaining good neighborly relationship with Zoo is important
- Phoenix Zoo gets 500 golf balls on property every six months; Grass Clippings communicated to City and board and asked for support to change hole for six months; problem existed before they took over; Zoo stated issue has existed for decades
- Shortened hole temporarily to protect themselves; Zoo has noticed improvement
- City reached out asking for hole to be changed back to par 4
- Reached out to men's and women's leagues and City asking for help and didn't receive any; putting nets up would cost \$1.6 million, Grass Clippings does not have
- Zoo gets golf balls from driving range; driving range short distance at 215 yards
- Shortening hole 3 from par 4 to 3 and reangling, shortening hole 2 while keeping at par 3 would extend driving range and solve zoo problem
- Hole 9 challenging to keep at original distance; move back to par 4 during phase 2
- Prefer to not move tee box back, in danger of being hit by golf balls from other holes
- Will put back original tee box if that's wanted, will need to install cage for protection
- Hole 9 is not located in area of map that "must remain as is"
- Ideal to rebuild tee box during spring so the grass grows in; will install mat if done now
- Board members asked questions and made comments about:
 - What is the reason the tee box and par 3s are issues; is it public complaining?
 - Hearing the course is "doing it anyway" in regards to creating par 3s
 - Did you talk with Zoo prior to partnership and were you aware of issue?
 - Had City been engaged in conversations with Phoenix Zoo prior?
 - Are you saying you would put original tee box (hole 9) back if we want it but you wouldn't recommend it?
 - When previously asked about hole 9, communicated would be par 3 temporarily

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- Are you saying hole 9 can go back to a par 4 but not right now due to construction, or can go back to par 4 but it would need a cage no matter what?
 - Message to public was footprint of course would not be altered except hole 9
 - Craig Hayton stated that the Phoenix Zoo had contacted the City regarding the golf ball issue when the City was already in negotiations with Grass Clippings
 - Keith Burke said this is the first communication they have received that a cage would be needed to keep hole 9 as a par 4 and creates a challenge in how to communicate to public

Regarding turf reduction:

- 13 turf acres either completed or in process of being removed; non-essential turf like weeds or invasive Bermuda; water redirected to places water needs to go
- Grading has been taking place with intention of reintroduction of native plants
- Pursued WIFA grant for turf reduction but hit dead end
- Board members asked questions and made comments about:
 - Board member is in communication with Sustainability Office
 - Concern expressed about removal of native desert plants
- Craig Hayton said Grass Clippings is doing work that City could have done years ago and that it is nice to see delineation between turf and desert

Regarding resident rate:

- You don't pay online, you pay in person; can do a better job of marketing the resident rate and so can the City
- Grass Clippings doesn't think there is signage on site advertising resident fee; will be switching to new booking engine in February; can put signage at the front desk and look at current booking engine
- Board members asked questions and made comments about:
 - Friend recently played Rollings Hills and paid full price, not resident rate; did not see resident rate online; how does resident know there is a resident fee?
 - Is there signage at the course advertising the fee?

Regarding communication:

- Partnered with Troon; YouTube, social media are main channels; inherited email distribution list; marketing is primarily digital
- How do you recommend we reach out to older golfers?
- Grass Clippings wants to be better partners; would like to have the board come out
- Board memberships asked questions and made comments about:
 - Try reaching out to City staff for recommendations
 - Opening night was spectacular, putting green is exquisite
 - Board would like to have a tour
 - Would like to discuss the Troon aspect in the future
- Keith Burke stated City water bill is a useful communication tool

Susan Carlson stated she wanted to move the rest of the meeting's agenda items to the next month and adjourn meeting. Before adjourning, Alex Jovanovic recognized Lisa Zyriek's role as Vice Chair, who will remain on the board but will not serve as Vice Chair in 2024. Alex also recognized Kara Espino, whose term as board member expires at end of 2023.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Prepared by: Joshua Bell, Management Assistant II, (480) 350-8676

Reviewed by: Alex Jovanovic, Deputy Community Services Director- Parks, (480) 350-5811