



**CITY OF MELBOURNE, FLORIDA
MINUTES – GOLF COURSES ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING**

**January 11, 2012
Melbourne City Hall – Council Chamber
900 East Strawbridge Avenue
Melbourne, Florida**

A meeting of the Golf Courses Advisory Board was held at the City Hall Council Chambers, 900 East Strawbridge Ave. this date, called to order by Vice-Chairman Sachidanandan at 6:30 p.m.

1. All present gave the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. The following members and staff were:

Present:	Gubbi Sachidanandan	Vice-Chairman
	Penny Goode	Member
	Robert Coleman	Member
	Stephen Redoway	Member
	Jack Bryant	Member
	Mary Ann Bowman	Leisure Services Director
	Robert Nachreiner	Golf Director
	Ed Barbour	Mgr. Mallards Landing
	Lynn White	Mgr. Crane Creek Reserve
Absent:	John Francey	Chairman
	Eric Martin	Member

Vice-Chairman Sachidanandan welcomed Councilman Mike Nowlin to the meeting.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – November 9, 2011

Motioned by Goode/Bryant to approve the November 9, 2011 minutes.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**CITY OF MELBOURNE, FLORIDA
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January 11, 2012**

NEW BUSINESS

4. Annual Presentation to City Council

Mary Ann Bowman informed the board that on March 27, 2012 the board will make their annual presentation to the City Council. She distributed a copy of their last presentation for the board to review and update. Robert Nachreiner did an over-view of the presentation and updated the board on what changes need to be made. Ms. Bowman stated that they would mail an updated presentation to everyone prior to the March 27th presentation for their review. Discussion followed.

5. Staff Report

Vice-Chairman Sachidanandan stated that before them was correspondence from an anonymous golfer regarding the condition of the greens at Mallards Landing and from a gentleman regarding the winter frequent player discount card versus the current “Special”. Vice- Chairman Sachidanandan stated that he did not feel an anonymous writer warranted a response, however staff did provide one and therefore felt the board should address it. He stated that with the minimal staffing level for maintenance and the need to reduce the operating cost to stay solvent he feels staff does all that they can possibly do. Penny Goode stated that they cannot compare the City’s two golf courses to the private/public golf courses since they have the staffing levels they need for maintenance. She felt somehow the public needs to be educated and understand that our courses have to be 100% self-sufficient and are not subsidized by City tax dollars. She felt that often, complaints are embellished and they feed off one another.

Mr. Nachreiner stated the fact is golfers do pay good money to play the City courses and there are problems. He advised that a lot of it is aesthetics, however the greens are suffering from a fungus disease and have been treated with fungicides at a cost of \$16,000 and they are responding. The greens were recently over-seeded and in the next 7-14 days they should have grass on them and the affected areas will be covered. This is not an uncommon problem for courses. When Viera experienced this problem they tore the greens up and re-grassed them. Many of the other private courses just close those holes until they have healed. Melbourne does not have that option.

CITY OF MELBOURNE, FLORIDA
MINUTES – GOLF COURSES ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING
January 11, 2012

Ms. Goode asked if the maintenance staff were full-time. Mr. Nachreiner advised that there are 4 full-time and 3 part-time employees. The main differences between the two golf courses, which have the same staffing levels, are that Crane Creek has approx. 80 acres of turf and Mallards Landing has approx. 120 acres to maintain. Crane Creek fairways and roughs are muck based with only two sand based fairways so nematodes are not a problem. Mallards Landing is 95% sand based and nematodes are a continual problem and are expensive to treat. He and Ms. Bowman are currently looking at what they can do in next-year's budget to find the funds to improve staffing levels since it is imperative to improve maintenance standards. Ms. Goode asked if we are currently using volunteers. Mr. Nachreiner stated that they currently have 26 volunteers between the two golf courses. Mr. Nachreiner stated that they have to put the best product out there that they can since all the golf courses are down in play and are all competing for the same golfers with their daily specials. Stephen Redoway inquired about limiting the amount of annual fees sold to 400. Mr. Nachreiner advised that the board set this number last May and between the two golf courses there are a total of 305 so there are many Annual Fee openings still available. The board can always recommend changing the cap, especially if we have new businesses move into the area and the demand rises. Mr. Redoway also inquired about marking some of the fairways with white paint like #1 fairway for ground under repair for a drop. Mr. Nachreiner stated that paint is expensive therefore he recommends the Scrambles make a local rule.

Jack Bryant inquired about the guidelines for volunteers to help out on the course. Mr. Nachreiner stated they can't operate equipment but they can pick up trash, empty trash cans, ball washing, paint, cleaning of carts, etc., which frees up a maintenance employee. Mr. Bryant pointed out the exit areas by the cart paths need attention. Mr. Nachreiner stated that would have to be done by the maintenance personnel since it involved hauling materials. He pointed out that most of the volunteers don't want to do ground maintenance. Mr. Bryant asked about soil samples. All of the preventative maintenance was done including soil samples and meeting with experts. Mr. Nachreiner pointed out that Tifdwarf is more susceptible to these funguses than the Tif Eagles, Emeralds, etc., and in the five year CIP budget there are plans to re-grass the greens when funds allow. Burrows Turf grass service does our soil sampling twice a year. Councilman Nowlin stated that the maintenance issue was brought up at the recent City Council meeting. Being in the maintenance business he stated that one thing he has learned if you can't afford to maintain it then you can't afford to own it.

CITY OF MELBOURNE, FLORIDA
MINUTES – GOLF COURSES ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING
January 11, 2012

Mr. Nachreiner stated that they have been operating the courses on a “cost saving” philosophy since funding is limited as opposed to operating it the optimal way and worry about the cost later. You have to look at the bottom line and determine how you are going to fund it. Mr. Nowlin pointed out that when you keep reducing personnel you no longer are effective. Staff agrees with the board that they need to look at ways to fund additional maintenance personnel and fill positions that have been frozen. Mr. Nachreiner also pointed out that next year carts need to be replaced. Mr. Bryant stated that “funding” is one of the greatest challenges that we need to mention in our presentation. Mr. Nachreiner did point out that our bond payments of \$100,000 will end next year so that will help. Ms. Bowman stated that we reorganized the Pro Shop staff at Crane a couple of years ago so we will look at doing that at Mallards next year. Since we are now in the budget process for next year we are going to look at several options. Mr. Nowlin stated that the golf courses are a major asset for the City and they don’t want to lose them, however on the flip side they don’t want to let them get in such condition that you have to come in and get them back up where they need to be. Mr. Nachreiner stated that is where we are now and we are looking at everything. One option would be to float a bond and make all the capital improvements but you would have to find a way to pay for it. Ms. Bowman pointed out that the City reduced the Administrative Fee last year for the golf courses by \$37,000. Mr. Sachidanandan also pointed out that our winter visitors are down. Mr. Redoway said the incentive they gave the scramble group is working to retain players. Mr. Nachreiner stated with the recent rate structure changes they are able to do so.

Ms. Goode recommended sending letters out to new companies regarding afternoon golf and leagues. Mr. Nachreiner stated that volunteers are assisting at Crane with the painting of out buildings. They are in the process of soliciting bids to install aluminum fascia to alleviate the on-going painting on the out-buildings. At Mallards Landing the bar is being replaced on Monday night. The Winter Frequent player card has been very successful with 257 sold to date which is one of the reasons the annual fees are down. The afternoon special that was recently implemented was done to match other courses and to attract golfers after 1 p.m. Mr. Nachreiner also mentioned the recent coupon in the Saving Safari and the notices they are sending out via e-mails to golfers regarding specials. Hopefully in the near future we will be posting specials, leagues, etc. on facebook.

**CITY OF MELBOURNE, FLORIDA
MINUTES – GOLF COURSES ADVISORY BOARD
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6. Selection of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Vice-Chairman Sachidanandan asked for nominations for Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Motioned by Bryant/Goode to nominate John Francey for Chairman.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Motioned by Bryant/Redoway to nominate Gubbi Sachidanandan for Vice-Chairman.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. Petitions, Remonstrances, and Communications

Mr. Redoway pointed out that they are still having problems with the apartment residents walking across the fairways. Mr. Nachreiner reported that they have spoken on several occasions with the apt. managers and the police have also assisted.

Lynn White informed the board about Crane's annual NFL tournament they are conducting the end of January.

8. Adjournment

Motioned by Bryant/Goode to adjourn.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Mary Ann Bowman, Recording Secretary