

**PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**March 3, 2020**

Heather Carmona, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. at 851 South Eton

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Heather Carmona, Pam Graham, Ellie Noble, Dominick Pulis and John Rusche

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Ross Kaplan, John Meehan and Bill Wiebrecht

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:** Hayden Watkinson, Seaholm High School  
Mallory Windsor, Seaholm High School

**ADMINISTRATION:** Lauren A. Wood, Director of Public Services  
Carrie A. Laird, Parks and Recreation Manager  
Jacky Brito, Golf Course Manager  
Connie J. Folk, Recreation Coordinator

**GUESTS:** Susan Collins, Cindy Rose and Marilyn Rusche

Heather welcomed Mallory Windsor and Hayden Watkinson who are both from Seaholm High School and are now appointed student representatives for the Parks and Recreation Board.

It was moved by Dominick Pulis, seconded by John Rusche to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2020 regular meeting as amended.

**Yeas –5** Heather Carmona, Pam Graham, Ellie Noble, Dominick Pulis and John Rusche

**Nays – 0**

**Absent-3** Ross Kaplan, John Meehan and Bill Wiebrecht

**AGENDA ITEM #1: 2019 Annual Golf Report**

Jacky Brito reviewed the 2019 Annual Golf Report. Jacky reported that the golf courses finished the season with an operating income of \$247,422 and after Depreciation (\$92,703) and the contribution to the General Fund (\$150,000), the courses ended with a net surplus of \$4,719.

Lincoln Hills opened the season on March 27th and Springdale opened on April 6th. The weather was continuation of the 2018 fall with cold temperatures and rainy days in April, May, and early June. In fact, Lincoln Hills was closed for two (2) days during this period, and there were twenty-four (24) days that no power carts went out due to the wet conditions. Springdale was closed for six (6) days and endured thirty-two (32) days without power carts. This had a huge impact on our cart revenues and delayed the start of many leagues due to the restriction of "walking only" days. The wet conditions can cause turf damage if power carts are used.

November came in with a blast from "Jack Frost" on November 11th and brought nine inches of snow and forced Lincoln Hills to close on November 10th. Each fall, one course will close early, around mid-October, while the other course remains open as long as weather permits. Springdale was the course to close early as its last day of play was October 20th that included a review of annual rounds, revenue and expenditure comparisons, the Junior Golf Program, a five-year financial projection and a forecast for the 2020 season. Jacky also reviewed the upcoming 2020 marketing strategies.

Jacky stated that overall, memberships remained steady, but there was a slight decline in the residents and business categories. The last two seasons, our marketing strategies focused on the non-Residents with the promotion, "Just a Drive Away." A direct mailer went out to the surrounding non-Birmingham communities that offered a small discount for those who never been a member, and this year it generated 27 new members. This season, our target market in 2020 will be directed to the Residents and local Businesses with a special invitation to our "Welcome Back" outing on April 18th at Lincoln Hills. This will be a good opportunity to showcase the course improvements, advertise the club events, meet the staff, enjoy a bite to eat, and to hear their comments.

Pam asked if the resident memberships are worth it since it is a nominal fee and if it's a deterrent. Jacky stated that the golf courses are membership based and the golf courses are very accommodating to individuals who would like to golf the first time without a membership.

Jacky stated that the golf memberships are sold at the golf courses.

Jacky stated considering the slow start to our season, the courses finished with 49,583 combined total rounds, an increase of 2,967 from 2018, or 6%. Lincoln Hills totaled 27,020 rounds, an increase of 975, or 3.7%. Springdale had 22,563 rounds, an increase of 1,992, or 9.6%. The last two seasons have suffered from inclement weather and capital projects that hindered play, but our objective in 2020 is to increase rounds compared to 2017.

Jacky stated that in 2020, the golf courses will be utilizing PGA Coach Program. The PGA of America introduced this new method of coaching and developing new players. This program is built on the principals of the American Development Model (ADM), a proven, long-term athlete development model that has been successfully implemented by the United States Olympic Committee, USA Hockey, USA Basketball, and USA Lacrosse.

Jacky stated that food and beverage is slowly growing each season and we are pleased to report revenues of \$91,187, an increase of \$6,783, or 8% over last year. The food and beverage items had a slight increase over 2018 (\$1,231, or 2%), but the main contributor was the beer sales (\$5,459, or 14%). A majority of these sales are generated by the leagues, tournaments and our club events. Jacky stated that the objective in 2019 is simple, to increase rounds and activity.

Jacky stated that each year, the city continues to reinvest into the courses with upgrades through annual capital projects, operating and other contractual expenses. With the undertaking of the bridge renovations at Springdale last season, this year the focus was Lincoln Hills. Installation of new drainage in the fairway of #9 and adjacent to #3 tee box was desperately needed due to the wet playing conditions. New cart paths were installed in a few specific areas located near tee boxes and greens to eliminate the distressed turf and compaction produced by power cart usage. The latter was delayed due to the awful spring, but it was well worth the wait as indicated by the members and their guests.

Jacky stated that at the end of each season, the membership receives our "End of the Season" Survey, and it is a great opportunity to hear what they like or dislike about their courses.

Jacky stated that the objective in 2020 is simple, sell golf memberships. Jacky also reviewed the 2020 marketing strategies.

It was moved by Dominick Pulis, seconded by John Rusche to accept the 2019 Annual Golf Report and recommend it to be forward to the City of Birmingham commission.

**Yeas –5**

Heather Carmona, Pam Graham, Ellie Noble, Dominick Pulis and John Rusche

**Nays – 0**

**Absent-3**

Ross Kaplan, John Meehan and Bill Wiebrecht

**AGENDA ITEM #2: Request for Board Review of First Draft of the Birmingham Plan**

Lauren stated that the first draft of the Birmingham Plan was provided to the Parks and Recreation Board in advance to review the first draft of the master plan, entitled "The Birmingham Plan" and provide the board's collective comments.

Lauren stated the Parks and Recreation Board should review the findings and recommendations related to City of Birmingham parks. The findings and recommendations are from the public and planners. Lauren stated that there have been meetings and charrettes that the Parks and Recreation Board should have been able to participate in.

Heather asked the Parks and Recreation Board members are there any items that the Parks and Recreation Board does not agree on. John Rusche asked on page 3, about the operation of a café service in Shain and Booth Park. John stated that it sounds like an intriguing idea but just wondered if the Parks and Recreation Board would have a role in that.

Ellie stated that there was discussion about splash pads and the Parks and Recreation Board had spoken about a splash pad and also there was discussion on sidewalks, trails and playground equipment. Ellie asked if there would be fine tuning of the plan.

Heather stated that it is a composite of public comment that was pulled from the public planning process. The Parks and Recreation Board is not going to decide if there should be one or two splash pads. The intent was behind the comment to some extent so the broader idea that a splash pad was mentioned.

Dominick stated the Birmingham Plan is in line with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Ellie asked then on page 9, "Install an environmentally sensitive, hard-surfaced, and well-lit pathway for pedestrians and cyclists along the Rouge River." Ellie stated that she thought in the past the Parks and Recreation Board was not going to do a different surface.

Lauren stated you're going to hear public comments for a hard surface or others that will say to keep it natural. Until budgets are prepared and the Master Plan is approved this again is a bird's eye view of what people would like to see.

John Rusche stated that all the items stated in the Master Plan are good and nothing was outrageous.

Lauren stated that the Parks and Recreation Board will be involved with any item involving parks and recreation. Lauren stated that there are a lot of layers that the public still has to go through.

Heather stated that before anything is implemented the Parks and Recreation Board would review.

Dominic stated that community gardens had resurfaced, development of Worth Park and how the parks and facilities are used.

Cindi Rose stated that Worth Park is the property basically on Walgreens parking lot and that when Walgreens received their plan permit they agreed to donate it back to the City of Birmingham and to help develop the property as a park.

Cindi asked if that was correct. Lauren stated that she could not speak to that right now.

Heather stated she wanted to have some clarification in what the Parks and Recreation Board's role would be in the development of Worth Park.

John Rusche stated that one of the interesting ideas is formalizing the neighborhood boundaries to a greater extent which then could lead to more formal neighborhood presidents. There are a few presidents now not the entire city so that when things are communicated to the neighborhood presidents it does not mean everyone in the city will hear about it.

John stated he liked the idea of a speed reduction on Woodward to 35mph within Birmingham through legislative means and reduced residential speed limits to 20 mph.

**John stated that part of the plan is to make the area east of Woodward, more like the west, with a downtown walkable field.**

~~John stated that part of the planner's notion is if the eastside of Woodward be developed in a more downtown walkable area.~~

It was moved by John Rusche, seconded by Ellie Noble to accept and support the Birmingham Plan as presented to the Birmingham Parks and Recreation Board.

**Yeas –5**

Heather Carmona, Pam Graham, Ellie Noble, Dominick Pulis and John Rusche

**Nays – 0**

**Absent-3**

Ross Kaplan, John Meehan and Bill Wiebrecht

**COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

No items presented

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Dominick asked about the Parks Rules and Regulations. Lauren stated that the City's attorney's office is reviewing them and they will be presented at a future Parks and Recreation Board meeting.

Lauren stated that the Birmingham Ice Sports Arena financials will also be presented at a future Parks and Recreation Board meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Carrie stated that the department will be conducting a prescribed burn at Barnum Park in the upcoming weeks with David Borneman. David has over 28 years of professional experience conducting prescribed, ecological burns and the City of Birmingham has been using him since 2017 for conducting the prescribed burns.

Carrie stated that the fire dept. is involved with this procedure and homeowners associations and residents are informed of the prescribed burns.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA:**

No items presented

Heather Carmona stated the next regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 7, 2020 at 6:30 pm at DPS.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm  
Connie J. Folk, Recreation Coordinator