

**Friends of Duluth Public Golf**  
Initial Organizational Meeting Notes  
Enger Park Club House  
December 20, 2017

**Presenters**

Tony Dierckins – Moderator

Dennis Isernhagen – Duluth Parks and Recreation Commission Member (Volunteer)

Tim Lee – Attorney for St. Louis County - Retired

Mr. Dierckins presented historical information providing context for this meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to organize the Duluth golf community in response to the potential closing of the Lester Park Golf Course by the City of Duluth. He emphasized that the group should work cooperatively with the City in achieving its goals.

Mr. Isernhagen encouraged the attendees to get organized ASAP. He stated that presentations had been made to Duluth governmental officials earlier in December that highlighted four issues of concern regarding the status of the Duluth Public golf courses.

- 1) The program continues to run operating deficits and the proposed 2018 budget forecasts a \$108,000 loss.
- 2) An accrued deficit of \$2,200,000 is owed to the General Fund resulting from accumulated past annual operating shortfalls.
- 3) The two public courses need \$12,500,000 of capital improvements.
- 4) Strategies must be implemented to make Duluth Public golf operations financially sustainable.

Mr. Lee spoke of his experiences working as a board member associated with Grandma's Marathon. He cited the statistic of a combined 66,000 rounds played in 2017 at the Enger and Lester Park courses. He very seriously doubted that Enger alone could handle this level of play during a single golf season. He further emphasized the need to organize a board to respond ASAP to the potential closing of the Lester Park Golf Course.

## **Organization Proposals**

- 1) Form a board ASAP
  - a. The board should have equal representation of Lester and Enger Park golfers
  - b. The board should be as diverse as possible with respect to gender, age, etc.
- 2) Contact women golfers to be involved in the group's efforts.
- 3) Contact high school golfers and coaches to recruit younger players for involvement in the group's efforts. (Twenty one percent of season passes were sold to junior golfers in 2017)
- 4) Develop an organization website.
- 5) Develop Business/Strategic Plans for presentation to Duluth Governmental Officials by 6-30-18.

## **Other Attendee Comments**

- 1) Concern was voiced regarding pushing for the large capital improvement expenditures.
- 2) Pursue off-season revenue opportunities for the golf courses. (EG. , Cross Country Skiing)
- 3) Pursue tourism tax funding. Application for this funding requires out of town (>50 miles) golfer participation data. (Duluth hosts 4,000,000 tourists per year)
- 4) William Roche was recently hired as Director of Duluth Parks and Recreation and appears to be open to our organization's concerns.

## **Next Action Steps**

- 1) Sign up interested potential board members for an organizational and goal setting meeting during the first week of January, 2018.
- 2) All of our members must recruit additional golfers to join our organization. Contact information should be obtained for email distribution and future meeting notifications. These new members should also be encouraged to forward any ideas that will help achieve organizational goals.
- 3) A February, 2018 meeting will be held as a brainstorming session promoting the achievement of organizational goals.
- 4) Arrange for Duluth City Officials and Billy Casper Golf to make presentations and answer questions regarding the concerns of our organization.