

From: Mike and Cathy Pond [mailto: [REDACTED]@charter.net]
Sent: Saturday, January 06, 2018 1:19 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: golf courses

First off, thank you for all you do to make Madison a great place to live and visit..

I was at the golf sub-committee meeting on the 4th and heard all the reasons that Monona

should not be shuttered, I would like to be an advocate of Yahara hills..

It would appear that there is no way to continue operating the golf enterprise without outside funding..

I know the mayor prides himself in all the green spaces he has created but has zero interest in subsidizing golf so if a decision is made to shut down a course, please consider leaving Yahara in tact as I believe it is the course with the most potential of all of them..sell all or part of Monona –reinvest all the monies in the remaining courses and create a golf course that Madison can take pride in.(Yahara) the Mayors legacy could include creating a gem of a course, thanks for your time and consideration, a golfer who loves Yahara, Mike Pond

From: Hoitomt, Owen [mailto: [REDACTED]@uwex.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, January 09, 2018 5:39 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Fw: The Golf Enterprise's future

There are two agenda items on the Jan. 10 meeting concerning the golf enterprise. I forwarded my concerns to the Parks Superintendent and the Golf Subcommittee, and it was suggested that these comments should also be shared with the Parks Commission.

On Jan 8, 2018 6:20 PM, "Hoitomt, Owen" < [REDACTED]@uwex.edu> wrote:
Eric,

I'm a retired CPA and worked my entire career for governmental entities, primarily Wisconsin Public Broadcasting. I'm a Madison resident who has golfed on all the city courses since I came to school here in 1967. I currently play in both MARGA 18 hole leagues at Yahara and Odana, and my wife and I both have annual passes. Recent articles in the newspaper about the future of the municipal courses are very troubling.

In an effort to better understand the financial issues, I have reviewed the budgets and actuals for the golf enterprise included the Madison Operating Budget, the audited Madison Financial Statements, the Golf Madison Parks Annual Report that was released in July 2017, The Edgehill Advisors Report and the recently released Course Closure and Hole Reduction Analysis. There clearly is a problem with the Golf Enterprise, but it is not as dire as the Parks Department leads us to believe.

The Edgehill Report paints a bleak picture for golf nationally, but as they point out, the Wisconsin market is markedly different. There is a participation rate at 14.4% that is almost twice the national average. The data on rounds played, participation, and course openings and closings might look very different if the focus were narrowed to Wisconsin, and ideally Dane County. Edgehill sees an ongoing trend of less golf, because they choose to measure change from the peak years in the early 2000's. When you take a longer view, you see that golf has returned to levels played before Tiger Woods came on the scene in the mid-nineties. With a 14.4% participation rate in Wisconsin, there is still a very healthy segment of the population that plays the game.

I am much more concerned about the Edgehill analysis relating to an over-supply of golf courses in the Madison Area. There is the assumption that there was an adequate number of golf courses in 1995. Since the subsequent increase in golf holes far outstrips population growth, they reach the conclusion that there is now an oversupply. I disagree with the analysis and the conclusions. I was golfing in

Madison in the early 90's and at that time there was a severe shortage of golf courses.

Using the Edgehill data for Participation Rates" (14.4% of the population above the age of 7) and "Play Rates" (18.9 rounds per year) for the state of Wisconsin, it is possible to estimate the demand in Dane County. For Dane, the number of golfers is about 68,000 (525,000 less 52,500 under the age of 7 multiplied by 14.4%) and the total number of rounds calculates to almost 1.3 million rounds (68,000 multiplied by 18.9 rounds). The demand is out there.

The recent "Financial and Operational Analysis" uses questionable assumptions and methodologies. My first concern is an approach that uses 3 years to establish a baseline for interpreting future revenue and expense. One of those years, 2016 is a significant outlier with expense. Salary, fringe and supplies were \$450,000 above the approved budget. As reported in the Dept. of Parks Annual report overall costs rose 16% over 2015, almost \$600,000. The Annual Report offers no explanation for the significant cost over-runs.

You indicated in your Nov. 28, 2017 memo to the golf subcommittee that "staff did an excellent job in controlling expenditures in a difficult season, especially labor and supply costs". With a salary and fringe budget of \$1,482,961, I estimate that staff went over that portion of the budget by about \$160,000. (I multiplied the "baseline" amount by 3 and then subtracted actuals for 2015 and 2016 to come up with this number.) The use of a 3 year average might be a good piece of information to help inform your estimates, but to use them as a projection for future activity is shortsighted. If cost containment measures were established in 2017, then why include data that pre-dates those efforts?

There are some curious assumptions included in the 18 hole Yahara closure. With the proposed closure of Monona, there is the assumption that 35% of the rounds would be picked up at Yahara, but the closure of Yahara doesn't result in any increases at other courses. You even go so far as to assume a \$60,000 drop in revenue at Odana. If the rounds hold steady at Odana, as you project, and the number of season passes decline, it probably results in more revenue on a per round bases rather than a \$60,000 drop. At the very least, the \$60,000 should be added back into your analysis. If a modest 10% of the lost Yahara rounds go to Odana and 10% to Monona that would add \$63,935 in revenue in addition to adding back the \$60,000 of revenue.

The closure of half the holes at Yahara saves only 19% per your calculations. The 18 hole course at Yahara would cost \$197,264 more than the 18 hole course at Odana even though it would have 17% fewer rounds played. I don't know how you can find that even remotely acceptable as a manager. I understand efficiencies will be lost, but management has to take some responsibility in bringing down the costs. A 30% cut in expenses would decrease expense by another \$146,000 and costs would still exceed Odana.

When the contracts for the PGA pros were not renewed, I thought that was a good idea. In retrospect you and I were wrong. The pros had an incentive to contain costs. It didn't benefit the golf enterprise, but it provided an example on how to run a tighter enterprise. What has happened subsequently is that costs have skyrocketed and now exceed the added revenue from cart fees and concessions. These courses are not run as efficiently as they were. Having contractual employee(s) with different incentives has not been considered, but it has merit no matter how many holes ultimately remain part of the enterprise.

I've looked through the minutes of the golf subcommittee and I don't see any discussion concerning the alternative of "Conversion of the Golf Enterprise Fund into a zero levy support park service for operations" presented in the Golf Madison Annual Report, although I would guess that this approach has widespread appeal. There have been multiple public comments from individuals who are puzzled by the unwillingness to provide some form of subsidy to the golf enterprise. One of the speakers at the last subcommittee meeting railed at the ongoing PILOT charges.

Instead the money flows from golf to the general fund. As the number of holes shrink, the payments to the general fund will decrease. The Parks Dept. estimates that closing 18 holes at Yahara has an \$80,000 impact and closing all of Yahara will decrease general funds by \$160,000. If the golf enterprise were truly run like a business, the city of Madison would not see the kind of subsidy for youth golf (\$8 to \$12 per 18 holes) currently offered. There's a reason 14.4% of the state population golfs. They grew up in an environment where municipal and county courses made it part of their mission to provide cheap golf to kids. Those kids are out walking and learning a lifelong recreational activity and it shows in the high participation rate in the state. That would seem to be something the Parks Department should embrace rather than reject out of hand.

Thank you

Owen Hoitomt

█ Hilltop Dr. Madison

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Heidi Fischer** <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Jan 10, 2018, 11:14 AM

Subject: Monona Golf Course

To: <district10@cityofmadison.com>, <district17@cityofmadison.com>, <nanragland@att.net>, <anndave@chorus.net>, <madelyn.leopold@gmail.com>, <emily.gnam@cunamutual.com>, <[REDACTED]@outlook.com>, <eknepp@cityofmadison.com>, <district15@cityofmadison.com>, <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>

Please read attached.

To All Concerned:

As a resident of the Lake Edge Neighborhood, I would like to express my strong

opposition to the potential sale of all or part of the Monona Golf Course.

This

property is a green space and recreational jewel in the heart of Madison's East

side. I personally do not golf, but use the course for cross-country skiing and find

it a great recreational resource close to my home.

It is unfortunate that the golf course is not generating enough revenue to support its

operation. Before you decide to close the course, I implore you to explore all options – perhaps a long-term lease to a private operator with use limited to golf

course/open space, a new clubhouse that could better generate revenue by hosting

special events such as weddings, etc.

If despite all efforts it is determined that a golf course operation cannot succeed,

the property should still remain in the public domain as park/open space. A sale

of the property would be extremely short-sighted as the revenue would be exhausted in no time and residents left with nothing. Further, a sale of all or part

of the golf course is completely counter to the City's own goals regarding active

living (as stated on the Public Health website), namely:

- Promoting community design and development that supports physical activity; and
- Facilitating access to safe, accessible, and affordable places for physical activity.

Please keep this vital and beautiful asset in the public trust. Thank you for listening.

Heidi Fischer

██████ Major Ave.

Madison, WI 53716

From: Fey Nan [mailto: [REDACTED]@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 10, 2018 4:05 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Monona Golf Course Public Comment for Board of Park Commissioners meeting 1/10/18

Dear Park Commissioners,

I have a conflicting meeting this evening or I would attend yours and provide the following input:

If (and when) you are considering alternative uses for any portion of public land under your control, please do not sell it to meet short-term financial needs. Land is such a valuable commodity; the City should retain any and every piece of land it can. But this doesn't mean the land can't be used for other things while still under the City's control – lease it instead and seek the kind of development that is desirable, appropriate, and in keeping with the City's comprehensive plan.

In 2009, while serving as Chair of the Plan Commission, I attended a Land Banking seminar with a number of city staff (Bill Fruhling, Heather Stouder, Linda Horvath and matt Mikolajewski). The presentation explained how Denver's Office of Strategic Partnerships is proactive when land may become available, issuing Requests for Proposals for the kind of development that's needed. The City leases the land for 99 years, providing the "patient money" to enable desirable projects that might not otherwise be possible.

According to the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map, the Monona Golf Course area is designated for Employment and Transit-Oriented Development. By leasing any portion of this property, the City can actively seek this type of development if the land is no longer to be used for golf or park land.

Sincerely,

Nan Fey
[REDACTED] West Wilson Street
Madison, WI

Date: _____

CITY OF MADISON
Registration Statement for
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Agenda No. <u>13</u>
Do you have handouts? Yes <u>No</u> <u>X</u> Please provide copy to parks staff

Name Peggy Gierhart
Address 201 Kensington
Madison 53709

Please check the appropriate boxes:

☐ Support
☐ Oppose
☒ Neither Support Nor Oppose

and ☒ Wish to speak
☐ Do not wish to speak
☐ Available to answer questions

At this meeting, are you representing an organization or a person other than yourself:

☒ Yes ☐ No

- If you answered "no" **STOP**; you need not complete the rest of this form.
- If you answered "yes" provide the name, address and phone number of each person or organization you are representing: 215 6012

Are you being paid for your representation?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Are you appearing as part of your other paid duties for this person or organization?

☐ Yes ☒ No

- If you answered "no" **STOP**; you need not complete the rest of this form.
- If you answered "yes" complete page 2 on back.

Speaking Limits:

Public Hearing (Common Council).....5 minutes
Information Hearing.....3 minutes
Other Items.....3 minutes

(SEE BACK)

My name is Peggy Gierhart. I have been the Edgewood High School girls golf coach for 15 years. Before that I grew up here in Madison as Peggy Kelly. I have played junior, amateur and professional golf in madison on and off for 40 years or so. I am very familiar with the local golf community and the Madison community as a whole.

I am writing in response to the current issue and challenge of what to do with the city golf courses facing financial issues.

I understand that the city is in a predicament with the need for repairs at Yahara. I won't claim to know the exact numbers and I do understand that there is not many options financially.

I would, however, ask everyone involved to please consider all options before having to close a golf course.

Even if you don't play golf, please gather as much information that you can on golf in Madison.

I feel strongly that Yahara would make money if the repairs are completed. I would hope, since the courses are after all, under the control of the parks department, that we could find a way to find the money to help the facility which in turn will help the Madison community.

My first plea would be to find a way for the city to finance the repairs to the drainage system. I don't have a great answer here but I would hope every financial loan option can be investigated. I truly believe that Madison has a responsibility to the public courses not only for the community as a whole but for juniors and the Madison public schools.

I could write a book and pull on your heart strings about Yahara and Monona and the city courses. I could talk about the long history of how many juniors started at these courses. I could talk about how many hundreds of golfers played and came to Yahara when it hosted one of the biggest PGA junior event of the year for over 25 years. I could talk about how the large facility at Yahara is perfect for all ages and levels of play. multiple golf teams to practice, for dynamic junior programs while having the ability to host large outings and multiple leagues.

Instead i would like to give a hands on perspective from someone who is in the trenches so to speak as a high school golf coach and as a Madison golfing resident.

With all due respect to the recent analysis that has been published, I don't think demand is our problem. Golf in madison is in huge demand. Yes, there are many golf courses but we don't fit the national average. We are a young vibrant active

city. All signs point to more and more growth in Madison and the population gets younger and younger with UW, Madison college and Edgewood College thriving. I believe the city's golf rounds played by college age kids were extremely high the last few years. The only reason that yahara's rounds seem low is because when the weather is bad, the golf course cant handle the rain. This can be fixed.

High school teams have a really hard time finding a place to play. I disagree that the area is saturated with golf courses. Especially public courses.

East, Memorial, West, Lafollette, Edgewood, Monona and McFarland use the city courses right now. All of these schools have boys and girls programs that need a golf course to play and practice. This is not to mention Edgewood College, Madison college and others. This is also not including the golf programs that these schools play against. I host a high school tournament in the fall with the PGA. We host 25 schools around the state. They all love to come to play Yahara. I also host either one WIAA regional or sectional there every year. Yahara is a wonderful place to host high school teams. The courses are fair yet still challenging allowing so many levels to play the course. For over 30 years, the WIAA has approved Yahara as being a great fit for high school golf.

If Yahara is closed, where will these teams go?

- Monona being a 9 hole course, can't accommodate that many more teams and can't host 18 hole events.
- Odana is thriving with rounds and has little room for even one team right now, let alone 9 more.
- Glen way is also thriving and busy and is not a standard length course.
- Vitense is a practice facility but again does not have a course to host matches.
- A few private courses offer a day here and there for the teams (which we have appreciated) but they generally can't provide a home base to host events or offer accessibility to other schools for practice rounds, etc.
- The Bridges Golf course is very busy with leagues, there is no room for teams there either.

Where are the teams going to go? Where are the active Yahara leagues going to go? Every day at Yahara, I see hundreds of golfers playing in active leagues. The Madison High School golf programs want a home course. We have budgets. We do pay and we can pay. We don't want to have to limit or discontinue any level of after school sports. This could greatly affect that. If we have limited access to golf courses, we will have to make cuts or eliminate lower level teams.

We need our teens to keep busy. At some of the Madison schools, there are up to 30 or more golfers in a program. While maybe 10 of those players play

tournaments on a competitive basis, the remaining 15-20 practice and play every day after school and enjoy the recreation of golf. If we lose facilities for these kids to play, they are going to have less structured time after school.

So I hope the golf committee, the parks committee, city council and Mayor Soglin, for the future of madison and area public high school programs, are investigating every option possible before we shut holes down.

Because from my view, the course market is not saturated nearly as much as the strong desire to find a place to play.

As you can see, I don't see a downward spiral here. I see a city thriving in golf.

I see it. I am living it. We are already in need of more holes for the MMSD golf programs. Let's not take more away.

Yahara is a wonderful facility that will only continue to enhance recreation in Madison. Please consider investing in the repairs to save the facility that once thrived and will thrive again.

If you fix it, they will come.

Thank you so much for your time,

Peggy K. Gierhart
Edgewood High School Girls Golf
Head Coach
[REDACTED]@mac.com