

7.15.20 Task Force on Municipal Golf in Madison Parks Discussion Summary

Official actions are captured in Meeting Minutes

(<https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=M&ID=795072&GUID=FD956891-21DB-4718-961C-739D9A92714As>) and complete video recording of meeting is available on the City's Legistar website (<https://media.cityofmadison.com/Mediasite/Play/051dd9c9a2654ede9d2c6cf2a62e7ee61d>)

Recommendation #2

Task Force added a new Recommendation #2, "The City should remove enterprise fund designation from its golf courses." Action is captured in the minutes.

- Enterprise system is at odds with the program's mission.

Recommendation #3

Task Force took action to amend former Recommendation #2 to: "The City should update the Mission Statement of the Golf Program"

- Sentiment that it must have more teeth than affordable and accessible, but should identify who intended customers should be. If people of color and lower income, mission should be explicit. Should also be clear of uses other than golf.
- Be specific about what kind of equity as it relates to residents, and it is not geographic (east vs. west)
- Residents of Madison should be the focus if taking out of enterprise system and City will be subsidizing.
- Be intentional and specific about the problem that needs to be solved

Recommendation #4

After much debate and deliberation, Task Force tabled further action on former Recommendation #3, "The City should reduce holes of golf operated". Thoughts shared and possible scenarios include:

- Members must acknowledge difficult financial times caused by pandemic. Need to look at how some golf can be saved and need to be honest and specific for the Task Force's work to be most helpful to policy makers.
 - One member voiced concern that course closure conversations were premature due to lack of available information and public opposition to closure.
- Strong sentiment that courses need to be discussed as an ecosystem, and not individually
- Suggestion that Task Force provide prioritized list of hole reductions for future response.
- No support for closure of Odana, but all other courses were discussed for some level of closure.
- Potential closure scenarios discussed:
 - Explore public/private partnership for operations of Monona through RFP process and close 9 wettest at Yahara.
 - Keeping portion of Yahara open will provide greater flexibility for outings.
 - Closure at Yahara as few as 9, as many as 36
 - Feeling of exclusive environment at Odana, and if Yahara closed completely could cause further disparities in the sport among people of color and women.

- Recognize that closure of Yahara will impact other courses.
- Yahara has greatest capital needs.
- Closure of only 9 holes at Yahara will not have significant impact on financial situation of program, facility closure would be required to generate savings.
- Closure of 9 wettest at Yahara could significantly alter capital needs. Back 9 west are wettest. Course would need to be rerouted to avoid wet areas, which is already done regularly.
- Closure of 50% of holes would leave City below other municipalities but above national average for daily fee courses available to the public, and would drive up daily fees within the market. Greater market competition on east side than west.
- Start with meaningful reduction with as few holes as possible and reevaluate before investing any capital.
- Closure of Glenway to balance courses geographically
- Operate Glenway with a Kiosk model, closing the clubhouse
- Close and sell Monona to fund capital needs and support golf program
 - Members did not favor sale of park land to support golf program
 - Future use of golf land if not used for golf is not within purview of Task Force.

Recommendation #5

Task Force took action to approve former Recommendation #4 to: “The City should work with the University of Wisconsin, including OJ Noer Ag Research Station, to develop Integrated Pest Management protocols that are at the forefront of managing public golf courses sustainably.”

- Narrative should focus on deepening existing relationships.
- Be clear about social and environmental impacts of land management practices
- Improvement in this area is important to policy makers and the community

Recommendation #6

Task Force took action to approve former Recommendation #5 to: “The City should work to promote positive ecological outcomes at the golf courses through reducing reliance on limited natural resources and providing ecological assets.”

- Be specific about moving away from potable City water to use of well systems

Recommendation #7

Task Force determined more time was needed to adequately discuss/deliberate former Recommendation #6 and did not take any formal action.

- The item speaks to race, class, gender
- Needs to promote equitable access beyond instruction.

Recommendations #8 & #9

Task Force took action to approve former Recommendations #7 with amendment and #8 as written.

Recommendation #7 (new #8): “The City should work with residents, stakeholders and partners to promote wider utilization by the community of the golf courses to better integrate the courses into the wider park system for uses other than golf.”