

7.23.20 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=797919&GUID=1C52CF36-1F3B-4BB3-9A4F-E954ACD8D49E>) and complete video recording of meeting is available on the City's Legistar website (<https://media.cityofmadison.com/Mediasite/Play/375ddb86cb604610be94a48470ee43461d?Mode2=Video>)

Recommendation #1

Motion to approve recommendation #1 as written. "The City should provide Municipal Golf in Madison Parks."

- Though affirmed, formal action had not been taken in prior meetings.

Recommendation #4

After much debate and deliberation, Task Force took action on Recommendation #4, "The City should reduce holes of golf operated", to include "The City should RFP Monona and close 18 holes at Yahara." Actions are captured in the minutes.

- Recognition that Capital needs are great, City is unlikely to allocate significant funds to Golf Capital improvements especially within current financial crisis.
- Sentiment that it would be irresponsible of Task Force to recommend continuing status quo with no closures.
 - Keeping 9 holes at Yahara would not have enough impact, would need full closure of one of the courses/removal from system to improve financial situation.
- No support for closure of Odana, as historically profitable, but all other courses were discussed for some level of closure.
 - One member again voiced concern that course closure conversations were premature due to lack of available information and public opposition to closure. Discussed desire to explore other options before determining any closures.
 - Clear opposition from several members around full closure of Yahara
 - Full closure would send clear message to groups that don't feel or haven't felt welcomed at Odana. Both are used for 18 hole play and players cannot get the same play experience at Glenway or Monona.
 - When golf is doing well, Yahara does well and is profitable-- "the Bellwether".
 - Possible 9 hole vs 18 hole closure at Yahara and progressive closure.
 - Consider evaluation of financial situation and true capital needs before execution of each level of closure.
 - Impact on ability to offer outings and still offer daily play at same time.
 - 18 hole reduction would significantly reduce capital needs for course and provide opportunities for other non-golf uses.
 - Address impacts of inefficient irrigation systems and reduce water consumption as making course improvements.

- Strong sentiment to keep places that feel welcoming open, while also working to change and influence places that have historically felt unwelcoming to groups.
 - Clear opposition around closure of Monona from some members because of public support for the course.
 - Opposition around closure of Glenway because it is a neighborhood course and has little capital expense, but also support for closure because of its impact on the Wingra watershed and geographic parody.
 - Sentiment that Glenway and Monona have lost revenue in most years and if Yahara closes there would not be room for other play within other municipal courses because they would be full.
 - Discussion around play transferring to other courses within the system, which is unlikely given historic knowledge and loss of available tee times to do so.
 - Discussion around Task Force providing tiered recommendations for closures.
- Request for Proposal “RFP” Monona to remove its Capital and Operating expenses from the golf program.
 - Goal would be to secure non-profit partner that would advance the game of golf within the community. Little interest from Task Force members in turning over portions or entire program to private, for-profit entity as it would not align with stated goals/recommendations of Task Force.
 - Concern regarding it becoming market competitor.
 - Some support and opposition for outcome of RFP to influence extent of closure at Yahara.
 - Recognized opportunity for cooperation and ability to negotiate specific terms of agreement regarding City’s goals for diversity, equity and inclusion.
 - Board of Park Commissioners “BPC” will need to approve terms of RFP.
 - Expected timeline of RFP:
 - Drafting and review/approval by BPC by late October.
 - Issue to public for response for approximately 6 weeks around mid-to-late November.
 - Complete official selection process, including panel review over winter.
 - Negotiate Lease Agreement to be finalized around March 1, 2021.

Recommendation #7

No Motion made on Recommendation #7, instead, TF asked that Staff work with Department of Civil Rights and other applicable parties to draft language to be reviewed/approved at next meeting.

- Sentiment that if making statement about diversity and inclusion, it must be substantial, actionable, progressive around racial issues and specific about who the task force is trying to serve.
 - Concerns that listing targeted groups would in itself be exclusionary.
- Consider referring to clubhouse as “community center”.
 - Facilities should be designed with intentional focus on serving people for purposes other than golf.

- Specific concern around women and individuals of color not feeling welcome at Odana due to experience/vibes from other customers and feeling of historic disenfranchisement.
- Suggestion to work with community groups, such as Boys and Girls Club, to recruit, grow interest in the game and provide employment opportunities for youth of color in order to strengthen/diversify workforce and help customers feel more welcome.
- Layer uses, incorporate non golf activities onto the courses and bring in more people who haven't been exposed to golf.
- Should include language similar to "...for those historically excluded and continuously marginalized, including women and people of color."
- City should include initiatives to address these concerns in the operating budget.

Recommendation #10

Task force added new recommendation: "The City should not sell park land to fund capital improvements of the golf courses." Action is captured in the minutes.

- Discussion that Task Force should make definitive statement regarding sale of land as it relates to the Golf program.
 - Group previously felt issue was not within its purview, but acknowledge importance of capturing the Task Force's recommendations.
- Some members have strong opposition to selling land for the benefit of a single sport, while others felt it is necessary to provide funds for large amounts of necessary capital improvements.
 - Sentiment that sale of greenspace would be short-sighted, due to high value within the community as it relates to mental and physical well-being.
 - Some sentiment that there's an abundance of parkland that is not fully-utilized.
 - While complete land acquisition records are not easily available, it is believed that the vast majority of Odana, Glenway and Monona were purchased through General Fund resources. Yahara was primarily purchased through Federal Funding programs, with exception of a small expansion, which Golf made minimal payments on before the City took over the remaining balance.