

CITY OF NORTH SALT LAKE
EAGLEWOOD GOLF COURSE
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING
JUNE 17, 2020

FINAL

Committee Chair Logan called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Committee Chair John Logan
Committee Member Ryan Curtis
Committee Member Roger Graves
Committee Member Court Huish
Committee Member Karen Mills
Council Member Brian Horrocks

STAFF PRESENT: Ken Leetham, City Manager; Tyler Abegglen, Golf Course General Manager; Andrea Bradford, Minutes Secretary.

1. COVID-19 UPDATE

Tyler Abegglen reported that the pro shop and the driving range were now open to the public. The restrooms on the golf course were also open and followed the same regulations as the parks with sanitization twice a day. He said plexiglass had been installed in the pro shop, hand sanitizer was available, and staff was practicing social distancing measures.

Council Member Horrocks commented that Davis County was close to moving to the “green” new normal risk phase and then the number of COVID-19 cases increased and he felt that it would no longer move into the green phase this golf season. Tyler Abegglen said he thought it would remain in the yellow “low” risk phase for the rest of the year.

Committee Member Graves asked if customers were required to wear a mask in the pro shop. He asked if there were inexpensive masks that could be offered to customers. Tyler Abegglen replied that there was signage recommending the use of masks and social distancing, but customers were allowed to enter without one. He said masks and gloves were available for employees to use.

Council Member Horrocks said his company, which was based in Chicago, discouraged offering masks to their tenants due to potential liability issues.

Tyler Abegglen commented that the requirement for masks and other measures would be reevaluated per the County and the City Council recommendations.

Committee Chair Logan said that a portion of the public would not comply and there would not really be a way to enforce it. He said as long as the golf course employees were wearing masks they may be somewhat protected.

2. SOCIAL MEDIA REVIEW

Tyler Abegglen reported that as of June 1st there was not much of a social media presence for the golf course. He made an effort to increase this by posting two to three posts per week on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and through the feeds and stories. He said over the last two week there were 32 likes on Facebook, 3,000 people reached through different posts, 309 page views, and an increase from 25 to 674 followers on Instagram. The golf course Instagram username was "eaglewoodgc".

Committee Member Huish commented that Facebook was a dying medium and Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat were the more popular social media options. Mr. Abegglen replied that his focus was mostly on Instagram. He said that they had just done a Father's Day promotion with a giveaway of 18 holes with a cart that had over 75 entries so far.

Tyler Abegglen also said that Tom Kirkland from KSL 5 had retweeted the Men's Association tweets. The Twitter account had 101 followers with 25 new followers and 1,000 views over the last two weeks. He said there would be more Instagram and Facebook promotions after Father's Day.

Council Member Horrocks asked about the use of TikTok. Tyler Abegglen said TikTok was very popular and video based. He said they would have a golf pro monthly or weekly minute and could use TikTok for that.

Committee Member Graves asked if all the social media sites were being cross promoted on the website. Tyler Abegglen said he had not yet included feeds on the website but there were links to the social media profiles.

Committee Member Curtis asked about the content strategy for the weekly social media posts. Tyler Abegglen replied that the posts would be something to engage the public including promotions, stories for daily updates, reminders, etc. He also said he had been promoting George's Grill as well.

Council Member Horrocks commented that that his wife would take photos of the sunset and would get multiple retweets and likes. Tyler Abegglen said he would love any content and pictures provided by residents and staff. He also spoke about a drone photographer who would be coming out to take videos and photos of the course.

Council Member Horrocks talked about premature failure in the parking lot and suggested that it needed to be crack sealed.

The Committee commented on the views from the reception area and the option for indoor dining in this area.

Committee Member Huish suggested posting videos of staff performing trick shots and pro tips along with posts promoting golf lessons on Instagram. Tyler Abegglen said it was on his agenda to map out a schedule for social media posts each month. He said content would be prepared and ready to go including a July 4th promotion.

Committee Member Curtis suggested that staff create online personas for people that followed Eaglewood. Committee Member Graves commented that crazy things would get people talking.

3. DRIVING RANGE AND RATE DISCUSSION

Tyler Abegglen reported on the driving range and said it was previously closing at 6 p.m. The hours have been changed to dawn until dusk every day except Tuesday. He said it would take some education to let people know the hours had changed. The course was being closed early to clean up the golf balls, so they were not stolen. Mr. Abegglen said that he did an experiment to compare the cost of replacing balls versus staying open later and determined it was worth it to stay open later. He said that the course did close early on Tuesdays to allow staff to clean up the balls before the greens were mowed on Wednesday morning.

The Committee recommended closing early on Sunday night to allow for Monday morning mowing. Tyler Abegglen replied that he would prefer this but it was hard to get staff to come in on Sunday especially when the school year had started.

Committee Member Graves asked how long it took to pick the range with the new range picker. He also asked about golf ball theft at night. Tyler Abegglen replied that it took approximately two and a half hours with three employees. He said the theft was not that prevalent. He said a box of 24 dozen balls cost \$100 but this equaled out to the sale of twelve large buckets of balls.

Committee Member Graves said the driving range was the biggest advantage over Bountiful Ridge Golf Course, which was the nearest competitor, and should be better utilized.

The Committee further discussed the hours of the range and the potential to add lights to allow for later play.

Committee Member Mills asked if social distancing of six feet on the driving range was still being maintained. Tyler Abegglen replied that the spacing seemed to be working but did cause a five to ten minute wait.

Committee Member Curtis said the driving range was a symptom of the culture. He asked what else had been identified as opportunities. Tyler Abegglen responded that there were certain things that would be changed or altered.

Committee Chair Logan suggested that a chipping area would be nice to add to the long-term list. He said this could be done through the addition of a fence. Tyler Abegglen replied that there was limited space, but this request could be reviewed.

Tyler Abegglen then reported on small, medium, and large bucket of balls sizes, which were currently \$5, \$8, and \$10 respectively. He suggested adjusting the size of the buckets so that the extra-large bucket would be the large bucket, etc. and also increasing to \$6 for the small bucket next year.

The Committee discussed whether rates had to be approved by the City Council. Tyler Abegglen said that policy required the City Council to approve fee schedules on an as needed basis.

Committee Member Mills recommended that the adjustment to the bucket sizes so that the extra-large bucket would be the large bucket at the cost of \$10.

Committee Member Graves asked for Mr. Abegglen's opinion of the range balls. Tyler Abegglen felt that the pinnacle balls were a good quality but said he would be ordering the equitable ball without the Titleist or golf course logo for less money. This would save money and allow for the purchase of newer baskets and pyramid stacks for corporate tournaments.

Committee Chair Logan commented that the senior discount was too much and that no other courses offered that large of a discount. He suggested that the discount should be \$2 at the most and that it was currently \$5 or \$6. Tyler Abegglen replied that when he started there was the regular rate and then multiple discounted rates. He said some of these discounts were eliminated but the Friday, Saturday, Sunday afternoon discount would remain the same after 2 p.m.

The Committee asked that the discounted rates be increased and proposed to the City Council. Tyler Abegglen replied that the fees structure for senior and junior rates remain for the rest of this year.

Committee Member Huish said he was excited for the range to be open later for multiple reasons. He said the instructors needed to be available after hours as well. He also suggested that Tuesday or Wednesday night could be a youth night at the range. Tyler Abegglen replied that staff had discussed having a date night special and could consider a youth night as well.

The Committee then discussed young kids hanging out at the golf course and if it was an issue. Tyler Abegglen replied that there had been some complaints from other golfers on the course.

Committee Member Huish said there were no markers on the driving range. Tyler Abegglen replied that this had also been discussed and permanent markers needed to be purchased. He said these little amenities made the course look nicer.

The Committee discussed perception and how creating a private club like feel and appearance for the course would allow for an increase in rates, etc.

4. MERCHANT PROCESSING DISCUSSION

Tyler Abegglen reported that the merchant processing system was an issue. He said he spent every day for two weeks trying to fix the point of sale (POS) system and integrate it with World Pay. Staff has since made the decision to move to Square merchant processing. Mr. Abegglen said this system would result in more work for him as he would have to reconcile but said Square had a lower processing fee, which would save the course approximately \$4,700 per year in fees.

Committee Member Graves suggested keeping an eye out for an even better system and said staff and the committee had to keep track of all these little things.

5. ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

Tyler Abegglen reported that there was event center Google advertising and the Men's Association Google ads that were going. He said the next ad campaign would advertise for burgers and a driving range special as well as a giveaway of a Titleist wedge or a Callaway fairway wood over the week of July 4th. These campaigns would run on Facebook and Instagram.

Committee Member Graves said he could ask the Titleist and Callaway reps to donate the clubs. He said people were really motivated by contests and prizes like this.

Tyler Abegglen also said he would have a ladies day promotion next week as well with half off drinks. He said they would promote Wednesdays as ladies day.

The Committee asked if staff was contributing and buying in on changes, ideas, etc. Tyler Abegglen replied that while staff was not media savvy that they were contributing and coming up with ideas. He welcomed advertising and marketing ideas from the committee as well.

Committee Member Graves asked what the advertising and marketing budget for the upcoming fiscal year would be. Tyler Abegglen replied that it was \$25,000 for the fiscal year starting on July 1st.

Committee Member Graves spoke about how services were exchanged for play, etc. in the past. Tyler Abegglen responded that he was against trades. He said he would rather pay and know exactly what was being received. He said the University of Utah had approached staff about

trading \$15,000 worth of advertising for free golf and after reviewing this he felt that what the course was offering exceeded what they offered. Mr. Abegglen felt that by not offering trade that everyone was treated fairly.

Committee Member Curtis asked which of the promotions were measureable and how the Google ads were working. Tyler Abegglen replied that Google Ads and Google analytics would show clicks and follow through on upcoming posts and promotions. He said he had a schedule prepared for what was being spent on marketing to determine what worked via page views, etc.

Committee Member Graves asked about tracking the return on investment such as wedding bookings per advertisements. Tyler Abegglen responded that there was a form on the event center page for reservations, which would track this. He also said they would offer Google review promotions.

The Committee then discussed the potential for exaggerated numbers via Google analytics and accurate tracking. Council Member Horrocks relayed a story from the Davis County Mosquito Abatement Board and an excessive amount of hit on the website based on a search for the word "mosquito".

Tyler Abegglen commented that Google would input and change the ad words being used including words that were relatively similar. He said he would have to check Google ad words every day to ensure that the right words were being used.

The Committee then discussed ad words, SEO and the website, advertisements and external links. Tyler Abegglen commented that the course had external links on the PGA website.

6. UPDATE ON UPCOMING CORPORATE TOURNAMENTS AND STRATEGY

Tyler Abegglen then reported on corporate tournaments with the first scheduled tournament was for July 17th. He said several tournaments from April and May had been cancelled or rescheduled per the gathering regulations for COVID-19. Mr. Abegglen commented that Valley View and Bountiful Ridge courses were holding tournaments with little to no restrictions and said that he was not sure if he or the City were comfortable proceeding without some safety measures in place. He said they would still practice social distancing, spread the carts out, recommending the use of masks, discouraging gathering, having virtual check-in, etc. He said his concern was to lose tournaments as other courses had no restrictions.

Committee Member Curtis said he was surprised organizers were taking those risks. Committee Member Graves recommended promoting the safety measures at the course to attract tournaments.

Committee Member Graves asked if the County Health Department had given the green light for golf courses to operate without restrictions. Ken Leetham replied that the Health Department had encouraged the City and the golf course to follow social distancing practices and published instructions for course operations.

Tyler Abegglen commented that he would work with Ken Leetham on guidelines and procedures. He said they would offer box lunches and guide players to golf carts and ensure they were spaced out.

The Committee discussed the reasons for cancelled tournaments including COVID and course closures. Tyler Abegglen said that some were probably cancelled due to financial reasons and some were probably held at other courses.

7. FINANCIAL STATUS UPDATE

Tyler Abegglen compared the revenue for May 2019 at \$151,000 with \$153,000 for May 2020. He said the rounds were up significantly and the revenue per round was low due to the lack of carts and discounted rates. For June 15, 2019 revenue was \$109,000 compared to June 15, 2020 at \$103,000. He said there was a tournament last year, which contributed to the higher revenue last year.

The Committee discussed the discounted rates in May 2020, which allowed everyone to play at the senior discount.

Committee Member Mills commented that many players were only doing nine holes since carts were not available. Committee Member Graves also said the restaurant and other portions of the course were closed at many golf courses due to COVID.

Committee Member Logan said he would like to create a financial subcommittee to review every line item and expense to truly provide oversight.

Committee Member Graves felt that this was a good idea but felt the Committee did not need to look over staff's shoulder. He said the City needed to track everything as in the past there seemed to be some surprises at the end of every fiscal year.

Council Member Horrocks commented that twenty years ago the golf course manager let his friends play for free and he was unsure if that perception had ever gone away.

Committee Member Mills said that technology has helped to resolve that issue as golfers had to pay online when signing up for a tee time, etc.

Tyler Abegglen said that the policy manual was put in place to provide guidelines. He said these were the types of things that had to be corrected. Ken Leetham said that he had worked for the City for ten years and didn't know there was a golf course perk at that time. He said the written policy that Tyler created for employees would help to fix some of the problems.

Tyler Abegglen said he did not want to give preferential treatment to anyone and there would be no gray area. This would help employees to avoid difficult situations as well.

Committee Member Graves asked if staff was tracking everything at the golf course and if the Committee needed to be a second layer. Ken Leetham commented that he supported the idea of the Golf Course Committee reviewing the finances to help them understand the financial strategies as well as the deficit and how to help Tyler correct that deficit. He said the committee members were chosen for their areas of expertise.

Committee Chair Logan said he had viewed the course and specified several areas of concern including the need for the bathrooms to be cleaned at least three times per day, that the door to the men's room near the 11th tee needed to be repaired, that the signage around the course were dirty and faded, the tee markers needed to be cleaned or repainted, some signage needed to be replaced, and fixing pin positions. He said the bathrooms needed to be sanitized, the cart paths needed to be cleaned up including the dirt holes, reduction of mowing in some areas, and paint in some of the restrooms. He also suggested obtaining feedback from players.

Committee Member Huish said that staff should have time to paint in the winter months and suggested that a to-do list be made.

Tyler Abegglen commented that there was a list of all of the cart paths and needs. He said that the company who would be providing aeration services in July had a root extractor that staff could use to cut out some of the roots and remove some trees along the cart paths to help eliminate issues. Mr. Abegglen said he had asked Weston to make a schedule based on priority items with associated pricing.

Committee Member Graves asked about the maintenance of the rough and that it seemed inconsistent. He also asked if Weston supervised his staff and held them accountable. Tyler Abegglen said that he thought it was maintained at 2 ½" but said it was just fertilized so it may be higher. He said he would follow up with Weston regarding accountability.

Committee Member Graves also said that there needed to be a beverage cart when the course was busy as the vending machines did not work.

Committee Member Huish asked in regards to George's Grill and if Tyler had reviewed their financials. Tyler Abegglen replied that this was on his to-do list. He said they also used Square so that would be easy for him to review. Mr. Abegglen said that reservations for the event center

were down but the café had done well lately. He explained that they would be down due to the lack of tournaments and events at the course.

Committee Member Huish asked if George and Tanya were being more or less aggressive. He also asked if the restaurant could become a destination. Tyler Abegglen replied that he felt they were encouraged and had several meetings for weddings. He felt that the restaurant could eventually be a destination with marketing.

Ken Leetham commented that the exterior of the building needed to be improved. He said that some repairs to the concrete and railing were being done.

The Committee spoke on the Café building a following and how this would take time, the quality of the food, the need for them to have consistent hours, improved attitudes, etc.

Committee Curtis said he had no confidence that the Café would be open in the evenings after he was done playing golf.

Tyler Abegglen stated that the Café had agreed to fixed hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday to Thursday and 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday. He said the hours needed to be posted on the website and the door. Mr. Abegglen said they would also be offering a Father's Day lunch and dinner special. He said he would help them to promote their specials as well.

Committee Member Curtis asked if staffing was still an issue. Tyler Abegglen said the pro shop staff was good. He said they would have a need for course marshals once the tee times were decreased to nine minute increments.

8. GOLF COURSE POLICY DISCUSSION

Tyler Abegglen then reported on policies related to City employee permissions on the course, staff uniforms, etc. He recommended that children under five would not be allowed on the golf course. He said it was distracting and unsafe for younger children to be on the course. Mr. Abegglen then spoke on the use of private carts on the course and said eventually they should no longer be allowed.

Ken Leetham suggested that a use fee could be charged for those that wanted to use private carts.

Tyler Abegglen commented that about 20 individuals used private carts and said that most courses in the country did not allow them. He said they wanted to encourage golfers to use the carts at the course.

Tyler Abegglen then reported that the golf cart repairs would be completed by the end of the week. He also spoke on July projections and said he felt it would be well over the \$120,000

revenue from last year. Mr. Abegglen spoke on aeration of the course and said that the course would not be offering a discounted golf rate as a different aeration method would be used this year that would not be as noticeable. He then said he would continue to update the Committee on revenues even when the revenue committee was setup. He felt that the more the board knew the more they could help.

Committee Member Graves asked about employee training and said it was inconsistent in the past. Tyler Abegglen said he had not had training yet as the point of sale system was so hard for staff to use. He said he had worked with each staff member and his biggest concern was that there had been no training or consistency. Mr. Abegglen said training would be part of the culture, along with the policy manual, and would be a high priority.

Committee Member Graves said many of the staff had not received training and needed to learn how to communicate or address customers. Tyler Abegglen replied that his vision was to create a semi private country club experience. This would include knowing customer's names, appearance of the pro shop and course, and cleanliness, etc.

Committee Member Curtis commented that there was a need for things like a standardized shirt, a nametag, etc.

Committee Member Huish thanked Tyler for stepping into this role at a difficult time and implementing changes. He said that Tyler had the Committee's support and urged him not to give up. Tyler Abegglen commented that he appreciated the support and that it was a hard to begin in the middle of the year and during a pandemic. He said staff knew things needed to change and were 100% onboard.

Committee Member Graves said the course lacked leadership, vision, and execution before and that he felt like things were on the right track now.

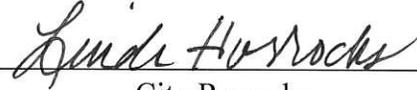
Ken Leetham expressed how Tyler Abegglen was the perfect person for the position. He saw Tyler and the Committee laying a foundation that would last for decades. Mr. Leetham said he was excited to see these permanent institutional changes and how thrilling it was to see how great the course could be. He felt that every effort put in today would result in dividends later on.

Council Member Horrocks commented on the political demographics of the City and how future leaders of the City may not live near the golf course. He said his concern was for several years from now when residents and leaders may not support the golf course, which was a great asset.

9. ADJOURN

At 8:00 p.m. Committee Member Mills moved to adjourn the meeting. Committee Member Graves seconded the motion. The motion was approved by Committee Members Curtis, Graves, Huish, Logan and Mills.

The foregoing was approved by the Eaglewood Golf Course Oversight Committee on Tuesday, November 10, 2020 by unanimous vote of all members present.



City Recorder