

TOWN OF BERLIN
Timberlin Golf Commission
230 Kensington Road • Berlin, CT 06037
Thursday, July 20, 2023
6:00 p.m.

Location for in person: Doc Mac Room

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85472756809?pwd=NVJZZW5uOUpOWU5yWGtuOFovVjR0Zz09>

Meeting ID: 854 7275 6809

Passcode: 177531

Via Phone (929) 205-6099

Commissioners Present: Nancy Berger, Peter DeFazio, Gale Lemieux, Jim Norton, Joe Pulcini, Seb Senia

Commissioners Absent: Jim Green, Bill Richards

Staff Present:

Sol Guerrero – Director of Golf

Mark Bayram - Golf Professional

Andrew Hrubiec - South Kensington Fire Dept. Assistant Chief

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Norton called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

None.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: June 15, 2023

Commissioner Senia moved to approve the June 15, 2023 meeting minutes.

Seconded by Commissioner Berger.

Those voting in favor: Commissioner Berger, Commissioner DeFazio, Commissioner Lemieux, Chairman Norton, Commissioner Pulcini, Commissioner Senia

Vote being: 6-0. MOTION CARRIED.

5. OLD BUSINESS

Director of Golf Guerrero said we spoke about the golf cart GPS system at the last meeting. Our map has been made and login information was given. I will test it out with a couple of groups.

We could turn it on next week. Chairman Norton asked if the geofence has been identified?

Director of Golf Guerrero said yes, it has been identified throughout the whole course.

Chairman Norton asked if it would be smart to send out a blurb email to people to let them know what is going on? Commissioner DeFazio added that the Starter can also alert groups as they are handing out keys. Chairman Norton said they could do both. Director of Golf Guerrero said he would write something up.

6. NEW BUSINESS

1. South Kensington Fire Department Movie Night

Commissioner Senia asked do you want to do concession? South Kensington Fire Dept. Assistant Chief Hrubiec said we went through Town Manager Jayawickrema and he said to go through the Golf Commission and then Town Council, but later on we were told not to go to Town Council with this because you need the Police department, Health department and Parks and Recreation department involved. It is because of the concessions, we wanted to do popcorn, candy, soda and water. There is a policy in place by the Town of Berlin where if you want to sell concessions on town property, you need approval from all of those groups and then go to Parks and Recreation and Town Council. We want to do this in October and this is not going to work. I went to Remzi who is already permitted to our concessions on the course. Remzi is willing to handle all of it. The South Kensington Fire Dept. will no longer be officially selling any concessions whatsoever. Commissioner Senia asked if you would get a piece of it? South Kensington Fire Dept. Assistant Chief Hrubiec said Remzi plans to donate any concessions back to the cause. We are using an existing permit from the Health Dept. to sub our concessions out and Remzi is going to donate it back afterwards. It makes it a cleaner approval process. Town Manager Jayawickrema advised that since we are not selling concessions, we don't need this and that, etc. We plan to use the old tennis court area to set up the screens. Chairman Norton said it is a public park and you can't limit people from bringing in their own food or drink. You don't have the authority to do that. Then there is prep and clean-up. Does the insurance cover trip or fall? South Kensington Fire Dept. Assistant Chief Hrubiec said that he contacted Steve Waznia who handles the insurance and liability for the Town of Berlin. He recommends using a policy from a company called Gather Guard. It is the same insurance used by anybody who rents Pistol Creek and when Berlin Fire Department rents Sage Park for a car show. He said that will more than satisfy the insurance issue.

Chairman Norton said his real concern is any damage to the putting green. South Kensington Fire Dept. Assistant Chief Hrubiec said our plan is to rope it off. Chairman Norton said it will be dark out and kids will be running around. South Kensington Assistant Fire Chief Hrubiec said I plan to have up to 15 strong as far as manpower to keep an eye on everything before and after the movie. We are utilizing the light towers on the fire truck and from the Police department if available and I also know of a construction company who has their own light power. There will be plenty of light as far as trip and falls are concerned. Once this is approved, we are going to get a tentative headcount. If we reach a certain limit, we will have a Police Officer on private duty assigned and will meet with Town Council before this should it be deemed necessary to get that through. Commissioner Lemieux said because Timberlin is a park, you should speak to Donna Bovee to see if we need Parks and Recreation to be aware. South Kensington Fire Dept. Assistant Chief Hrubiec said I talked to Jennifer Ochoa and she said the only part of the golf course that falls under her is the pavilion in the back, or if we were selling concessions. Commissioner Lemieux said my suggestion is as a courtesy. Director of Golf Guerrero asked if the event is under the same umbrella as a golf outing? South Kensington Fire Department Assistant Chief Hrubiec said no, we are not intending to use the playing surface. We did not want to go to Sage Park, we are looking to bolster the South Kensington Fire Department scholarship funds with a heavy focus on public safety and blue collar professionals. Chairman Norton asked how about the trades? South Kensington Fire Department Assistant Chief Hrubiec said yes, trades and Public Safety.

Chairman DeFazio made a motion to approve the movie night under the conditions that all town requirements are met.

Seconded by Commissioner Senia.

Those voting in favor: Commissioner Berger, Commissioner DeFazio, Commissioner Lemieux, Chairman Norton, Commissioner Pulcini, Commissioner Senia

Vote being: 6-0. MOTION CARRIED.

The commission discussed how there is a conflict with the movie night date of October 24 because there is already a night golf outing planned that day. Golf Pro Bayram said movie night would not conflict with the golf course. Chairman Norton said it would because it's over by the courts. Golf Pro Bayram said we could move the first tee up by the red tees. South Kensington Fire Department Assistant Chief Hrubiec said neither dates have been publicly announced yet. This is all preliminary. Chairman Norton asked if there is a fee to get in? South Kensington Fire Department Assistant Chief Hrubiec said we have to pay a license fee of \$450 to play the movie. We have been sponsored by town businesses that will help pay for the movie. If you charge, you are supposed to kick back 30% to the licensing company. We are going to ask for donations and sell concessions. Chairman Norton said so it is free, but you are going to ask for donations. South Kensington Fire Department Assistant Chief Hrubiec said yes, and if it works well, it will be easy to replicate more movie nights in the future. Also, there is no maximum number of guests since the event is outside. Chairman Norton said to keep us posted on this.

2. Course Conditions

Commissioner Lemieux said the course has been in good shape given the way the weather has been. I have one suggestion regarding people creating cart paths where there are none. Especially on the 3rd hole on the left, between the bunker and tree. People are using that as a cart path. Maybe we could use ropes and the Starters could encourage people taking carts, if there is a cart path, please stay on it and follow it. The GPS will help. Hopefully left of the number 3 green is off limits for the carts. Commissioner DeFazio asked if certain carts have less restrictions than others? Director of Golf Guerrero said you can designate any cart as a handicap restriction, or a normal restriction. We set up 6 to 10 carts for handicap only usage. Commissioner DeFazio asked how are we handling the handicap? Chairman Norton said the policy was already worked out previously. Director of Golf Guerrero said for someone to use a handicap cart they will show me a handicap pass. Chairman DeFazio said they can just prove that they have one and we can keep it on file. Commissioner Lemieux added that there are very few spots near the green where there is not a cart path. Director of Golf Guerrero said every green has it. Commissioner DeFazio asked if up near the flag pole will be geofenced? Director of Golf Guerrero said that area is where we need to have a second conversation.

Commissioner Senia said that he took a cart out and was playing the back and could not get up on the green at hole number 16 to the right by the pines. That is a dangerous drive up because it is all roots. Commissioner DeFazio said we are the only course that allows carts on a par 3. Commissioner Senia asked if that will be restricted so carts can't go up there anymore? Director of Golf Guerrero said it will be a lot of trial and error. We can set up all par 3's where it is cart path only. Chairman Norton said hole number 16 is not conducive to cart path only. The cart path goes to the left over there, we need to think that one through. Director of Golf Guerrero said whatever we do, we have to all be on the same page. Commissioner Lemieux asked if the cart will cut off? Director of Golf Guerrero said yes. Commissioner DeFazio asked who will have screens? Director of Golf Guerrero said there are two admin logins for myself and Golf Pro Bayram, plus two smaller setting logins which I will give staff. We will see which carts are

handicap or not, they will have a sticker on top. We will send out a marketing communication email on Monday.

Commissioner Senia said the garbage can holders appear banged up by clubs and a lot of them are broken. Commissioner DeFazio said we are working on getting rid of those. Director of Golf Guerrero said the course is in okay shape, but there are a lot of small things that need to come front and center.

Chairman Norton said he can't cross the bridge on hole number 17 without getting poison ivy, same with hole number 14. Employees are always seen on their cell phones. We are losing people to other courses because they are in better shape and cheaper. Commissioner Senia added that someone that he knows said they lost players in their foursome because it is pricey and the conditions are not as good as Stanley. Chairman Norton said the course is not worth what we are charging. Commissioner Senia asked how do we get back to being a top 10 course? Commissioner Berger said if you charge the price that we are charging, that's fine, but give them their money. Commissioner DeFazio said we set expectations for revenue based on the expenses that we intend to incur. This is the second year now that we have left a lot of money on the table unspent. On paper it looked like the course made \$197k, but \$102k is money unspent for expenses. Chairman Norton added that it is year four now. Commissioner DeFazio said we anticipated to spend that money, but we have to meet expenses with revenue. If we don't intend to spend that money then we are penalizing the golfer. Anything unspent should be partially paid back to the golfer in some form to make the golf course better.

Commissioner DeFazio said that we had seen 5 people working on a hole, the work could be done more efficiently, but they got the job done. Today they were working hard on bunkers and not one cellphone came out, everybody was doing something. I told them the bunker looks good. There are things that we can do more efficiently, but we are leaving this money on the table. I heard that we need two new mowers. It is a lot easier during the year given we have all this money to go and ask for a transfer into the CNR fund to see if we can accommodate this. Now we have to ask for this money from the reserve. Commissioner Senia said maybe we need to get some more staff in to do more work. Chairman Norton said either the town knowingly inflated the expenses, so that we cover the cost to make a profit, which I highly doubt, or it is total mismanagement fiscally. We need mowers and the cart path needs to be fixed, the barn needs to be fixed, the putting area needs to be fixed, the range area, the irrigation. We want a dump truck, but we could rent it for the amount of times that you really need it. We have seen this time and time again and nothing has changed. Where do we go and how do we fix this? To make a transfer during the fiscal year that you are in with the funds that you have is much simpler than after the fiscal year is closed. Commissioner DeFazio added that if we need anything now we have to go to the town and ask for our own money. If we are going to raise the rates to meet expenses, let's spend the money.

South Kensington Fire Dept. Assistant Chief Hrubiec stopped back into the meeting and asked if the Golf Commission knows of any other night time based events in October? Golf Pro Bayram said there are three events, September 29, 30 and October 14. Every Saturday in October is open besides October 14 for night time activity.

Commissioner Berger asked if we could spend the money if we wanted to during the year? Commissioner DeFazio said yes, it was money that was budgeted. We could go to Town Council and request a transfer. Commissioner Senia added that on a positive note, the ponds look great. Commissioner Berger asked Director of Golf Guerrero for his input on spending money. Director of Golf Guerrero said I think it comes down to getting another fund where we

can keep our surplus. Finance Director Delaney and Town Manager Jayawickrema want to start talking about having a special fund for the golf course. It would come into effect by the end of this fiscal year. Commissioner DeFazio asked if we could start with a slush fund retroactive from the past two years? Chairman Norton said the golfer has subsidized other people's budgets. There is a laundry list of things that we need. We need a cart path, barn and look at the putting green areas. Are we band aiding the irrigation? Commissioner DeFazio said he guarantees that we could get grant money if we plan to build a barn to house electric carts. Chairman Norton said that he spoke to Finance Director Delaney and some of the Board of Finance members. They want to set up a meeting with Director of Golf Guerrero, Golf Pro Bayram, Superintendent Salvio, Town Manager Jayawickrema and probably myself. The purpose would be to whiteboard everything that we are looking for long term and come up with a plan going forward. Commissioner DeFazio said to receive some insight at the meeting on how we could take some of that money and bring it back in without going through hoops. Commissioner Pulcini said a preliminary part of that discussion should be, it is a lot of dollars that we have given back the last two years, how do we set up our golf course reserve fund? Unless you ask, you don't know what the answer is going to be. Chairman Norton said that maybe we underestimated the rounds. We have to hold the line next year; we can't raise our rates.

Commissioner Senia added that we start a project and never complete it until one or two years later. When we start a project let's put a timeline to it and hold it to that. Commissioner DeFazio said he is happy that we are subbing some of the work out to Earth Contractors to allow our guys to focus on other stuff. Commissioner Berger said she gives kudos to Superintendent Salvio for the improvements that he made on hole number 12. Commissioner DeFazio said we dealt with a lot of rain and the greens are getting better. Commissioner Senia added that it seems like we have areas with a pile of dirt and a pile of trees like at hole number 6 and 17. Also, a pine tree came down by hole number 2. Director of Golf Guerrero said little things like that are getting overlooked.

3. Revenue Estimates Based on Preliminary Numbers

Discussed above.

4. Long Term Planning with Town of Berlin

Discussed above.

5. Comments From Patrons

Discussed above.

6. Timberlin June FY23 P&L

Chairman Norton said we have a \$197k profit going forward. Commissioner Lemieux added that we are under budget by \$122k. Chairman Norton said the rest is an increase in revenue. Initial revenue is up by about \$70k. Commissioner Senia said our cart revenue is up \$21k compared to last year. Chairman Norton said for part time and summer help we let go of about \$25k. There was room to add more staff. Director of Golf Guerrero said the blue collar help is only allowed 29.5 hours per week and the summer help, which is the high school kids, they can only do 120 days. We hired 3 blue collar workers this summer, one less than last year. Commissioner Senia said we could work around the limitations by doing more outsourcing.

Director of Golf Guerrero said that will be a conversation in November. Those employees fall under Union. You can't have a non-union worker doing union work. Chairman Norton said this is nothing personal in regards to Director of Golf Guerrero, it is all about stuff that has been going on at the course. People are frustrated. We are here for you as a support system. Director of Golf Guerrero said he is trying to make things better for the future. Commissioner DeFazio added that the carts have been in fantastic condition every day.

7. Open Discussion

Commissioner Senia said a lot of balls are coming very close to the green and bunker on the 18th hole. Do we need to put up a fence or netting there? Somebody is going to get hurt. Commissioner Berger said it also slows down play because people are looking around to see better. Director of Golf Guerrero said he's hesitant to have the cart guys go out there every hour because they might get hit by a fly ball. Commissioner Lemieux said the net would prevent the balls from going into the area. Commissioner DeFazio said what would a net look like on the parking lot side near the arborvitaes, a 10 ft. net would be enough. Commissioner Lemieux agreed that the net does not have to be 25 ft. high. Commissioner DeFazio said it does not need to be higher than the arborvitaes. We would just be putting a net behind the trees. Same thing on the right side of the driving range too.

Commissioner DeFazio said at the bottom of the flag sticks there are discs. People are catching the sides of the hole and the holes are getting rounded out quicker with them. I'm wondering if we should take them out for a month and see if the hole improved. If you don't take it out perfectly straight, you're hitting the hole. Commissioner Lemieux asked what was the purpose of them? Commissioner DeFazio said it is to prevent someone from scooping the ball out with their putter or lifting up the flag stick with the ball in it. Director of Golf Guerrero said he assumes a lot of seniors like it. Commissioner Berger asked if the discs are only one size? Commissioner DeFazio said yes, one size. Maybe we try doing one side, or every other hole and see if it is the same amount of wear with or without.

8. Account Balances:

- Tee sign account (\$5,578.56)
- CIP Budget balance (\$30,026.73), encumbrances (\$)

Chairman Norton asked what is next on the project list to complete? Director of Golf Guerrero said it is the normal things, bridges, bunkers and cart paths. The bridges got put back into the budget. Chairman Norton said he did not hear that yet. Director of Golf Guerrero said that everyone in this room should be involved in the long-term planning. At the next meeting we will have an agenda on projects the golf course should have. Golf Pro Bayram had some suggestions already. Chairman Norton added that a special meeting could be held if needed. Director of Golf Guerrero said we should all be involved in how we spend the money. I don't know if it is an agenda item, or a special meeting. I would like to re-do the left side of hole number 2. There is probably another hole that we could touch upon. If we do two holes a year, that is a good way to put money back into the course and improve it. I think it is time we put some thought into that and get some clarity. Director of Golf Guerrero said you can leave the fairways green and keep it playable, but right and left of the fairways you have to clear all of those trees and maybe put some irrigation there. It is more than just putting fertilizer down, you can't grow grass on roots. You literally have to do a big project on that. It is a bigger renovation than you think.

9. Reports:

- Directors Report, to be given at meeting. (see report below)
- Golf Pro Report, to be given at meeting. (see report below)
- Superintendent Report. (see report below)

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner DeFazio motioned to adjourn at 7:38 p.m.

Seconded by Commissioner Berger.

Those voting in favor: Commissioner Berger, commissioner DeFazio, Commissioner Lemieux, Chairman Norton, Commissioner Pulcini, Commissioner Senia

Vote being: 6-0. MOTION CARRIED.

Submitted by,
Alina Brown

Director of Golf Report July 20, 2023

30-Day Recap of Operations and Benchmarks

- We had a decent month of operations for the Golf Course and Driving Range.
- The GPS Map of the golf course should be done in the next week or so.
- With that, the GEO Fence will be put into play shortly after the map is finalized.
- The patrons will have a learning curve when using a golf cart.
- The system will also help the staff monitor pace of play by time and position.
- The system will also help the staff during rainy days and keeping carts off the fairways.
- Men's Club donated a divot bottle holder to be put between #1 and #10 tee box.
- Men's Club also donated 4 Par 3 divot mix holders for the Par 3 tee boxes.
- The refund for Paul Heimann's season pass has been processed.
- The refund for Rich Schlichting's season pass has been processed.
- Both should receive their refunds from town soon.

Looking Ahead/Goals

- Continue to work with Golf Commission on new, innovative ways to increase play and revenues.
 - Working with Jerry and rest of maintenance crew to pay attention to small details such as cup cutting, green speed, rough length, and divot mix program.
 - Get consistency with pace of play during normal play and for tournaments.
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Golf Pro Report

To: Golf Commission

From: Marc S. Bayram, PGA

July 2023

30-Day Recap of Operations and Benchmarks

- Detailed revenue comparison between 2022-2023 is attached.
 - Junior golf programs have started and have been overwhelmingly popular. We have programs for ages 5-17. So far, we have totaled 130+ juniors between our junior camps (ages 5-10), PGA Jr League (ages 7-17), and Future Stars Academy (ages 10-15).
 - I have been nominated as the CT PGA Youth Player Development Award for 2023. I submitted my application this month.
 - In 2023 we had added 5 new outings that have 100+ players. 2 we have already successfully hosted and the other 3 are coming up over the next couple of months. These outings are large sources of revenue for the town of Berlin. We have also gotten a commitment from the St Paul outing for 2024.
 - Most of the leagues have paid in full. Our leagues are a huge revenue source for the golf course. We host 25+ leagues on weekdays.
 - Youth on Course has been very popular this season. With memberships, junior golfers under 18 can play 9-holes at Timberlin for \$5. YOC subsidizes an additional \$7. We should be receiving our first subsidy check by the end of July for 100+ rounds.
 - In July we hosted the Bob Stein Grandparent Grandchild outing. This event was hosted by the Senior Men's Club and an event where grandparents get the opportunity to play with their grandchildren. Bob Stein was a very nice man who took a great passion in this event, and he wanted nothing more than to keep this going after he passed away. After a battle with cancer, he passed back in 2011, which was my first year. Since then, working with John Rao of the Senior Men's Club, we have dedicated this event to Bob and kept it going.
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Successes and Challenges

- Pace of play seems to still be an issue for club events. I think the addition of GPS in the carts will help staff identify slow play issues earlier.
- The 2 teams (town and my staff) have been working quite well together. We have had a couple of issues since the beginning of the season, but Sol and I addressed them and continue to work together to make things as efficient as possible. I hope the customers' experience has improved this year with the extra help, from what I have seen it has been good and the check-in process getting better.
- Golf Shop sales are down quite a bit from years past. I had a feeling that may happen with the counter being on the opposite side, however, it makes the most sense to have the golf shop set up the way it is and it was part of the sacrifice I made for the town to implement their changes along with moving my office. I will just need to do a better job with my prebook ordering for 2024.

Customer Satisfaction

- I recommend a mid-season survey to customers. Things like customer service, course condition, pace of play, instructional programs, food and beverage, etc. can be put on the survey with maybe a comment section for recommendations. This type of thing shows we care and it also helps us hear what the customer is feeling during their experience at Timberlin GC.
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Staffing Report

- Staff have worked together well.

Looking Ahead/Goals

- Advertise Fall Junior Programs as well as other instructional programs offered.
 - Monitor staff and adjust their daily routines as deemed necessary.
 - Continue to keep the tee sheet organized daily with the number of leagues, organizations, outings, and regular play traffic we get each day.
 - Coach Jr League All Star Teams.
 - Create fall outing schedule for Remzi.
 - Continue updating the website and blast email marketing.
 - Collect league 2nd half payments.
 - Create video content for our marketing team.
 - Host junior clinics.
 - Successfully host our largest outing of the year, 240-player Ryan Lee Memorial August 5th.
-



JULY, 2023 REPORT

From the Desk of Jerry Salvio

We are doing our best to survive the excessive rainfall and humidity that we are currently experiencing. The course is beyond saturated and each rain shower/storm does not help the situation. It has been very difficult to prepare the course each day.

Under the extreme conditions we are currently experiencing, in the middle of the growing season it is stressful and frustrating to have no control over playability on the course. Many golfers have no idea how 2" to 4" of rain will impact playability. Let me offer some examples and ideas for you to think about to better understand:

- Humidity – If your shirt is sticking to you, what do you think the golf ball is doing to the putting surface?
- Lack of air movement reduces dry down and the sticky texture of the turfgrass.
- You are playing golf outside. The weather has the biggest impact on the playing conditions.
- Rainfall in July is higher than April through June. That is more rain in 16 days than the last 90 days.

Below is a chart (provided by a very good friend and respected agronomist) which will help you better understand how rainfall, humidity and wind affect playing conditions.

Monthly Precip	Humidity/Wind	Results
0-2"	Low/Windy	Lots of moisture management, perfect golf weather, firm/fast, non-irrigated turf off color
2-4"	Med/Breezy	More careful moisture management, mostly consistent golf conditions, periods of firm/fast, periods of less-than-ideal conditions, good turf health
4-6"	High/Low wind	Sneaky dry periods following rain events, inconsistent golf conditions, slower greens, excessive growth, saturated periods, skipping mowing events
6"+	High/Low wind	Completely inconsistent conditions, slow/velcro like greens, no-dry down, excessive growth, difficult to mow everything, water in bunkers/washouts, high disease pressure
10"+	Excessive/No air movement	Just keep the place alive and fix the bunkers when there isn't water in them

Disease pressure is the highest since 2021. Fungicide intervals have shortened significantly due to excessive turfgrass growth and lack in mowing consistency. Consequently, the chemical programs developed are having to be modified and additional applications are required to keep disease and growth in check.

Hopefully this simplistic explanation will help you understand how these extreme conditions affect playability.

Faithfully submitted,

Jerry Salvio
Assistant Director of Golf
Timberlin Golf Club
Member of Golf Course Superintendents Association of America
Member of Connecticut Association of Golf Course Superintendents

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BERLIN TOWN CLERK

2023 AUG -1 PM 4:52

Kathryn Wallace
BERLIN, CT.