

Bella Vista POA  
 Joint Advisory Golf Committee  
 Minutes – July 13, 2016

Members Present: Jim Abrahamson, Bill Barr, Rex Butler, Dean Collins, Jake Grasmick, Harris McKee, Susan Nuttall, Terry Predl, and Tom Stephens.. Members Absent: Kirk Van De Walle, David Whelchel

Others Present: POA GM Tom Judson; POA Interim Golf Ops Manager, Darryl Muldoon; POA Liaisons: Ruth Hatcher, Bruce Portillo; Visitors: Steve McKee, Lynn Atkins, and John Nuttall.

1. Chair **Jake Grasmick** called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.
2. **Minutes for June were approved by email.**

**3. Reports from Management**

**a. Tom Judson:**

**Scotsdale:** Renovation efforts of Scotsdale Clubhouse are proceeding on schedule for the September 7th opening. Two representatives are receiving Alcohol Awareness Training in Little Rock, a prerequisite for obtaining the liquor license for the club.

**Golf Ops Mgr:** The search for a new Golf Operations Manager is progressing. The preferred candidate will be in Bella Vista on July 14th for his second interview. Mrs. Judson will provide the candidate's wife with a tour while he undergoes interviews from 9:00-4:00. Judson noted that the applicant comes from Louisiana, a state which he has never visited.

**Operations-1:** The revenue summary in the table below was presented showing substantial revenue increases both last year and this year. In response to a question remembering that the practice of charging every player without either seat-lease or private cart, for a cart had been touted as a way to recover \$500k in revenue lost because of free-riding, Mr. Judson took as action item a resolution of that hypothesis with the reported data.

<b>Member Golf and Cart Revenue Analysis YTD June 30, 2016</b>			
	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Green &amp; Cart Fees</b>	<b>\$1,075,978</b>	<b>\$1,250,345</b>	<b>\$1,376,263</b>
<b>Increase Over Prior Year</b>		<b>174,367</b>	<b>125,918</b>

**Operations-2:** Noting the many favorable comments that have been received on the condition of the Highlands course, a Pizza Recognition Party is planned to thank the Maintenance Crews for their part in providing customer service at the highest level.

**Signage:** The renovations of Lake Point and Scotsdale include \$40,000 and \$20,000 respectively for signage. In addition, the city of Bella Vista has \$20,000 in a signage budget. The POA and the City are working together to place 15 signs with up to three messages to help visitors find their way around Bella Vista. The signs will be of the "Wayfinder" signs being used throughout Northwest Arkansas.

**Metfield Beautification:** Sodding will take place shortly near the proshop. This is in the area where cart parking has continued to make lawn development difficult.

**b. Darryl Muldoon:**

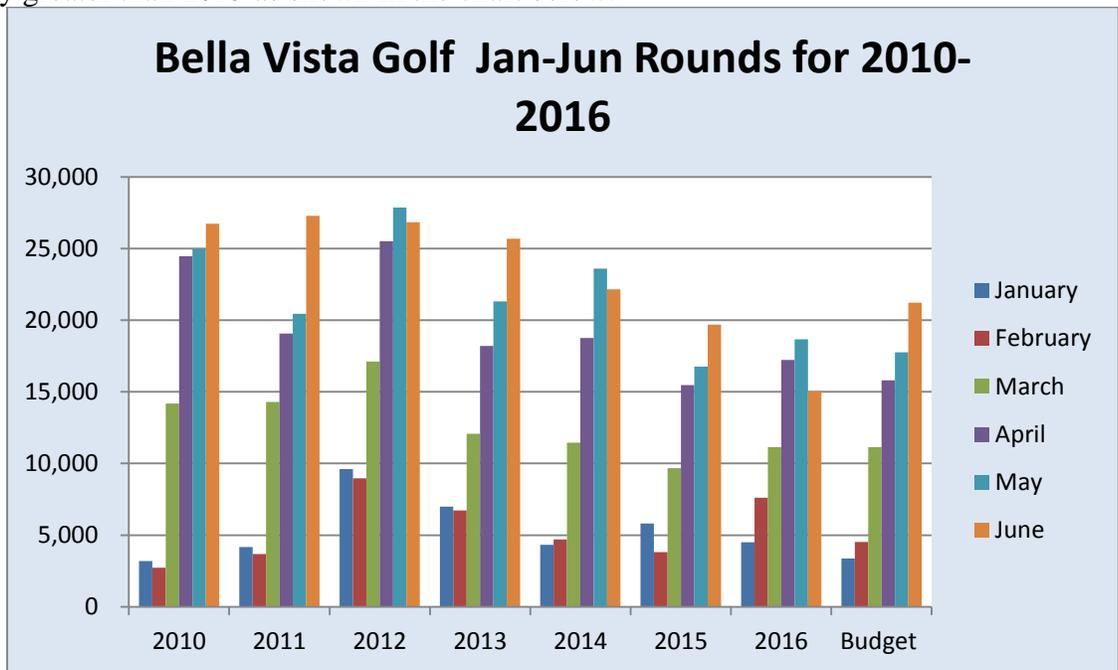
**Play It Forward:** Markers have been placed at Scotsdale and Dogwood. Work is proceeding on stencils for marking the location on the cart paths like the Mr. Mulligan stencils already

placed along the Highlands fairways. Some discussion ensued concerning whether labeling the tees "Play It Forward" rather than just having a fifth tee was more appropriate. Also, concern was expressed about not building real tee boxes. Chairman Grasmick suggested to the Greens and Courses Committee that they might consider making a recommendation.

**BVCC Logo:** A new logo for the Bella Vista Country Club, designed by Marketing Manager John Walsh is shown in the heading of these minutes. The logo represents the architecture of the Fay Jones designed Country Club. As shown, it is appropriate for clothing or for marking the Play It Forward markers. A version suitable for print will include additional color that will highlight the stone columns as well as the structure.

**Jr. Golf:** High school teams are up and running with summer practices. Darryl plans to hold work sessions to teach the team members proper course etiquette, including bunker raking and ball mark repair. The Junior Clinics with 20 students per class have been very well received. Parents are especially pleased an note that there is no other similar opportunity available.

**Rounds---**June rounds fell below the budgeted level for the first month of 2016 but were slightly greater than 2015 as shown in the chart below.



**Events:** The 4th of July Tournament at the Highlands was a great success with 71 couples participating. The weekend of July 16 will see the Men's Classic and 80 kids will have a tournament on Tuesday July 19th.

**c. Maintenance -** Darryl standing in for Keith Ihms who was absent because of a heart irregularity

**Scotsdale Greens & Bunkers:** Greens are in great condition and will be mowed every second day going forward. Bunker work will begin in August. Currently have 14 in plan.

**Sand Bottles:** The long range plans are to have sand bottles on every cart. Various options are being considered. Simply buying Club Car accessory bottles might be problematic long term if our next carts are another brand.

**d. Board Liaison--**No additional comments.

**4. Sub-Committee Reports**

- a. **Junior Golf and Tournaments/Course Enhancements/Volunteer Groups--**See Discussion above. Lads & Lassies of Scotsdale have placed permanent markers on the Scotsdale tees. Some painting is still to be completed.
- b. **Marketing--**Susan Nuttall reviewed the Marketing Plan distributed by email prior to the meeting. The first five pages are included as Appendix I. The fundamental suggestion is to develop an agreement with a group such as Golf18 as a way to make un-reserved tee times available to non-members. Such a system would be integrated into our reservation system. We would not be obligated to provide a specific number of tee times and would be able to designate each week an availability schedule. Stone Meadows has used such a system and is very pleased. Fees are collected when reservations are made, so no-shows are not a problem. In addition, we get the email address of anyone making a reservation! Our email data base now includes 15,700 names.  
Susan had asked for feedback and Jim Abrahamson responded with several suggestions. We should conduct a cost/benefit for each of the marketing options presented. In addition, we should conduct a cost/benefit analysis of the various tournaments that we conduct. He also suggested placing small coupons on the sports pages not only in the NWA area but in Kansas City and Tulsa.
- c. **Greens and Courses--**Tom Stephens reported that the roughs are lush and the courses are in good condition except for the continuing problem of rocks in the bunkers. He also noted that some issues remain in the course marking which he worked on last year. He also expressed a need to re-establish a plan to re-rate the courses on a systematic basis.

5. **Guest Comments:** Steve McKee provided a paper contending that the current Annual Golf Rate is much too low. He proposes raising the annual rate over two years from the current \$1,866 to \$4,400. He seemed to underestimate the elasticity of demand for the annual and to overestimate the elasticity of the operating costs with play. He also assumed that all holders play at a maximum rate without regard to weather or other responsibilities.

**6. Old Business-None****7. New Business-None****8. Volunteer Hours = 205****9. Adjourn: 6:45****10. Next Meeting: August 10, 2016, 5:00 p.m. - POA Board Room**

Submitted by: Harris McKee, Secretary

**Appendix I. Golf Joint Advisory Committee – Marketing Subgroup  
2017 Marketing Budget Requests--  
DRAFT**

**May 11, 2016**

**Summary**

**Problem:** Bella Vista Golf courses are currently hosting about 160,000 tee times per year. At the height in 2008, over 300,000 rounds were being played. This decline causes a shortfall of about \$2 million dollars with costs exceeding revenue. Assessment funding is being used to overcome this shortfall, but it is not a favorable financial pattern for the long term. Additional revenue streams are needed – quickly.

**Alternative Solutions:**

- Generate more revenue through non member rounds
- Raise golf fees to cover the shortfall (sure to be unpopular with members)
- Raise assessments to cover the shortfall (unlikely to pass)
- Close a golf course (difficult due to declarations and covenants)

We believe the alternative to **generate revenue** is the preferable approach and is the basis for the following recommendation.

**Recommendation:** The Golf Advisory committee recommends that in 2017 the Marketing effort focused on **generating additional paid rounds of golf and related sales**. In this budget request we would:

- 1) Generate Additional Sales through Targeted Marketing
- 2) Simplify Online Information, a focus area that includes Documenting Image Strategies for the BVV Golf Courses and Implementation of the low cost elements identified in the Image Strategies. *Capital projects identified in the Image Strategies are excluded from this recommendation.*

**Approach:** In 2016, several improvements were made to enable online tee times for non-members, making web sites more useable, consolidating email lists, documenting the strategy for Scotsdale and starting to promote golf to non-members. In 2017, we expect to continue these campaigns, and do additional advertising online and in local media.

With the opening of Lakepoint in the Spring, there is an important opportunity to capture the attention of the metropolitan area, and promote golf alongside Lakepoint. Tactics may include online advertising, print advertising, TV advertising and publicity.

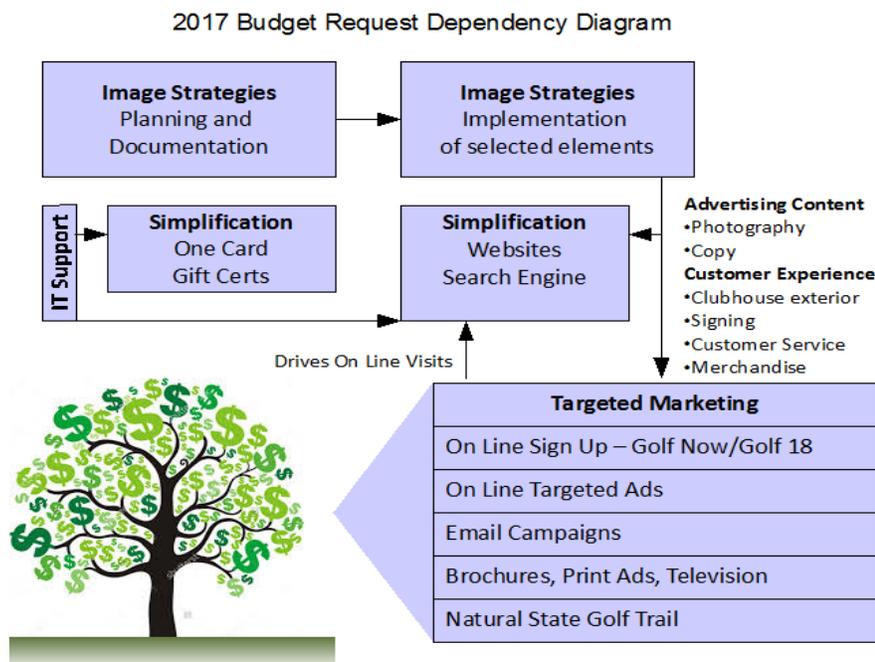
A marketing tactic we are recommending to drive more non member rounds is the use of Golf Now or Golf 18 Network to solicit tee time sign up from non members. This tactic will be targeted at golfers in most Northwest Arkansas zip codes and selected zip codes in cities within a 5 hr drive of Bella Vista. This initiative includes the online sign up and email communication

to the Golf Now/Golf 18 email distribution. We believe this is an effective approach to solicit enough non members to make a significant difference in filling unused tee times.

Additional online advertising, promotional email campaigns and support to sell group play are also included in this recommendation.

**Keys to Success:**

- To deliver on the campaign, collaboration between the Golf Operations, Golf Maintenance, Marketing, IT, POA Board, Volunteer Groups, Golf Group Leaders and Members is essential.
- There are dependencies for the elements presented in this request to become operational. The diagram below represents a simple view of these dependencies.



**Budget:** The overall cost of the request is \$xxxxxK. A budget summary is attached.

**Campaign Elements**

**Generate Additional Sales through Targeted Marketing**

The campaign to “Generate Additional Sales through Targeted Marketing” is designed to sell unused tee times to non members or members who play a 'little bit 'of golf. We have a unique proposition in that we have available tee times when people who are not retired or do shift work want to play – afternoons, evenings and weekends.

Northwest Arkansas is on the rise and we can benefit from the growth of Bentonville and surrounding cities by becoming the Golf Destination for the Region. Due to the presence of

several large, national companies and their suppliers, there is a rich target for group and tournament events.

The target markets are:

- Golfers – Living within 60 miles of BVV
- Golfers – Living within ~5 hr drive (St. Louis, Kansas City, Oklahoma City, Dallas)
- 'Medium size' Groups of 12-32
- 'Large' Groups of over 32 – require dedicated Sales/Project Manager
- Specific target segments: Jr. Golf, New Golfers, New Residents, Women

A separate strategy is outlined for each target group. Some campaigns will be 'active' with frequent changes and updates, others will be 'passive' where the customer will find us through our online advertising and we will answer questions as needed.

A major initiative that is planned and addresses “Golfers Living with 5 hr Drive”, including area residents, is the implementation of the Golf Now/Golf 18. The cost of this campaign is based on 'pay only if it is used' with the provider collecting for tee times on about a 2 BVV:1 Provider basis – with limitations on the maximum each week/month.

Specific Golf advertising tactics include online advertising, email advertising, and promotion of tournaments and special events.

General campaign elements will include targeted TV, print and publicity. We can combine the improvements being made in Bella Vista Golf and other amenities such as Lakepoint to develop a compelling message promote awareness that we welcome non-members and new residents.

The budget for the 2017 Request for Targeted Marketing is \$ xxxxxx., plus a 'pay as you go' investment of \$xxxk for Golf Now/Golf 18.

### **Document, Plan and Implement Image Strategies for the BVV Golf Courses**

Creating unique images for the BVV Golf Courses is a continuation of the strategy work that started in 2016 with the Scotsdale course.

The ***Documentation and Planning Phase*** will result in a written strategy for each course that includes physical changes planned for the course, along with image and marketing elements.

The ***Implementation Phase*** of the strategies (for 2017) presents a cohesive, professional image to members, potential members and non members. This phase includes the “Image Elements” such as photography and advertising copy along with non-capital improvements such as road and building signing, small changes to decor, landscaping and merchandising changes such as branded wearables.

The budget and/or capital projects may dictate the implementation schedule.

The budget for the 2017 Request to Document and Implement Image Strategy is \$ xxxxxxx, for 6 courses and 4 clubhouses

**Simplify Information and the Buying Process**

The BVVPOA has a rich website with a great deal of information. It has improved significantly in 2016 and can be brought up to an even higher level in 2017

Simplification activities deal with modernizing our presentation of information and increasing interactivity. The capabilities delivered in this effort tend to use technology so availability of skilled professionals is a critical success factor.

Deliverables include:

- Cohesive, action oriented web pages
- Search Engine Optimization and online advertising
- One Card – Range Cards, target programs like a Brittany Card, or a Weekend/Evening Offer
- Sell Golf Gift Certificates

The budget for the 2017 Request to Simplify Information is \$ xxxxxxx.

**Budget Summary**

The Golf Marketing Budget Request includes the following elements.

Marketing Element	Budget
Generate Additional Sales Through Targeted Marketing	
Golf 18/Golf Now	
Individuals withing 60 miles	
Individuals within 5 hrs drive	
“Medium Size” Groups of 12-32	
“Large Groups” of over 32	
Specific Target Segments	
Complete Image Strategies – Planning Phase	
Complete Image Strategies – Implementation Phase	
Simplify Information and Buying Process	
<b>Total</b>	