

Maynard Golf Club Reuse Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting date: September 16th, 2013

Location: Town Hall, Basement, 7:00 pm

Committee members present were Adam Conn, Kathy Campbell, and Mark Grundstrom. Selectman Bill Cranshaw was present. No community members were in attendance.

7:08 **Call to order** (Mark Grundstrom, Chair). **Quorum noted.**

7:09 Kathy Campbell moved to accept the Minutes from the August 12, 2013, meeting as written. Adam Conn seconded. **So moved.**

7:10 Floor was opened for community comments. None noted.

7:11 Mark Grundstrom reviewed visit to golf course on September 6, 2013. Mark Grundstrom and Adam Conn met with Gregg Lefter (Maynard Facility Manager), Kevin Osgood (Sterling Management), and Brad Durrin (PGA Professional at Maynard Golf Course). Meeting lasted almost 3 hours. Osgood discussed the business model, deficiencies, and profitability potential for the course. Durrin discussed the course. Lefter discussed the relationship with Sterling Management as well as what Sterling is providing to the town in service opportunities outside of the course, such as offering assistance at the Rockland Avenue fields.

The meeting focused on modifications to hole #1 (part of Option 3). Osgood was very open and direct about the capital expenditures involved in such a modification, as well as the necessary steps to effect such a change, safety concerns, and options to consider.

Additional capital expenditure elements that would improve the usability of the clubhouse as well as improvements to certain tee boxes were highlighted.

Lefter also provided insights into barriers to success and increased costs in equipment and resources surrounding municipal operation of the course.

Mark Grundstrom also reviewed the visit to golf course on September 15, 2013. Mark Grundstrom, Dierdre Campbell, and a community member went to hole #8 (part of Option 3). Some things that were discovered were that the gas tank in the proposed parking area is in active use. Kevin Osgood has indicated that this tank can be relocated farther away from the proposed garden space, if desired. The group designated an area of 110' long by 55' wide as potential garden space, to create at least 4 rows of 10' x 10' plots.

Three positive elements of the site location were noted by community member present – sunlight, location, and the sense of community that could be built by those using this area.

Capital expenditures involved in creating this garden space would be to remove several small trees, level the ground, and bring in additional appropriate soil. The onus for financing, maintaining, and operating this area would be upon a community-based group formed for such a purpose, so designated by a memorandum of understanding and a licensing agreement with the Town of Maynard.

Discussion of this option by the Committee raised a question about compliance of the parking area, and what might need to be done to achieve code compliance, if anything. Selectman Cranshaw will ask Eric R. Smith, AICP, Town Planner to review the site and offer feedback to the Committee.

7:47 Selectman Cranshaw provided updates on three outstanding issues surfaced at the August meeting.

- The tax bill for the Acton parcel is 1/4th of the assessed amount. This amount is considered de minimus.
- The Town of Maynard does owe land in “land trade” as part of the Solar Farm project. Because the golf course is Article 97 land, it is considered difficult to trade. Other land will be designated as part of Maynard’s obligation.
- The outstanding question about selling all or part of land acquired under CPA comes down to two basic conditions attached to such a transfer: all funds would be returned to the CPA to the specific designated source used to purchase the land in the first place and the land would be subject to permanent conservation easement – only the construction of affordable housing and/or open space/recreation uses allowed under CPA would be available options for the successor.

7:52 Kathy Campbell discussed option 4 (post golf course usage). Approaches for how to designate cost and usage estimates for each potential use were discussed, and a matrix solution was indicated to be the best first approach to try.

8:14 Floor was opened to comments from the community. None noted.

8:15 Committee roundtable. Next meeting will review other options in more detail, more likely one of the option 3 elements.

8:16 Next meeting dates were set for October 7th and October 21st at 7:00 pm, to be held at Town Hall.

8:17 Kathy Campbell motioned to adjourn. Adam Conn seconded. **So moved.**

Attached is the draft outline being used to frame the final work product of the Committee, as of September 16, 2013. This document is by no means final, but included here for transparency purposes.

Option # 1

Maintain Golf Course As Is – No Changes to Contract

Benefits to Town

- Guaranteed annual revenue (10 % / 5% or 50K. *Over 400K, 15%*)
- High Community Support (esp. among golfing community/ex-members)
- Limited burden to Town infrastructure (w/ Golf management company operating)
- **Town can choose to self-manage to increase income (Municipal GC /**

Enterprise Fund)

- Low OPEX / Fairly low CAPEX currently (clubhouse issues down the road)
- Low maintenance requirements by town
- Draws people to Maynard and Downtown
- Green/Open space and wildlife habitat is preserved.
- Low impact to taxpayer (except 15 year bond @ 1.5 Million)
- Free event space per Sterling contract 4 times a year.
- Off Season access (Dec-MAR)
- Clubhouse ADA compliant / Open to community as function hall (revenue generator)
- Acton tax abatement if land stays a golf course
- No concerns regarding land reversibility
- No Town redundancy
 - Could establish Resident / Non-Resident rates.

Disadvantages to Town

- Usage is limited to golfers during the season
- “Town Days” requires consideration and planning for temporary issues of parking, lighting traffic, security & accessibility
- Revenue generated is currently being used for Capital costs (over \$2,500.00). Only 1 of the 10 desired **course** improvements by Sterling has been done. Well off Hole # 2 established.

General Concerns

- Non Renewal of Management company
- Short and Long Term Capital Costs related to the clubhouse
- Failure of Management company to maintain proper stewardship of the land.

Option # 2

Maintain Golf Course w/ Temporal Edge of Day Activities

Benefits to Town, same as #1, PLUS:

- Expanded recreational usage by larger group of constituents
- Increased visibility and access to Town-owned open space
- Small cost (if any) to town
- Little or no impact to the lay of the land
- Might increase course play

Possible Recreational uses during golf season could include:

Walking, Jogging, birdwatching.....dawn and dusk.

Possible safety issues could arise.

General Concerns, same as # 1, PLUS:

- Contract Terms might be considered less attractive to golf management company
- Potential damage to the course
- Burden of management, enforcement needed
- Operating costs to get the word out.

Option #3

Modification of Hole 1 Tee boxes and Fairway and Green Approach

Description of area

- Longest par 4 on course
- Dogleg right
- Anchored by three fairway bunkers to dissuade cutting the corner
- Green opens narrowly in front, with three bunkers guarding

Overview of proposed changes

- Convert area between current first fairway and heavy tree barrier to second fairway to an active fairway
- Convert current first fairway to community and facility event use
- Pave additional parking area

Scope of work

- Convert area between current first fairway and heavy tree barrier to second fairway to a new active fairway for the first hole
 - Improve grounds in current unused/underused area of the course
 - Remove multiple trees
 - Extend irrigation system
 - Modify bunkers near green
 - Modify tee boxes to accommodate new hole direction
- Convert current first fairway to community and facility event use
 - Add picnic tables and other movable structures
 - Provide sufficient remote electrical support or generator platform
 - Plant trees and other natural barriers along left side of new fairway
 - Will need ADA compliant pathway/features
- Pave additional parking area
 - Provide accessible spots for area nearest community area
 - Expand current parking to attract and accommodate larger community uses and events
- Add safety crosswalk (flashing warning lights, pavement painting) at Acton/Brown intersection
 - Allow safe connection to Rail Trail
 - Allow safe connection to Maynard neighborhoods
 - Calm southbound traffic prior to curve with Golf Course entrance on Brown St
 - Calm southbound traffic prior to dangerous Haynes Park triangle

Additional uses to be accommodated by change

- Increased number of active town events, including but not limited to concerts, outdoor movie events, community bazaar, art festivals, yoga classes, summer theater programs, as well as provide a public gathering place for organizations and groups.
- Off-season use, such as sledding hill, will benefit by natural barrier to new fairway
- Off-season use, such as a skating rink, could be more easily accommodated without potential to damage course
- Allows for safer perimeter trail construction without impacting course, including access to Rail Trail at Acton Street/Brown Street/Conant Street intersection
- Some potential for an outdoor pool to be constructed, however, this may provide noise detrimental to golfing activities, a need for a larger increase in parking than for other passive and active uses, significant construction and recurring costs, increased ADA compliance issues, and severe impact on off-season usage.

Costs

- Architectural design
- Tree and stump removal
- Construction of the new fairway
- Irrigation
- Safety additions
- Changes to the green/sand traps
- Parking improvements
- Electrical support
- Certification of the hole (length, change to code rating, slope, etc.)
- Rough estimate for total project \$150,000 to \$250,000

Barriers to success

- Displeasure of current golfers
 - Potential delays in pace of play
 - Fear of change, any change
- Risks associated with concurrent use
 - Safety issues community use side from errant tee shots
 - May need to set tee boxes lower on hill, increasing cost but limiting options and shortening hole
 - Artificial barrier may need to be a permanent feature
 - May endanger golfers on hole 2
 - Possible sound distraction for golfers, should lessen over time with tree barrier
- Risks associated with non-concurrent use
 - Potential damage from community users leaving designated area (current risk now)
 - Potential litter problem
- Decreased visibility from Route 27
 - Lowered potential for those to see the golf course as they enter town
- Cost effectiveness
 - Capital expenditure for modification would not be short-term effective

Benefits

- To golf course management
 - New area to use for additional revenue opportunities
 - increased parking
 - New challenge to the course
 - More non-golf events increases exposure to potential patrons
- To Town
 - large area for use for events hamstrung by Memorial Park's shortcomings
 - increased events at facility increases awareness and desirability for further use
 - opportunity for additional tree planting increases "greenness" of town
 - opportunity to improve safety along Route 27

Other factors

- Highly reversible, as former fairway will still be maintained
- Should community uses not coalesce, area could be converted to a small driving range or chipping area
- Very low impact environmentally, as most of trees to be removed are dead or in poor condition [need to verify number of trees]

Other alternatives to modifying Hole 1

Working with course management to create an event area with minimal intrusion
Could be in area behind Hole 9, next to first hole tee box
Events would need to be planned for after golf activities

Punchlist of information needed to complete work on this section

Images of area under discussion

Visual of current hole

Graphical overlay of proposed changes

Additional costs [total project estimated \$150k-\$250k, per discussion with Sterling]

From Electrician

Adding sufficient power solution for proposed needs

From Town

Installing safety cross-walk at Brown/Acton intersection

Accessibility issues

ADA pathway compliance information (surfaces, parking)

DRAFT MCC plan – scenario #3. 8.12.13

Option #3. Modify Hole 8 to accommodate other concurrent uses.

Types of Co-Existing Uses with modified Hole 8 option.

- off-season access Nov 30-March 30 to golf course (sledding, skiing, hiking, winter camping)
- Night sports on golf course (golf, frisbee, etc)
- Low impact night-time activities on golf course (star-gazing, guided walks)
- Clubhouse functions
- Possible added recreational uses during warmer months on golf course (walking, jogging, bird-watching)
- more access and up to 4-season, 24/7 all access to added use (this depends on what the concurrent use is)
- Dedicated spaces for permanent structures (ie music stage, sports fields (courts? Tennis/bb allowed under cpa?), pool, playground, concession)
- Community gardens
- rail trail

Benefits to Town

- Guaranteed revenue annually from golf course (though may be reduced)
- Golf course would draw people to Maynard; could have additional draw depending on additional use
- High community support, though golfers less supportive of change to course
- Green/Open Space and wildlife habitat is preserved
- Unlimited Off Season Use (Nov 30 - March 31) on golf course for non-golf uses
- Golf course section would be low maintenance required by Town
- Golf course section still limited burden to Town infrastructure
- If renegotiated golf agreement is similar to current – town will have free event space for 2 days/year
- For Golf course, parking is adequate but may not be for concurrent use
- Clubhouse adequate and ADA accessible
- Town can choose to self-manage to increase income for both golf course and concurrent use
- Increased visibility and access to Town-owned Open Space
- Possible added opportunities for income to Town depending on additional use : (user fees, concessions)
- Increased community usage (beyond golfers) (Town Rec Dept could manage uses and schedule if sports, alternate plan for community gardens)
- Potential rail trail connection
- Community excitement for special events/concurrent use
- Potential location to hold fundraising events for future capital improvements

Disadvantages to Town

- While usage is broadened, it could still be somewhat limited to golfers plus users of concurrent area (gardeners/various sports enthusiast)
- Relocation of fairway/s will require capital funds and/or Contract offset
- Depending on additional use, money for parking expansion may be needed (sports more so than rail trail/gardens)
- Capital improvements, fencing and or area designation, lighting and ADA compliance needed depending upon desired uses
- Management of and revenue from golf course may be affected due to design change
- Management Staff, maintenance & operating budget needed for Town-controlled section
- Likely loss of Golf Course visibility from Route 27

- Loss of Historical Golf Course classification (??) with it possible grant money for maintenance?

General Concerns

- Investment in professional golf course design and (concurrent use)/construction needed
- Mid Agreement Exit of Management Company
- Failure of Mgmt Co to maintain proper stewardship of the land
- Non Renewal of Agreement by Management Company
- Short and Long term Capital Costs related to the Clubhouse and concurrent use
- Long term viability of the water supply
- Need to phase construction to avoid loss of Golf use during course modification
- Contract - responsibility of Manager for course modification?
- Crowd-based events or recreation creates traffic, security, trash, noise, ADA, parking issues
- Would be expensive to reverse it
- Master Plan needed to develop Best Uses, parking, ADA compliance

Follow Up Questions/Clarification

- Need a process to determine additional use and management.
- May take considerable planning/design time

#4. Repurpose Golf Course for Primarily Non-Golf Related Recreational Uses (allowed under CPA)

- Unlimited recreational uses as allowed under CPA and preservation restriction
- Redundant recreational opportunities/activities using other Town owned assets?

Follow Up Questions/Clarification

- This is a LONG TERM scenario so include (in a list) ALL *creative* ideas (allowed under CPA) that got more than a few votes at the original visioning session? Maybe identify those that *could* be revenue generators?

INTRODUCTION

This option is the removal of the current primary use of the land as a 9 hole golf course, and developing 1 or more selected options for recreational use. Due to the land management requirements to maintain and operate a golf course, this option is considered irreversible without significant capital funding for restoration.

Parks and dedicated recreational areas can become a central gathering place for a community, to foster a stronger sense of commonality and self-identity. They are public spaces where everybody can congregate to pursue different interests and interact with one another. However, any new, large scale recreational development will stall without the commitment of town leaders, community groups and key volunteers. Furthermore, changing the existing land use to a non-golf specific recreational facility will require good marketing, site-specific design, and capital planning to transform the asset into a destination that people will recognize and embrace as their own.

For the purpose of this section, it is assumed that the entire ___ acre parcel will undergo transformation for perhaps a multitude of new open space and recreational uses. It is the Committee's understanding, however, that there are additional options such as full or partial divestiture of the land if long term management becomes unworkable for the Town. The acquisition of the land using by CPA funds puts certain restrictions on this scenario, which should be more fully explored if and when this option is necessary or desired.

VISIONING SESSION RESULTS REVIEW

(Grouping Headers, Put full list in Appendix)

Identify those uses that fit under this option

Future Uses suggested during October 10, 2012 Community Forum and site walk, as grouped:

- Agriculture related:
- Athletic Field Related:
- Broad Parkland related;
- Environmental Conservation related:
- Trail Related:
- Clubhouse Uses:
- Golf Related:
- Housing related:
- Pool/Water related:
- Winter/Off Season Uses

COMMUNITY BENEFITS OF THIS OPTION

The benefits to the Town are 1) opportunities for unlimited, 4-season access to recreational open space and the improvements thereon, and 2) accommodation of multiple users & demographics with proper land use and capital planning. One of the greatest benefits is the opportunity for a multitude of shared uses on different portions of the land. Simultaneous events and activities, both passive and active, can occur. It will be important, however, for thoughtful and realistic planning to be enacted, and periodically updated to account for changes to recreational needs and desires of the community, to achieve the best short-term uses and long-term stewardship of the land.

[Space to share for developing both passive and active recreation](#)

During visioning sessions, participants identified numerous re-use options for both passive and active recreation. However, any re-use alternatives that are considered will need to be evaluated, at a minimum, in terms of the following:

- allowable uses under CPA
- usage estimates
- physical land restrictions (wetlands, floodplains, rock outcroppings)
- availability of parking or resources for expansion
- handicap accessibility
- environmental benefits
- traffic management and connections to surrounding streets, and
- cost implications
- potential revenue opportunities

ALLOWABLE USES UNDER CPA

Low Land Use Impact: Disc Golf Course, playgrounds, walking paths, jogging trail, accessible paths leading to various open and connected spaces. Accommodations for group functions or outings. Play spaces, picnic pavillion, benches. Wildlife blinds with interpretive signs describing the flora and fauna of the wetlands.

High Land Use Impact (requiring larger dedicated spaces and higher capital costs): swimming pool, community garden, athletic fields or courts, mini-golf, driving range, music stage, camping sites, spray park, connections to rail trail (potential need for traffic signal)

USAGE ESTIMATES

PHYSICAL LAND RESTRICTIONS

(wetlands, floodplains, rock outcropping etc - use maps)

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

While land conservation and wildlife habitat protection were ideas discussed during public visioning sessions, the overwhelming public consensus involved the development of new options that encouraged all ages and their unique interests, while allowing opportunities for the most number of people to actively enjoy the property. Certain sections of the land parcel are thriving resource areas for flora and fauna; these areas also serve as important

assets for storm drainage, flood control and groundwater recharge. These resource areas define the center section of the parcel, giving ample opportunity for public wildlife viewing - therefore serving to provide both recreational uses and environmental protection benefits. However, care should be taken to manage the boundaries of these existing environmental resource areas, as unmanaged open spaces within the floodplain could expand wet areas, diminishing public access and use.

Existing woodland land planning for added wildlife benefits, nature trails and connections to adjacent Acton conservation land.

Open Space Aesthetics: Topography and context-sensitive land development

Scenic landscapes – include notable areas such as hilltops, stream corridors, open meadows, areas suitable for agricultural uses, separation landscaping, scenic views, and scenic pathways.

PARKING

The existing golf course has the capacity of 80 parking spaces. Expanded uses and increased visits will require additional parking, with multiple access locations coinciding with locations of specific improvements. Additional organized parking will be required to access more remote sections of the recreation site, most likely originating off of Concord Street, but possibly also Conant Street. The existing parking lot off of Route 27 will need to be enlarged under almost any re-use scenario, to accommodate parking for daily casual users as well as for planned recreational programs and events.

Information From the City of Houston, TX, parking requirements for recreational facilities, as a general guideline:

Parkland (over 10 acres) 5.0 spaces for the first acre; and 1.0 space for each additional 10.0 acres; plus additional parking must be provided for each additional facility or land use existing or constructed.

Golf Course 5.0 spaces for every green.

Auditorium or Performance Venue 1.0 space for every three seats.

Tennis/Racquet Club 3.0 spaces per court.

Roller or Ice Skating Rink 5.0 spaces for every 1,000 square feet of GFA.

Swimming Club 9.0 spaces per employee.

Park Pavilion 1.0 space for each picnic table.

Sports Complex 1.0 space for every 40 square feet of seating.

Miniature Golf 1.0 space for each hole.

Driving Range (Golf) 1.0 space for each tee.

Its also important to consider non-motorized transportation pathways and accomodations for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. In addition to parking spaces, striped walkways and bicycle paths should be used to direct people safely without interfering with vehicle movement. There are no current sidewalks on this side of Brown Street; future roadway planning should consider widening to allow for better community connections to the Town recreation area.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Visitor access and safety can be improved through increased traffic management measures such as speed bumps, well-defined parking, entrance and exit re-configuration of primary and secondary lots, and updated signage. Furthermore, short term planning of recreational uses and programs should maximize the efficiency and location of the existing main parking lot while other parking lots are being developed.

For special events in the short term, remote parking lots with shuttle drop-offs can maximize the numbers of people attending without requiring expanded parking. Police details can also assist at times of heavy parking lot use, due to the inadequate sight distance when attempting to turn left out of the parking lot. Any future planned connections to the Assabet River Rail Trail may also benefit from a traffic signal, pedestrian crossing, or flashing warning light at the intersection of Route 27 and Conant Street.

HANDICAP ACCESSIBILITY

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires planners and designers to make trails accessible, but doesn't specify how. New regulations are being finalized that will propose ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) for trails, outdoor recreational access routes, water access routes, and picnic and camping facilities. Under current ADA guidelines, a trail is "a route that is designed, designated, or constructed for recreational pedestrian use or provided as an pedestrian alternative to vehicular routes within a transportation system." The accessibility guidelines apply to those trails which are designed and constructed for pedestrian use. These guidelines are not applicable to trails primarily designed and constructed for recreational use by equestrians, mountain bicyclists, snowmobile users, or off-highway vehicle users, even if pedestrians may occasionally use the same trails. However, a multi-use trail specifically designed and designated for hiking and bicycling would be considered a pedestrian trail.

The proposed guidelines apply only to areas of newly designed or newly constructed and altered portions of existing trails. However, for entities covered by title II of the ADA, "program accessibility," may require accessibility to be provided on existing trails, if they coincidentally serve one or more major elements in a recreation program.

COST IMPLICATIONS

The availability of capital funding for desired improvements

TO IMPLEMENT + TO MAINTAIN

- Option is likely irreversible without large capital cost
- No guaranteed revenue to offset operation and maintenance
- Full time management needed
- Capital improvements will require prioritizing based upon funding
- All facilities including clubhouse must be maintained by the Town
- Thoughtful planning needed to avoid a money pit for unsupported uses
- Improvements can be phased as capital funding is raised

POTENTIAL REVENUE OPPORTUNITIES

The land is rich in recreational, aesthetic, and natural resources, and has the potential to be a popular and frequented recreational asset to the entire community. In the absence of the currently operating golf course, it also needs to generate revenue from its assets to help with construction and renovation of the facilities, and ongoing development of recreational programs.

A detailed analysis of revenue opportunities would be tied to the implementation of specific alternatives within this Option, and is beyond the scope of this study. Some preliminary recommendations, however, are listed below:

- Encourage the development of additional revenue-producing facilities and programs.
- Develop and implement a policy of fees and charges for special events that reflect costs and potential financial return to the sponsoring group or department.
- Develop and periodically re-evaluate areas and facilities that need capital improvement funds that can be utilized in a special promotion, grant opportunities, or other sources of funding.
- Establish and engage local organizations to assist with targeted fundraising, programming, building volunteerism, partnerships, sponsorships, etc.
- Pursue non-traditional funding sources such as advertising, corporate sponsors, and other potential individual donors, for special events and various park projects.
- Encourage school districts, fraternal organizations, and other private institutions to adopt-a-park for community service projects.

WHAT'S NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT - A MASTER PLAN

Changing the primary use of a large parcel of land, or any portion thereof, will require a comprehensive Master Plan to evaluate and plan for different types of recreation activities that are of interest to the community. The Plan must take into account different demographics (seniors, active adults, multi-age groups, and children) and their interests and discretionary spending habits, and the existing recreational opportunities already available to residents.

A Master Plan will establish a framework for meeting the current and future recreational needs of the Maynard community, and should include:

- Parks and Recreation Department organization and funding to help it meet the challenges of the next decade and beyond
- An understanding of current recreation programming and recommendations for future programs that reflect community needs and desires
- Current and future events that bring the community together and contribute to the economic fabric of the Town
- Currently identified, and future anticipated need for recreational facilities that provide opportunities for sports, events and specialized activities
- Opportunities for trails and trail connections
- Opportunities to create partnerships and find new ways of doing business.
- Plan for operation and maintenance practices that are efficient and meet community needs.