

East Hempfield Recreation Authority
1700 Nissley Road, Landisville PA
July 27, 2022, 7:00pm In person and zoom meeting

The East Hempfield Township Recreation Authority held their regular meeting in person and zoom at the East Hempfield Township Building, 1700 Nissley Road, Landisville PA. The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Chairman, Ryan Lundy.

Members in attendance:

Attending: Ryan Lundy, Dave Lounsbury, Steve Ulrich, and Tom Bennett.

Others in attendance:

Jim Micilcavage, General Manager, Jeanna Johnson, Staff Accountant and Cindy Schweitzer, Township Manager.

Open Discussion regarding the use of Land at the corner of Church Street and Stony Battery Road

Mrs. Schweitzer reiterated information on the history of the Authority. She explained why the Recreation Authority was created by the Board of Supervisors in 2019 and given control of the 126-acre golf course property for the purpose of making the Four Seasons Golf property profitable. She further explained the financial history of the property via a graph. The graph showed in the early years of ownership of the golf facility there was a mortgage. The mortgage was paid off in 2011 but the Township continued their supplement of funding. Expenses (including debt service) have exceeded income until recent years when the Recreation Authority successfully negotiated a lease with Blue Collar Restaurant and Catering. The trend line is now Revenues exceeding expenses which is a trend the Recreation Authority would like to continue and expand.

Authority members provided further explanation and the importance of creating additional revenue streams. An example is a commercial use on the corner property but rezoning to Community Business Center would be necessary as the current zoning of Recreation/Open Space does not allow retail or commercial uses. A conceptual plan to rezone the corner property was shown on the screens.

Mr. Lundy opened the discussion to public comments:

Kris Housner, Randy Road feels zoning should wait until a decision is made on what would be placed in this area. It was explained that discussions with potential users of the tract have all been commercial in nature and commercial is not a permitted use in Park and Open Space.

Susan McMullen, Christine Lane feels the golf course was cash flowing before Blue Collar and does not think the Township was subsidizing as much as depicted. Mr. Bennett assured Mrs. McMullen that the Township did in fact financially supplement the operations at the course. The Authority has successfully removed that liability from the Township budget and are seeking additional revenues to maintain the trend to have the course self-supporting. She agrees with Mrs. Housner that a user should be chosen before zoning is considered. She would prefer to see recreational use or open space in this area and is particularly opposed to adding an access point on Stony Battery Road. She suggests pickleball courts and acknowledges that this would not be a money generator but would serve the community. She asked about the proposed cell tower. The Authority noted negotiations did not result in a contract and the income that could be generated was not worth the effort. Mr. Lundy noted that rezoning to Commercial allows for a wider range

of options for the use of that land. He also noted that the Authority does not have funds to invest in any significant improvements on the corner property.

Harry Worth, Lancaster City but a golfer at Four Seasons – Mr. Worth feels it is a false premise to think that the golf course needs to be a profit center. He points out that other recreation facilities the Township owns are not profit centers and therefore why does the golf course need to be. When asked Mr. Worth would support a tax increase or slightly higher greens fees to support the golf operations but did note greens fees are already somewhat higher than other local courses.

Joe Forry - Has concerns if the corner were developed and if the restaurant wants to expand, where would that expansion occur in terms of additional parking needs.

Kyle Kraybill, Indian Springs Drive feels that a mini golf/ice-cream use, if well managed, would be successful. Feels the Authority/Township should have a five-year plan. Also reiterated his idea of a wedding venue. The Authority noted it comes back to the use of the land and as zoned, uses would be very limited. Mr. Bennett explained that there are no significant changes planned for the golf course. Potentially longer-range improvements to the pro shop and locker rooms will be needed. There is a long-term lease with Blue Collar and is a solid source of revenue into the future. The Authority feels another revenue stream, similar to what is generated from Blue Collar, is needed to continue to sustain the golf course. Mr. Lundy noted that golf, since Covid, has significantly increased play, however planning needs to occur to create another revenue stream when less golf play or bad weather affects revenues. It was confirmed that the lease does provide for increases in rent as years pass.

Susan McMullan questioned the status of the sod farm. It was noted that this land remains in the control of the Township. Mrs. McMullan would support a driving range created on the sod farm.

Mr. Lounsbury commented that the Authority has sought professional insight regarding the development of the corner property, and they have told the authority that potential interest in the development of the property would be higher if the tract had the proper zoning first. He also pointed out that the decision to rezone the property would be the Township, not the Authority.

Kris Housner requested clarification regarding the process. Mr. Lundy explained that if rezoned the Authority would reach out to a marketing firm to market the property.

Harry Worth feels that professional advice should be sought regarding the whole property, not just the corner. Suggests reaching out to Millersville students for an exercise in what could be developed.

The Authority stressed that the plans presented are conceptual, could be commercial, could be recreational...no decisions have been made.

Larry Shields, Gloucester Street – If rezoned to Commercial he would like a multi-use facility that could be used by residents of the Township. He questioned if uses could be excluded, if rezoned. Conditional zoning is not possible, however the Authority pointed out that the eventual development of the property would be if full control of the Authority and the Township. He understands the need to supplement golf course funds but feels the use should benefit Township residents. Another convenience store or bank is not needed.

Kris Housner received clarification that control remains with the Township and the Authority and a request for proposal does not require the highest revenue be selected.

Susan McMullan noted that under the concept plan the maintenance shed would need to be moved and the concept plan shows it being moved to the practice green. Mr. Lundy assured the audience these issues have been discussed by the Authority and will factor into what is ultimately done at the corner.

Committee Reports:

Lease Negotiating and Real Estate Committee (O'Brien, Ulrich, Trump) – Mr. Lundy provided some conceptual insight into Blue Collar's preliminary discussions with the Committee regarding the construction of a deck on the eastern side of the restaurant. It is a substantial project that will need careful review and renegotiation of the lease.

Finance and Operations Committee (Bennett, Lounsbury, Lundy) – Mrs. Schweitzer noted the agreements are still under review.

Action Items: none

Old Business:

Goals and Objectives for the Property – no discussion

Golf Operations report – Report provided. Mr. Micilcavage indicated another good month, with weekends very busy. The course is doing great with little rainfall this month. William Gately, Golf Service Manager has moved on to his next job opportunity. John Sanchez has been hired as his replacement. He will be handling Mr. Gately's job functions (running tournaments, pro shop operations, junior camp) with the exception of lessons. He will be operating the junior camp next summer. We continue to wait for the ordered maintenance equipment, now anticipated for the fall. Older equipment is holding up. There is also a recall of the A-arms on the new golf carts. EZ-Go is working on replacements for the entire fleet.

Simulators – Mr. Ulrich outlined cost information and indicated a location has not been determined. The Authority will need to decide on when the appropriate time is to begin the project.

New Business:

Sod Farm – Mr. Bennett noted that the Township Park/Recreation group has begun preliminary discussions regarding developing the 50 acres into a recreational facility housing baseball, soccer fields, pickleball, tennis or basketball courts, maybe a driving range, parking, and restrooms.

Minutes:

Motioned by Mr. Ulrich seconded by Mr. Lundy and unanimously carried to approve the minutes from June 22, 2022, as presented.

Public Comment:

Harry Worth noted his representation of a group of senior golfers who play regularly at Four Seasons and is dismayed at the direction the management has taken the course by initiating a rule that golf carts are no longer permitted in the parking lot. This has made it very difficult for senior golfers to get their clubs to the golf carts. He is requesting the Authority consider a bag drop point. He also feels it is extremely understaffed and suggests adding Marshalls and Starters, perhaps providing free golf in exchange for their services. He noted the water fountain only provides warm water. He is upset about the snack bar hours of operation and no water available on the course and the inability to get water. He feels the lease should address required hours for the snack bar. He noted there is no longer water available on the golf course and feels there should be water like other courses provide. He did note this was stopped due to the potential health hazard. He hopes Four Seasons will become more in tune with the needs of the senior population.

Joe Forry reiterated the concern of Mr. Worth and feels that changes to golf operations should be looked at from the golfer's perspective.

Susan McMullan agrees with Mr. Forry and Mr. Worth and having a bag drop needs to be addressed. She feels that having the ability to provide lessons is important to the course. Mr. Micilcavage confirmed that Mr. Sanchez is not PGA certified.

Adjournment: Motioned by Mr. Lounsbury, seconded by Mr. Lundy and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:24pm.

Submitted by: Cindy Schweitzer, Township Manager