



**Hyland Greens Task Force
November 10, 2015
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Haeg Conference Room
2nd Floor, Bloomington Civic Plaza
1800 W. Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington, MN**

Call To Order:

Irina Fursman called the third meeting of the Hyland Greens Task Force to order at 6:28 p.m. in the Haeg Conference Room at Bloomington Civic Plaza.

Task Force Members Present: 13

Rod Axtell
Doug Bruce
Andrew Carlson
Liz Heyman
Diann Kirby
Mike Kolthoff
Laura Perreault
Randy Quale
Cindy Rollins
Lenny Schmitz (Alternate for Jim McCarthy who was absent)
Virg Senescall
Cary Weatherby
Roger Willette

Task Force Members Absent: 2

Jim McCarthy
Rick Sitek

Staff Present: 1

Heather Lambert, Administrative Assistant, Human Services Division (to take minutes)

Facilitators Present: 2

Irina Fursman, *Huelife*
Erik Juhl, Web Coordinator, Community Services Department, City of Bloomington

Members of the Public Present: 12 (including 3 Alternate Task Force Members)

Welcome and Introductions/Agenda Review – 6:30 p.m.

Irina Fursman welcomed the Task Force members and guests to the third meeting of the Hyland Greens Task Force. She stated this meeting would differ from the first two meetings, as members would work together to determine the problem the Task Force is trying to solve. She asked Task Force members to “stay present” throughout the night’s discussions.

She then asked members to introduce themselves, share their role on the Task Force, and state what they do on a typical Tuesday night.

- Irina Fursman introduced herself as the co-facilitator of the Hyland Greens Task Force.
- Lenny Schmitz is serving as an Alternate Representative of the Parks, Arts and Recreation Commission.
- Diann Kirby is serving as a member of the City Staff (Community Services Director).
- Roger Willette is serving as a Representative of the Planning Commission.
- Andrew Carlson is serving as a Representative of the City Council.
- Cindy Rollins is serving as a member of City staff (Budget Manager).
- Mike Kolthoff is serving as a Hyland Greens user.
- Cary Weatherby is serving as a Representative of the Community.
- Rod Axtell is serving as a Representative of the Business Community.
- Laura Perreault is serving as a Representative of the Neighborhood.
- Randy Quale is serving as a member of the City Staff (Parks and Recreation Manager).
- Doug Bruce is serving as a Representative of the Neighborhood.
- Virg Senescall is serving as a Representative of BAA Golf.

I. Fursman introduced Erik Juhl, who is serving as a co-facilitator of the Task Force and is a member of City Staff (Communications).

E. Juhl provided announcements. He stated L. Schmitz is serving as an Alternate Representative for the Parks, Arts and Recreation Commission and introduced the three Alternate Representatives in the audience: Annie Schmidt (Business Community), Greg Hanson (Community) and Larry Welte (Neighborhood). E. Juhl stated Task Force packets are placed on the City of Bloomington website (keyword: Hyland) prior to Task Force meetings.

I. Fursman reminded Task Force members the first meeting of the group was about setting the stage, getting to know one another and understanding the charge given by the City Council, specifically: “To study data related to Hyland Greens and its services; review budget forecasts and their implications; identify problems to be solved; study potential alternatives; and provide feedback to the City Council.” The Task Force worked together to come up with protocols for members to follow, grouped by preparation, participation and purpose. The general consensus of the Task Force was that these protocols are being met.

I. Fursman noted that the second meeting of the Task Force was about sharing information with members. Members were given the opportunity to raise questions about the data that was provided by staff. I. Fursman noted that the outcome of this data sharing was to generate confidence among Task Force members, allowing them to be transparent, clear and open. She stated the purpose of the Task Force is to solve an issue and to collaborate, so the community benefits from the solution.

I. Fursman stated the purpose of this third meeting was to identify the problems the Task Force was asked to solve. She posed the question, “How can we agree on a solution if we cannot agree on the problem?” She said that members would be writing down their thoughts on what problems the Task Force was charged with solving and then place those ideas on a board. She said this would allow members to cluster ideas that were similar, thus creating broader themes.

D. Kirby reviewed the contents of the meeting materials which included the agenda for November 10, 2015; the minutes from the October 28, 2015 meeting; a golf course questions and answers document; a sampling of area 9-hole golf course budgets; the source documents for the area 9-hole golf course budgets; a City of Bloomington golf course wages and benefits chart; a City of Bloomington golf course internal charges chart; the *Golf Participation in the United States 2015 Edition* report prepared by the U.S. Golf Foundation; information on the demographics of Bloomington; an update of the 2015 Golf Course Business Plan; a staff memo to City Council dated July 8, 2015 regarding Hyland Greens; the evaluation summary from the October 28, 2015 meeting; and the evaluation form for the November 10, 2015 meeting. She noted that the following question was added to the evaluation form: “#5. *What other information would be helpful to you?*” D. Kirby asked R. Axtell to read the purpose of the Task Force listed on the agenda and M. Kolthoff read the outcomes for the day.

Response to Questions about the Meeting Packet - 6:45 p.m.

D. Bruce inquired about the final product of the Task Force. L. Perreault said that she thought the final product would be a recommendation presented to City Council when the work of the Task Force was complete. R. Axtell added that it should be a non-binding recommendation.

I. Fursman asked members if they would accept a recommendation of “no recommendation” to the City Council. The general consensus was that this would be unacceptable and that members would work to come up with some form of a recommendation. I. Fursman asked if it would be acceptable to recommend doing nothing, keeping things the same. R. Axtell stated the Task Force could recommend leaving everything as is, but encouraged a review of the overall operations at Hyland Greens. He further stated that the role of the Task Force was not to dictate the operations of the golf course, but to make recommendations. He explained that these recommendations could then be used by the City Manager to make operational decisions. M. Kolthoff stated that a discussion of golf course operations was necessary, for if the golf courses had made money, the Task Force would not have been convened.

D. Bruce noted that the Task Force has identified seven (7) potential options for the use of the Hyland Greens facility, and inquired if these different approaches would be discussed. A. Carlson spoke about looking at short-term solutions for the upcoming golf season in 2016, and to incorporate good ideas into the Business Plan, using it as a launching pad for longer-term solutions.

L. Perreault asked about the wages and benefits budget report for the golf courses. In particular, she wanted to see the breakdown of full-time staff members at Dwan versus Hyland Greens. R. Axtell noted that the two courses cater to different clientele and pointed out Hyland Greens does not have a kitchen. He stated that Hyland Greens has two (2) full-time employees and many part-time employees. He recommended looking at total staff hours at each course. V. Senescall stated that the Golf Course Manager mainly works at the Dwan location, with the Assistant Golf Course Manager working at Dwan in the mornings, and at Hyland Greens the remainder of the day.

Consensus Process Around Identifying Problems to be Solved (Break Included from 7:25 – 7:40 p.m.) – 6:55 p.m.

I. Fursman asked members to share their assumptions about the Task Force:

- V. Senescall stated the Task Force is to find the best way to make Hyland Greens land work for the City, with the intent of continuing to use it for golf, if possible.

- D. Bruce stated the Task Force is to find the best way to meet the needs of the people of Bloomington.
- R. Quale stated that based on the data that has been received, Hyland Greens is not netting out in an acceptable manner. He added that Hyland Greens is losing money, and the Task Force should come up with options to address this problem.
- L. Heyman stated the Task Force is to come up with a sustainable and equitable solution for the City of Bloomington.
- L. Perreault stated the Task Force is to come up with the best use of this land space.
- R. Axtell stated the Task Force is to provide the City Council a sense of direction.
- C. Weatherby stated that Hyland Greens is not working the way it is currently being used, and the Task Force should study it to see what can be changed to make it better.
- M. Kolthoff stated the Task Force is to come up with ways to make the golf operation profitable.
- C. Rollins stated the Golf Courses are operated by a professional manager.
- A. Carlson stated the Task Force should address the issues that created the Task Force in the first place while keeping in mind the best interests of the community.
- R. Willette stated that there is a need for more advertising.
- D. Kirby stated the Task Force is to come up with a fiscally sustainable use for the property.
- L. Schmitz stated the Task Force is to come up with a palatable solution for Hyland Greens. He stressed that once a natural resource is gone, there is no way to get it back.

D. Bruce noted that there was a wide variety of assumptions made by Task Force members; he expressed concern that if a single solution was provided to the City Council, some voices would not be heard. He would like the City Council to hear all voices and the research.

I. Fursman paraphrased Albert Einstein saying “If you give me an hour to solve a problem, I’ll spend the first 55 minutes identifying the problem, and the next five minutes solving the problem.” She asked members to consider what problem(s) the Task Force was trying to solve.

E. Juhl asked each individual to come up with a list of ten (10) problems the Task Force is trying to solve. Once members made their lists of problems, I. Fursman had them team up and narrow their lists to what they believe to be the top two or three problems. The following top ideas from each team were placed on the board:

- Why are we losing money? (This was rephrased to read “We are losing money”.)
- Highest best use of the land. (This was rephrased to read “Best use of the land”.)
- Why is golf treated differently than other recreation activities?
- What marketing activities will enhance revenues? (This was rephrased to read “No marketing”.)
- Should community subsidize golf?
- What cost saving measures should we pursue?
- Make Hyland land financially palatable for residents.
- Is a \$ loss acceptable?
- Make Hyland Golf financially sustainable.
- Annual ongoing losses.
- Can alternate uses increase revenues and usages?
- Are the budget comparisons to other cities valid?

- Bad data.
- Are expenses allocated appropriately?
- How many golf courses are enough in Bloomington?
- Find best options for Hyland land.
- Have we thoroughly vetted all options?

Additional ideas that were added during discussion include:

- Can current facility be improved to be self-sustaining?
- Is the community willing to pay for this? How much?
- What is an acceptable outcome?
- What is the time horizon for our decision?

R. Quale noted that the City of Bloomington does a good job, comparatively speaking, of tracking the true costs of operations including internal service charges and other charges that may not be charged in other cities. Therefore, golf course losses may look more significant than they are in actuality. R. Axtell questioned the budget figures from other communities.

I. Fursman opened further discussion by asking what would be an acceptable outcome.

A. Carlson stated he struggles with the scope of the Task Force's work, given its resources and time frame to make a recommendation. He added that he felt that the group's work should lead to some kind of action. He reported that the purpose of the Task Force was to come to a focused outcome in a timely manner. He would like to see the Task Force's work result in something of substance, such as defining areas that can be worked on in the Business Plan.

R. Axtell noted that it is the City Manager's responsibility and authority to act on the broad recommendations made by the Task Force.

Through discussion, the top ideas on the board were lumped together by theme. This resulted in the Task Force generating the following three overall problems the group is trying to solve:

- 1. Improving Operations:** We are losing money. What cost saving measures should we pursue? Annual ongoing losses. Are expenses allocated appropriately? Bad data. Make Hyland Golf financially sustainable. Can current facility be improved to be self-sustaining? No marketing.
- 2. Community Needs and Values:** Is a \$ loss acceptable? Why is golf treated differently than other recreational activities? How many golf courses are enough in Bloomington? Are the budget comparisons to other cities valid? Should community subsidize golf? Is the community will to pay for this? How much?
- 3. Land Use Options:** Make Hyland land financially palatable for residents. Can alternate uses increase revenues and usages? Best use of land. Have we thoroughly vetted all options? Find the best options for Hyland land.

R. Axtell stated he would like to first focus on land use options. He noted that the land is an asset to the City, and asked if it is being used appropriately. L. Perreault stated the Task Force decided at the first meeting to look at all options for the land.

M. Kolthoff stated out of the three areas, he would like first to study why Hyland Greens is losing money. He said that he thought that finding a recommendation for why the golf course is losing money would solve the golf course's problems.

A. Carlson stated the data that has been provided has been useful in stimulating conversation; however, he said that he thought there are forces at play that the City of Bloomington cannot control. He added that action needs to be taken on the forces the City can control.

V. Senescall stated that he was struggling with the magnitude of what the Task Force has been charged to do. He said that perhaps the charge given the Task Force may be too large to accomplish with so few meetings left.

R. Axtell said that it would be helpful to have an individual from Planning come to a meeting to explain the various alternatives that are possible for the site. He noted that there may be a way to keep the golf course and add another use to the space.

C. Weatherby offered that she thought that the purpose of the Task Force was to come up with ideas on site usage, and then put the ideas out for the community to comment on.

R. Axtell asked that the Task Force look at the pros and cons of all seven (7) potential options for the use of the Hyland Greens facility. C. Weatherby stated per the meeting schedule, the Task Force will be reviewing the alternatives at the next two (2) meetings.

A. Carlson stated he would like some kind of tool (i.e. pro/con analysis) to look at each land use option. L. Perrault suggested that there are several tools that could be used.

L. Schmitz proposed starting with studying how to improve operations. V. Senescall asked that if Hyland Greens was to come close to breaking even, would the City Council still want the Task Force to vet all options for the land. R. Axtell stated that he thought the answer was yes, that the Task Force should still look at all options for the land in order to know what may be given up. C. Weatherby added that by vetting all possible land uses, a different kind of golf facility might be created that could be profitable. L. Perrault asked members to pay due diligence while researching all the usage options.

I. Fursman concluded the discussion by asking members to consider how their perspectives may have shifted as a result of the meeting.

V. Senescall asked that minutes from meetings be shared in a timely manner in order to give members time to read them over. In addition, he requested that homework be given out earlier, if possible.

The meeting closed at 8:34 p.m. I. Fursman asked Task Force members to complete the meeting evaluation forms found in the Hyland Greens Task Force binders. She stated the next meeting of the Task Force is December 16, 2015.