

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES

November 4, 2024

The regular meeting and public hearings of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Upper St. Clair, duly advertised and posted in accordance with law, was called to order at 7:30 PM on Monday, November 4, 2024, at the Township of Upper St. Clair Municipal Building, Board of Commissioners' Meeting Room, Upper St. Clair, PA. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present.

PRESENT: Commissioner Paoly President
Commissioner Burlingame
Commissioner Enck
Commissioner Graves
Commissioner Pardini
Commissioner Thomas

Mark Mansfield Assistant Township Manager
Mark P. Romito Director of Finance
Adam A. Benigni Director of Community Development
Irving S. Firman Township Attorney
Michael J. Galet, P.E. Township Engineer
Missy Fenster Network Deposition Services
Prudence Cooper Recording Secretary

EXCUSED: Commissioner Plutko Vice President
Matthew R. Serakowski Township Manager

PUBLIC: 18 people attended.

REVIEW OF BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 7, 2024

Commissioner Burlingame moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 7, 2024. This was seconded by Commissioner Thomas and carried with a 6-0 voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING RE. PLC24-0001 – ST. CLAIR COUNTRY CLUB TERRACE COURSE – UNIFIED CONDITIONAL USE PRELIMINARY AND FINAL LAND DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL

Commissioner Paoly introduced the Continued Public Hearing Re. PLC24-0001 – St. Clair Country Club Terrace Course – Unified Conditional Use Preliminary and Final Land Development Approval.

Commissioner Thomas recused himself since he is a member of St. Clair Country Club which is the applicant in this matter. Commissioner Thomas's Recusal statement is attached to these minutes.

Mr. Benigni reviewed the recommended continued public hearing procedures and recommended that the hearing be continued to Monday, December 2, 2024 for the purpose of taking Staff testimony.

Those wishing to testify who were not previously sworn at the initial public hearing were sworn in by Commissioner Paoly.

Mr. Benigni then entered Township Exhibit #13 and Applicant Exhibits #11 through #14 into the record.

Mr. Scott Rowland, President of St. Clair Country Club, provided professional backgrounds of each member of their team, which includes Dr. Michael Hurdzan, Principal, Hurdzan Golf, Mr. Jason Sloan, Principal Designer, Strategic Golf, and Ms. Kimberly Gales, Professional Engineer with J.R. Gales & Associates.

Mr. Rowland continued with his Power Point presentation explaining that in 2022, the Country Club's Long Range Plan identified the Terrace Nine Course as an area to be improved which was supported by its membership. Also included in the Plan was to keep the driving range in its current location, but to install a Trackman Range to monitor golf ball flights and to restrict the type of balls used to limited play balls that go no further than 200 yards. Since that time no golf balls that have been hit on the driving range have left the property.

Mr. Rowland explained that there is a need for the members to hit full flight balls along with the interest of the Club's neighbors to move the driving range away from Old Washington Road, which prompted this project.

The Terrace Nine Course has not been redesigned or addressed since the 1970s. The Club reached out to Dr. Hurdzan, due to his experience with golf course design and safety, when it was determined that the driving range would need to be relocated. He also developed conceptual designs for the Terrace Nine Course, so he was appointed as the golf course architect for this project.

Mr. Rowland continued with the history of the Terrace Nine Course emphasizing that the location of the Terrace Nine green next to Old Washington Road has not changed since 1916. The current location of the driving range is to the right of the Terrace Nine Course.

Dr. Hurdzan provided an overview of the redesign of Terrace Nine Course, which is used primarily by golf novices and families, so it will have multiple tees to accommodate all skill levels. The safest way to use the land, specifically along Washington Road was incorporated in the overall redesign of the course. The driving range will be moved to the west side of the property in a northly direction at the current location of the first golf hole of the Terrace Nine Course. The location of each hole was reviewed beginning with the first hole and ending with the ninth hole both of which will be located near the club house. The 7th hole will be located along Old Washington Road in the location of the driving range.

Dr. Hurdzan's presentation emphasized the design of the 7th hole. Based on research data from the United States Golf Association (USGA), the Royal and Ancient Golf Club (R & A), and Arccos software, golf balls land between a 10-to-15-degree angle on either side of the aiming point or landing area an average of 90 to 92% of the time. These metrics were used in the planning design of the Terrace Nine Course. In addition, over one million golf balls were hit on the driving range in one year; it is estimated that only 7,000 golf balls will be hit on the new 7th hole, thereby further reducing the risk of golf balls leaving the property.

The existing mounds and tree plantings will stay to the side of the new 7th hole and knee-high tall fescue grass will be planted. The tees will be closer to the property line so that balls are hit away from Old Washington Road. Golf shots from each of the tees were reviewed, and using the aforementioned metrics, balls will land from 27 to 46 feet from Old Washington Road depending on skill level. This is well within the standard guidelines of golf course design pertaining to holes next to roadways. In addition, high bunkers will be installed, and the landing point will be up to 20 feet higher than the hitting point, further deterring golf balls from going onto Old Washington Road. The safety margin has been increased to Old Washington Road from the landing area of the driving shot and the green itself.

The new driving range will be located at the old Terrace Nine #1 hole which will have a 139-foot wooded buffer between the 15-degree angle of the aiming point and the property line. This will eliminate balls from leaving the property.

A video was then shown illustrating how the new 7th hole will look based on the plans. Deep, protective and discouraging bunkers, high fescue grass, steep topography, the existing 15-foot-high net, and many trees were depicted, all designed to keep the golf ball in play. Screen shots from the 3D renderings were reviewed depicting many angles of the distance and steep topography between the back of the houses on Old Washington Road and the 7th hole.

Applicant's Exhibit #15 (applicant's Power Point presentation), Exhibit #16 (applicant's video), and Exhibit #17 (applicant's still photos/screenshots) were then entered into the record.

Ms. Gales continued the presentation by explaining that there are two different drainage areas; one goes down toward Old Washington Road and back behind a building and the other goes towards Lake 18. A lake will be added to the 6th hole. The post-development area on the 1st hole will be detained in Lake 18 and the post development detained area will be detained in the new lake. The pre-development flows were considered before 1916 when the land was all meadows, so this is a very conservative design. The flows are small so the discharge is less than if the golf course today was considered. All the flows in the post-development are 75 to 20% of the pre-development flows that will leave the property.

Ms. Gales further stated that the review letter from Gateway Engineers was received and there are three comments to resolve.

Commissioner Burlingame expressed his concerns about regular golf balls leaving the Terrace Nine Golf Course. The consequence of golf balls leaving the property is the closing of the Course after the investment to have it built. The Board is seeking confirmation that golf balls will not leave the Course.

Commissioner Graves confirmed with Mr. Rowland that mostly novice golfers or golfers with a high handicap will be using the Terrace Nine Course although it is open to golfers of all abilities. Commissioner Graves expressed an interest in seeing a diagram showing yardage, age and skill level of Course users. His concern is that novice golfers and left-handed golfers may not be lined up correctly which would dramatically shift the 15-degree angle of their golf shot. In addition, the tree to the left of the tee box was not included in tonight's presentation but was included in the presentation at last month's Regular Board meeting. Lastly, he requested the length of the fescue that will be planted because he is concerned that members will complain about it and the grass will be cut down making it easier for golf balls to leave the property.

Mr. Rowland confirmed that the groundskeeper determines the length of the fescue. The Country Club does have a fescue program and there is a large amount of fescue on the championship course so the membership is familiar with this type of grass. There is also a plan for at least one tree to be planted near the tee box.

Commissioner Pardini inquired if the Country Club has any knowledge of any injuries sustained by stray golf balls or if they have been sued for this reason in the 100+ year history of the Club. In response, Mr. Rowland had no knowledge of any injuries but stated that he will research this and respond to the Board. Commissioner Pardini stated that if there have been no injuries, then the golf ball dispersion should not be an issue.

Mr. Rowland confirmed for Commissioner Paoly that driving the golf ball on the 7th hole past the bunkers is not feasible since it is approximately 315 yards to the bunkers and the average golfer hits the ball only 216 yards. In addition, there will be high rough and fescue grass past the bunkers. The green that has been there since 1916 will be moved even further away from the property line.

Mr. Rowland further confirmed for Commissioner Paoly that there is approximately 300 feet of thick woods down to the stream which would stop any golf balls that are hit there. Mr. Rowland agreed that the fescue grass, fence and trees will remain for safety reasons.

Mr. Joel Mazur, Tiffany Lane, stated that he is a member of St. Clair Country Club and is a frequent user of its driving range which is top rate, safe, and usable. The Club has invested in a Trackman which confirmed that no golf balls have left the property and have caused no injuries or property damage to its neighbors. He and Club members are not in favor of the proposed plan and he asked what the process was to add another level of safety to the current driving range by adding a higher net and a back up secondary net.

Mr. Firman responded that the Board of Commissioners only reviews what is presented to them. For the purposes of this hearing, they only look at what is presented by the Country Club, and they may add certain conditions. A request for a fence height variance would need to go before the Zoning Hearing Board, which is completely independent from the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Paoly asked if there were any additional questions or comments from the Board or the public and there were none.

Mr. Benigni added that the hearing be continued to Monday, December 2, 2024 for the purpose of taking Staff testimony.

MOTION AND VOTE TO CONTINUE PUBLIC HEARING RE. PLC24-0001 – ST. CLAIR COUNTRY CLUB TERRACE COURSE – UNIFIED CONDITIONAL USE PRELIMINARY AND FINAL LAND DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL

Commissioner Burlingame moved to continue Public Hearing Re. PLC24-0001 – St. Clair Country Club Terrace Course – Unified Conditional Use Preliminary and Final Land Development Approval to the Board of Commissioners' Regular meeting on December 2, 2024. This was seconded by Commissioner Graves and carried with a 5-0 voice vote. Commissioner Thomas recused himself from voting.

RECOMMENDATION RE. PLC19-0001 – ARDOLINO DEVELOPMENT PLAN – AMENDED FINAL APPROVAL – EXTENSION REQUEST

Mr. Benigni stated that Mr. Rodney Ardolino, Marigold Management, LLC, has submitted a request for a five-year extension for the Ardolino Development Plan which was granted by the Board of Commissioners on November 4, 2019, by Ordinance 2209.

Staff recommends that the Board of Commissioners act on this request by considering Bill 5-24.

Mr. Rodney Ardolino, 3285 Maple Lane, was present for questions from the Board or the public. In response to Commissioner Burlingame's inquiry, Mr. Ardolino stated that Ardolino's Pizzeria will remain where it is and that he plans to build a structure for another type of business.

Mr. Ardolino confirmed for Mr. Firman that there will be no change to the original plan, just an extension to build.

Commissioner Paoly asked if there were any additional questions or comments from the Board or the public and there were none.

MOTION AND VOTE TO ADOPT BILL NO. 5-24

Commissioner Thomas moved to adopt Bill No. 5-24 Re. PLC19-0001 – Ardolino Development Plan – Amended Final Approval – Extension Request. This was seconded by Commissioner Pardini and carried with a 6-0 roll call vote.

NEW BUSINESS

RECOMMENDATION RE. APPROVAL OF CONTRACTS

Mr. Mansfield stated that Staff recommends the following contracts for the Board's approval in accordance with Township Code:

C. Crump, Inc. Hubbard, OH	Hays Road Stream Restoration	\$ 94,350.00
Melzers Fuel Service Coraopolis, PA	87 and 89 Octane Gasoline, Diesel Fuel and Winterized Diesel Fuel Additive	OPIS Daily Pittsburgh Average Index Plus Fixed Margin of \$.0400 on each gallon of 87 and 89 Octane Gasoline and Diesel Fuel and \$.0250 on Winterized Diesel Fuel additive on each gallon of Diesel Fuel.
Maher Duessel CPAs Pittsburgh, PA	Audit Services for the Township, Tri-Community South EMS, and the Municipal Authority	Fiscal Year 2024: \$47,800.00 Fiscal Year 2025: \$50,150.00 Fiscal Year 2026: \$52,700.00
Penn Care, Inc. Niles, OH	Three (3) Ford F-450 4x4 Ambulances which include graphics and additional equipment @ \$252,596.00/each	\$757,788.00

A simple motion and voice vote will authorize the above actions.

Commissioner Paoly asked if there were any questions or comments from the Board or the public and there were none.

MOTION AND VOTE TO APPROVE THE ABOVE-MENTIONED CONTRACTS

Commissioner Burlingame moved to approve the above-mentioned contracts. This was seconded by Commissioner Enck and carried with a 6-0 voice vote.

RECOMMENDATION RE. PUBLIC HEARING FOR 2025 PROPOSED BUDGET

Mr. Romito stated that this is the Public Hearing for the 2025 Proposed Budget and reviewed the recommended Public Hearing procedures. The adoption of the 2025 Budget will be considered at the Board of Commissioners' Meeting on December 2, 2024.

Those wishing to testify were sworn in by Commissioner Paoly.

Mr. Romito shared a Power Point presentation which began with a review of the budget process that begins with Staff meetings in May that continue throughout the year. This is followed by several public and internal meetings, this public hearing and then adoption of the budget at the December Regular Board meeting. There was much support from Department Directors and their Staff in developing the budget.

The budget being presented has no tax increase for the 16th consecutive year. The budget accomplishes the Board's strategic initiatives from the planning priorities process. The largest expense is the Sanitary Sewer Source Reduction Project which has been anticipated for many years.

The proposed budget includes a \$27.6 million general fund budget which is the primary operating budget for the Township and this is where most of the tax revenue goes. All other funds are balanced at \$36.2 million. There are six other funds, three of which are considered major funds: Sanitary Sewer Fund, Community & Recreation Center Fund, and the Capital Projects Fund. The total budget is \$63.8 million.

The overall profile of revenues to the General Fund has been consistent. The two primary sources of revenue have been Real Estate Tax and Earned Income Tax, amounting to almost 80% of General Fund Revenue. Roughly 9% of remaining revenue comes from other taxes which include realty transfer tax, local services tax and the Township's share of the Allegheny County Regional Asset District (RAD) sales tax. The remaining 12% of revenue comes from other pieces of revenue. General Fund revenues are budgeted to increase by 3.5% from 2024.

The operating expenditure profile has not changed much from past years. Public Safety and Public Works make up approximately three-fourths of the general fund budget with the remaining departments making up the rest. Operating expenditures are budgeted to increase 3.4% from 2024. Last year, the largest single increase was from the refuse collection contract, and it is again for 2025, but not at the level of last year. It is a five-year contract, so this was not unexpected. If the increase from the refuse collection contract of approximately \$190,000 is excluded, the budget increase from last year would be 2.7%. In this economic environment, this is a very good result and a credit to the Department Directors who have submitted reasonable requests for the 2025 budget without negatively impacting the level of services.

The Sanitary Sewer Fund is its own fund and operates using revenues from sewer fees. ALCOSAN is raising its rates by 7% again next year and in 2026 which was expected. The Township crafts its sewage rate by a multiplier to cover ALCOSAN costs, but to also have funds left over for Township infrastructure work. The 2025 budget propose to pass along the ALCOSAN increase onto the sewer bill but keep the Township's portion level. On the expense side, wastewater treatment is budgeted at \$6.1 million, which is the amount the Township pays ALCOSAN to treat wastewater. This is usually the largest expense in this fund, but that is not the case in 2025.

The Township will be conducting major source reduction work in 2025 which usually costs about \$1.5 million each year, but \$6.4 million is proposed in the Sanitary Sewer Fund budget for source reduction work in 2025. This work has been identified by Gateway Engineers to meet the Township's obligations of the Consent Order but this work is not unique to Upper St. Clair. All 60+ municipalities in the ALCOSAN region are under the same Consent Order to do a lot of work in 2025. The bid opening for this project is happening very soon so that we can get ahead of the other municipalities doing this same work. This will cause a temporary expense increase to the Sanitary Sewer Fund, but after 2025 the expense will decrease for the next couple of years; however, the expected costs beyond 2025 are unknown at this time. It is anticipated that there will be another Consent Order, but again, the mandates and requirements are unknown.

The Community & Recreation Center (C&RC) Fund is steady, but there continues to be pressure in some areas, particularly with part-time wages. A 4.5% increase is expected in this fund for next year. On the revenue side, membership levels have hit new highs and there is strong performance with programs, therefore a strong revenue performance in this fund is expected which will help support the operating expenses. On the Capital non-recurring side, routine replacement of fitness, aquatics and IT equipment is anticipated. There is also funding for the implementation stage of the Ballard*King facility assessment. The newly formed committee will begin meeting later this month and there is funding to help support their efforts.

When the budget is developed it is done with strategic goals in mind. The Board's planning priorities were incorporated in the 2025 budget proposal which include: holding the line on taxes; the operation and maintenance of the Morton Complex; the Fire Department Strategic Plan; Police

Department initiatives relating to training, accreditation, and technology enhancements; and, the completion of the Comprehensive Plan. The proposed budget was placed in the Finance section on the Township's website in October.

Mr. Romito opened the presentation up for questions from the Board or public and there were none. The Board collectively thanked Mr. Romito and Staff for their efforts in developing the budget.

MOTION AND VOTE TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING RE. 2025 PROPOSED BUDGET

Commissioner Burlingame moved to close the Public Hearing Re. 2025 Proposed Budget. This was seconded by Commissioner Enck and carried with a 6-0 voice vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Following a motion for adjournment by Commissioner Pardini and a second by Commissioner Burlingame which carried with a 6-0 voice vote, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:58 PM.

Prudence Cooper
Recording Secretary
November 4, 2024

RECUSAL

I, Richard I. Thomas, member of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Upper St. Clair, Pennsylvania, hereby recuse myself from consideration of the following matter scheduled for public hearing before the Upper St. Clair Board of Commissioners at its regular meeting of Monday, November 4, 2024: PLC24-0001 - St. Clair Country Club - Conditional Use Preliminary and Final Land Development Approval. I am recusing myself due to the fact that I am a member of St. Clair Country Club which is the applicant in this matter.

10/4/24
Date

Richard I. Thomas
Richard I. Thomas, Member
Board of Commissioners, Township
of Upper St. Clair, Pennsylvania