



PARKS CONSULTING GROUP LLC

**Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve Master Plan Advisory Committee
Commissioner Report - FINAL
January 25, 2011**

Contents

Executive Summary3

Background.....5

 Fort Sheridan History Summary5

 Advisory Committee Formation6

Summary of Advisory Committee’s Work in 201010

 February 10, 2010 Meeting Results.....10

 April 14, 2010 Meeting Results10

 June 9, 2010 Meeting Results.....11

 August 26, 2010 Public Open House11

 September 15, 2010 Meeting Results12

Public Comments Summary.....13

Advisory Committee Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners15

 November 17, 2010 Meeting Results.....15

 Next steps.....16

Appendices17

 A. Original Agreement18

 Excerpted from the Quitclaim Deed, dated December 4, 2001.....18

 Fort Sheridan Memorandum of Understanding between Army and Forest preserve District, 1998.18

B. Advisory Group Meeting Minutes	19
December 2, 2009 Minutes	19
February 10, 2010 Minutes	23
April 14, 2010 Minutes	25
June 9, 2010 Minutes	27
September 15, 2010 Minutes	30
November 17, 2010 Minutes.....	33
November 17, 2010 meeting facilitator notes - member comments on their recommendation to the LCFPD Board	36
C. Public Comments Analysis.....	39
D. Advisory Committee Working Protocols and Session Ground Rules	43
E. Golf Concepts – 1, 2A, 2B.....	44
F. Advisory Group Meeting Presentations.....	47
G. References – Project reports.....	48
H. Proposed 9-Hole Golf Course and Public Open Space Design Concept, November 17, 2010	51

Executive Summary

In late 2009, the Lake County Forest Preserve District (LCFPD) Board of Commissioners formed the Fort Sheridan Advisory Committee to discuss and explore options for the Fort Sheridan Preserve and to come back to the Commissioners with a report and recommendation for moving forward. The Advisory Committee members represented seven governing bodies adjacent to the site, including the Forest Preserve District, the cities of Highland Park, Highland Park, and Lake Forest, the Park Districts of Lake Bluff and Highland Park, and the Town of Fort Sheridan Master Homeowners Association.

The group met formally six times from December 2009 to November 2010. In between meetings, public comments about the site were collected and documented, tasks to assist the Committee occurred, such as, collecting and documenting public comments, gathering information and performing analysis, developing presentations and reports and holding an open house for the public. Each meeting was a working session with defined objectives and opportunities for discussion. The public was invited to observe and provide written comments at each meeting. At the December 2009 meeting, the Committee requested that the LCFPD hire a professional meeting facilitator, and Susan Parks of Parks Consulting Group was selected and began work in January 2010.

At the February meeting, members of the Advisory Committee came with very diverse ideas and priorities for the site. While the group members admitted that a consensus opinion would be difficult to achieve, each member took responsibility for the Committee's charter and worked hard to find areas of agreement, explore options, understand issues and explain differences. Early on they decided to focus the group's time on defining a compromise scenario and explore its feasibility as a way to try to achieve a consensus recommendation.

The consensus scenario had to balance and optimize all of the following objectives (each objective selected based on having strong support from at least two members of the Committee) before a recommendation could be made:

- Meet the deed restriction for golf on the site
- Provide a creative design that combines a unique golfing experience that will attract the number of rounds needed, while also providing the most possible open space and passive public recreational opportunities (such as trails and bluff access)
- Be financially feasible to build and operate
- Respect and maintain the historical relevance of the site
- Be environmentally certified, like other existing Lake County Forest Preserve golf courses
- Protect the ravines

The Advisory Committee listened to experts in the golf marketing and golf course design industries and also to land use and financial analysis provided by LCFPD staff. Public comments were collected, summarized and shared. Three scenarios for the site were created, and after much discussion and input from the public at an open house, the Concept Design "2B" (see the Appendix E) was selected as optimizing the most objectives and having the best chance for fiscal sustainability.

The issues of affordability and fiscal sustainability were very important to all Committee members. A detailed report of estimated costs, expected revenues and financing options for Concept 2B was developed and presented to the Committee at the November 2010 meeting. The fiscal challenges of developing a

new golf course became very clear, and the group realized that privatization might be the most fiscally responsible financing option for the site.

While the Advisory Committee's process of exploration and discussion was useful, in the end, there was no consensus about the preferred land use for the site. Some felt that an 18-hole course was the only financially viable option. Others felt that the land should be a traditional forest preserve, with no golf component. Some were comfortable with the blended golf, open-space compromise of Concept 2B, as long as a private developer could assume the cost and risk of development and operations. All agreed to a recommendation that the Board of Commissioners consider creating a RFP for privatization development and operation of the course.

This final report of the Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve Master Plan Advisory Committee will be forwarded to the Lake County Forest Preserve District President and Board of Commissioners for their consideration. The report completes the work of the Master Plan Advisory Committee, and the Forest Preserve District extends its appreciation to members of the Advisory Committee and to members of the public who attended the meetings and submitted public comments for their time and effort in attempting to reach consensus regarding this issue.

All information documented throughout the process can be found at the following site:

http://www.lcpd.org/fort_sheridan_golf/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.view

Background

Fort Sheridan History Summary

The following is a high-level summary of the events between 1989 and 2009. More detailed information about the project history can be found at the following sites:

Fort Sheridan Golf Club Site

http://www.lcfd.org/fort_sheridan_golf/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.view

Fort Sheridan Site

http://www.lcfd.org/preserves/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.view&object_id=163&type=SF

The Fort Sheridan Army Base closure was announced in 1989. In the next few years, the Forest Preserve District expressed interest in reusing the land for open space and outdoor recreation. In August 1991, the District offered \$10M to the US Department of Army to acquire the northern 253 acres. When the base officially closed in 1993, a Joint Planning Committee (JPC) was formed to plan Fort Sheridan re-use. Members of the JPC included two elected officials from each of the governing bodies of Lake County, and of the cities of Lake Forest, Highland Park and Highwood. In 1994, the Joint Planning Committee Concept Plan was adopted. The plan included a signature 18-hole golf course, designed by Robert Trent Jones, II.

In 1995, federal land transfer legislation was passed that required the District to protect and enhance open space in accordance with the JCP Concept Plan, including maintaining the cemetery, protecting endangered or threatened species and maintaining a golf course. Between 1996 and 2002, various land transfer agreements were made. The final deed for the land was received by the District in 2002. The deed states, "the Property shall be a golf course and recreational open space in perpetuity and not devoted to another use, all in accordance with the Fort Sheridan Joint Planning Commission Concept Plan, dated September 30, 1994." See Appendix A for the language in the Deed and Memorandum of Understanding.

At that point, the District began the natural resource and environmental engineering work and hired a second golf course architect, Cornish, Silva and Mungeam, Inc. The result was a Forest Preserve Master Plan that was approved by the Forest Preserve Board of Commissioners in 2003. The Master Plan included a reconstructed 18-hole golf course, public access roads, parking, three miles of trails, restored ravines and lakeshore, improved drainage, and a multipurpose visitor's center.

In 2003-2004, demolition and filling of the Nike missile silos and location and removal of unexploded ordnance began, and the existing golf course was closed in preparation for construction. When bids for the Master Plan came in, they were significantly higher than the District's budget. Because of the long-standing policy of the Forest Preserve Board to not pay golf course construction or operation costs with tax dollars, the bids were rejected. Staff was directed to revise golf course renovation plans and investigate implementing public access improvements and ravine restoration. In 2004, golf course funding and cost reductions were explored. It was concluded that high green fees were required for self-support, but that the cost-cutting would adversely affect potential net revenues.

In 2005, the Forest Preserve filed a lawsuit against the developer of the Town of Fort Sheridan for violating its 1997 agreement with the District by not removing dirt piles and completing demolition. In the

meantime, restoration on the site continued. Trails and the parking lot were opened, natural areas were improved, trail exhibits were installed, an education curriculum was completed and cemetery improvements were made. The lawsuit was settled in 2008, dirt piles were processed and earthmoving and demolition were completed. Grading was designed to support a future golf course. Additional ravine and upland buffer restoration was started.

In 2009, questions were raised about the feasibility of continuing to pursue construction of a golf course. Public opinion was divided about building the course or keeping the land as open space. The golf market had been declining locally, regionally and nationally for several years and the District and neighboring publicly owned golf courses had started to see declines in revenue. The cost estimates for building and operating the designed destination 18-hole golf course continued to be high.

The Board of Commissioners considered several options, including privatizing the construction and operations of a golf course, continuing with the 18-hole plan, rebuilding the course in similar quality to the original course, or leaving the land as open space. The board commissioned additional golf market analysis and projections for the three options. After reviewing the information, the board was split between the options and public comment also came in with opposing views.

Advisory Committee Formation

In late 2009, the Board determined that an Advisory Group be convened to discuss and explore the options for the Fort Sheridan Preserve. The Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve Master Plan Advisory Committee was formed in late 2009 and conducted its first meeting on December 2, 2009. At that meeting the group's charter was reviewed and each member's vision for the site was shared. Options discussed included an 18-hole golf course, a blended golf course and preserve alternative, a traditional forest preserve, and an alternative to land bank the site for three to five years and then reassess market and economic changes. The Advisory Committee members agreed that they represented varying interests and decided to bring in an impartial facilitator to conduct its future meetings. Parks Consulting Group was retained as a facilitator.

Advisory Committee Charter

The Board of Commissioners gave the Advisory Committee the following charter:

"The Committee will prepare, approve and forward a final report to the Forest Preserve Board of Commissioners, consisting of a recommended program and conceptual master plan of preferred future public uses for Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve, including a summary of options, analysis, opinions of probable construction costs, analysis of projected operating costs and revenues, and public input considered during the planning process."

Advisory Committee Members and Participants

The Advisory Committee consisted of ten voting members, representing the surrounding municipalities (Highwood, Highland Park and Lake Forest), the LCFPD Board of Commissioner representatives of the Board Districts surrounding Fort Sheridan, as well as two neighboring park districts (The Park District of High land Park and the Lake Bluff Park District), who, managed public golf courses and would be impacted by any decision at Fort Sheridan.

At each meeting, one person represented each voting member. Alternate representatives from that organization often attended and/or substituted as the voting member. Additional guests, Forest Preserve District staff and subject matter experts, were also present to answer questions and make presentations. The following people participated in some part of the process:

Voting member	Participants
Advisory Committee Chair	Carol Calabresa, Vice President, Board of Commissioners
LCFPD – Board District 23	Anne Flanigan Bassi, Commissioner
LCFPD – Board District 22	Michelle Feldman, Commissioner
LCFPD – Board District 13	Susan Loving Gravenhorst, Commissioner
City of Highland Park	Michael Belsky, Mayor, City of Highland Park Alternates: David Limardi, City Manager Patrick Brennan, Deputy City Manager, City of Highland Park
City of Highwood	Charlie Pecaro, Mayor, City of Highwood Alternate: Greg Jackson, City Manager
City of Lake Forest	James Cowhey, Jr., Mayor City of Lake Forest Alternates: Robert Kiely, City Manager Mary Van Arsdale, Parks & Recreation Director, City of Lake Forest
Park District of Highland Park	Lorenz Werhane Jr., President Park District, Highland Park Elaine Waxman, Vice President, Park District of Highland Park Alternates: Liza McElroy, Executive Director, Park District of Highland Park Doug Coutts, Director of Facilities, Park District of Highland Park
Lake Bluff Park District	Kurt Gronau, President, Lake Bluff Park District Sandy Hart, Vice President, Lake Bluff Park District Alternate: Ron Salski, Executive Director, Lake Bluff Park District
Fort Sheridan Homeowners Association	Ralph Pfaff, President, Town of Fort Sheridan Master Homeowners Assoc. Alternate: Chuck Bley, Vice President, Town of Fort Sheridan Master Homeowners Assoc.
Ex Oficio member	
10 th Congressional District	Aaron Winters, District Director, 10 th Congressional District
US Department of Army	William Brawner
Non-Voting Attendees	
LCFPD Board of Commissioners	Bonnie Thomson Carter, President
LCFPD Staff	Tom Hahn, Executive Director Andrew Kimmel, Deputy Executive Director Nan Buckardt, Director of Environmental Education & Public Affairs Bonnie McLeod, Director of Finance Daniel Prezell, Director of Revenue Facilities Mike Fenelon, Director of Planning, Conservation & Development Linda Carlstone, Marketing Specialist Marie Shields, Administrative Coordinator Randy Seebach, Land Development Manager
Subject Matter Experts, Presenters	Chris Brewer, Golf Marketing Consultant, ERA/AECOM Bob Lohmann, Golf Design Consultant, Lohmann Golf Design Todd Quitno, Golf Design Consultant, Lohmann Golf Design
Facilitator	Susan Parks, Parks Consulting Group

Advisory Committee Approach

Prior to the February 2010 meeting, Parks Consulting Group reviewed documents regarding the history of the site and also conducted an in-person interview with a representative from each member organization of the Advisory Group. Twenty-four people, representing nine organizations, were interviewed. The purpose of the interviews was to understand the perspective of each member organization, as well as the specific needs and concerns of that member.

The consultant made the following observations as a result of the interviews, which was shared at the first meeting, and also used to design the approach for the Advisory Group’s meetings:

- There was distrust and skepticism about the process and many felt the Committee’s recommendation would make no difference in the final outcome.
- There was overall fatigue and desire for close after 10 years; “wait and see” no longer an option.
- Many, especially the parties that were part of the original agreements, felt betrayed by the LCFPD because of past promises. They felt the LCFPD had made too many mistakes in the past.
- There was disagreement about the permanence and obligation to intergovernmental agreements – some felt it was legally and morally binding and non-negotiable. Others felt that government entities should first and foremost be fiscally responsible and if conditions change, agreements should be modified for the public good.
- Most parties already had a specific “solution” for the site in their mind, with little room for compromise. All acknowledged that the work of the committee would not be easy.

The approach and agendas for the Advisory Group meetings in 2010 were designed to ensure that the Advisory Group members:

- Had the relevant facts that they needed to understand the issues, including professional opinions
- Listened to and understood public concerns
- Acknowledged each other’s points of view and differences and each member’s priorities
- Identified all possible scenarios for the site and explored areas of potential compromise
- Strived to come to consensus, which was defined as “getting to a maximum point of agreement so that action can follow.”

Advisory Committee 2010 Timeline

January 2010	Gather information and conduct interviews and finalize approach (consultant)
February 2010 meeting	2 nd Committee meeting: Align to approach, charter and group’s working protocols. Brainstorm on ideas for the site
April 2010 meeting	3 rd Committee meeting: Prioritize shared objectives/requirements for the site. Explore possible scenarios for the site where alignment is possible. Define basic requirements for a compromise or “blended” site (with golf and passive recreation). Assign staff to develop some conceptual designs for review

May 2010	Develop conceptual designs and market analysis (staff and subject matter experts)
June 2010 meeting	4 rd Committee meeting: Review and discuss conceptual designs. Review public comments received to date. Plan for open house for public
August 2010 Public Open House	Conduct open house for public to view site design concepts and provide feedback
September 2010 meeting	5 th Committee meeting: Review results of public open house and public comments. Test for consensus and discuss additional information needed from LCFPD staff.
October 2010	Develop detailed report
November 2010 meeting	6 th committee meeting: Review report and share each member's recommendation for moving forward
January 2011	Present report to LCFPD Board of Commissioners

Summary of Advisory Committee's Work in 2010

Refer to the Appendix for meeting minutes

February 10, 2010 Meeting Results

The purpose of the February meeting was to form a cohesive group by having a shared understanding of facts, sharing perspectives, aligning to group objectives and agreeing to group working protocols.

The consultant reviewed her observations from the one-on-one member interviews and shared the proposed approach and timeline of the Advisory Committee's work.

The group discussed and agreed to the following statements about its work:

- The Committee's assignment is to define the "what" of a scenario for the Ft. Sheridan site, not the "how", which is the Board of Commissioners' responsibility
- The Committee will be more successful if there was a high level of consensus/alignment, but acknowledged that it is possible that the final outcome of the group might be to "agree to disagree."
- To achieve consensus the Committee will need to find a solution that balances several objectives:
 - Provide benefit for the constituents of the original agreement; meet the deed restriction
 - Maintain open space and scenic views of the lake.
 - Protect and sustain the environment – the habitats, water quality and ecosystems unique to the site
 - Provide outdoor recreational and educational activities consistent with the mission and other existing uses of the Lake County Forest Preserve District
 - Be fiscally responsible for the tax-payers and provide long-term benefit for Lake County residents

April 14, 2010 Meeting Results

The purpose of the meeting was to continue the discussion about possible scenarios for the Fort Sheridan site that were begun in February. Several scenarios were presented for consideration. These scenarios were based on the results of the February session, the public comments and the committee member interviews.

The discussion led to the following finalized set of objectives to balance and optimize at the site:

- Meet the deed restriction by incorporating a 9 -12 hole course, blended with natural areas and public access, fair and equitable access for both golf and passive uses
- Provide a creative design for a unique golfing experience that will attract the number of rounds needed for the course to be financially sustainable
- Respect and maintain the historical relevance of the site
- Be financially feasible to build and maintain
- Be environmentally certified, like other existing Lake County Forest Preserve golf courses
- Protect the ravines

The Advisory Committee asked LCFPD staff to work with subject matter experts and member organization staffs to develop a set of scenarios and conceptual designs to meet these objectives for consideration at the June meeting. The Committee also asked for market and financial analysis of the scenarios.

June 9, 2010 Meeting Results

The meeting focused on presentations about the conceptual designs that were developed to address the site objectives and the Committee's requests from the April meeting.

First, Mike Fenelon presented land use options and described the advantages and disadvantages of each. The first concept divided the site into concise use areas with general public use to the east on the lakefront and golf use on the west side. In the second scenario, golf and general public use shared the lakefront and parade ground.

The Forest Preserve District had retained Lohmann Golf Designs, Inc., who then presented several golf concept plans (1, 2A and 2B). The three golf plan concepts were presented with a design to: enable financial success of the golf course, to provide a challenge to all golfers, to take advantage of the physical features of the site, to provide unique play ideas, and to provide a youth component where possible

Mike Fenelon then described the open space, public access and trail components of each golf design concept. Each concept includes trails, wetlands, woodlands and scenic overlooks of the lake and ravines. The trail routes would allow the user to experience the historic structures of Fort Sheridan and a range of landscapes.

Chris Brewer, a golf marketing consultant, provided analysis on the 9-hole golf market and the financial aspects of those concepts. He showed comparisons with other courses in the area. He felt that options 2A and 2B had a better chance of generating revenue. Some of the fundamental revenue questions include the nature of the driving range/practice facility element, whether the course will play like a 9 or 18-hole course, and the layout of the alternative tee boxes.

After questions and discussion about development and operating cost estimates, the committee agreed to show all concepts to the public (via an open house) to get their input at an open house this summer and then meet again in September to attempt to come to a consensus to present to the Forest Preserve Board.

August 26, 2010 Public Open House

A Public Open House was held on August 26, 2010 from 5 – 8 PM at the Gorton Community Center, Lake Forest. It is estimated that 150 – 160 people attended, plus Advisory Group members and LCFPD staff and consultants. All three blended golf-open space concept designs (1, 2A, 2B) were on display with a designated person to answer questions.

There were several ways that the public could submit their comments at the open house, as well as by mail or online. The concept designs had been displayed on the LCFPD website and at several Village Halls in the weeks before the open house, to allow as many people as possible to view them and provide comments.

September 15, 2010 Meeting Results

The objectives of the September 15 meeting of the Fort Sheridan Advisory Group were to: 1) Provide Advisory Group members with updated information since the last meeting (Public Open House update, public comments summary and Concept 2B preliminary cost estimates) and 2) Explore the level of consensus surrounding a blended design (based on concept 2B) for the site.

The attendance at the public open houses had been good. Several hundred public comments had been submitted. Public preferences continued to be fairly evenly divided between those supporting golf on the site and those supporting a traditional forest preserve on the site. Of those who supported a blended solution (golf and open space), most liked concept 2B the most.

The Advisory Committee members were polled to see if they were ready to determine the level of consensus around a recommendation. While most members were open to looking further into Concept 2B, many felt that they did not have enough information to determine if the objective of “fiscal responsibility” was being met.

The following additional information was requested for the final November meeting:

- Financial information about the effect of a 9-hole course on the neighboring golf courses
- Additional information from Kemper Golf (provided by the City of Highland Park) to compare construction estimates
- Clarification on the golf-public area cost sharing breakdown of the design and construction estimates
- Economic benefit information
- One report (a “total package”) containing all the information collected on Concept 2B

The November meeting notes can be found following the Public Comments Summary in the section “Advisory Group Recommendations to the Board of Commissioners.”

Public Comments Summary

Comments from the public were welcomed and encouraged throughout the process and all emails, letters and comments forms at meetings were collected, converted to a PDF, and shared with all Advisory Committee members.

Any quantitative analysis of the public comments should be performed with caution, and not too much should be read into the “counts.” Public comments do not represent a statistically representative sample of the views of the residents of the Fort Sheridan communities or of Lake County. They only represent the views of people who chose to become involved in the process and/or submit a comment in the last two years. However, the qualitative analysis, in terms of the repeated themes of the comments is very helpful for understanding some of the public’s concerns

Copies of all of the comments are available for review. Please contact Marie Shields (mshields@LCFPD.org) for PDF versions of the comments.

Total responses

The breakdown of households supporting golf and/or a blended solution of golf and open space and households supporting open space was about half and half from February 2010 – August 2010. The final “count” of households at the end of November 2010 was:

- Supporting golf: 126 households
- Supporting open space: 222 households

Location of household

The golf supporters were very local. Most households supporting golf were from Fort Sheridan and the immediately surrounding.

Open Space supporters were more spread out across Lake County and even included some comments from Cook county residents, but the majority of comments were primarily from households near the Fort Sheridan Preserve.

Public comment themes

Households supporting golf were very focused and consistent in the themes of their comments. The most consistently mentioned themes were:

- The legal obligation with the Army must be honored
- An 18-hole golf course was promised and should be built
- Residents feel betrayed, insulted and disappointed in the Forest Preserves actions concerning the site
- Golf could provide a revenue generating opportunity through golf fees and the uniqueness of the site could provide a beautiful golf experience
- Ft. Sheridan owners purchased homes based on promise of a golf course and feel their property value has been impacted

Households supporting open space were more varied and often two themes were mentioned in tandem. The most consistently mentioned themes were:

- There are enough golf courses in the region; golf is declining and there is not enough demand for another course
- Building a golf course is not economically feasible; there is no appetite for funding a course with tax dollars
- This is a unique place in the region; this is a 100 year decision and the legacy of the site needs to be considered. The site has significant ecological value that would be compromised with a golf course
- A golf course would benefit only a few. The District should consider the county as a whole, not just one community
- More open space and trails are needed in the area

Compromise

While most golf supporters admitted they preferred an 18-hole course, over half of the households that supported golf were open to a compromise (a 9- or 12-hole course blended with paths and trails). Most supported Concept Design 2B for a compromise. Only 6 of the 222 households supporting open space were open to a compromise.

Advisory Committee Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners

November 17, 2010 Meeting Results

The Committee reviewed and discussed the Concept 2B Report, appendices, and the economic impact roundtable conference call notes. Funding options, cost estimates and other details were discussed and explained.

The consultant then asked the Committee members to each explain their own individual recommendations.

- Commissioner Bassi felt that the hybrid course was a nice compromise, so she would support Concept 2B, but without the Junior Course option, and only Funding Option 3 to issue an RFP for privatization should be considered.
- Elaine Waxman, Park District of Highland Park, stated that she felt that another golf course was not needed, but one was promised. Funding Option 3 to issue an RFP for privatization of Concept 2B is her recommendation.
- Mayor Belsky, City of Highland Park, said he would support Concept 2B if the cost is reasonable. Funding Option 3 should be considered if direct stakeholders have input into the RFP for privatization. Mayor Belsky stated that if the golf course was privatized, in order to make it succeed, the District would need to work closely with the developer, provide incentives and also help by providing significant financing help.
- Commissioner Gravenhorst stated that all County residents should be considered, so she would support Concept 2B with Funding Option 3 to issue an RFP for privatization, with the restriction that it is very closely watched and expenses trimmed where possible.
- Bob Kiely stated that the City of Lake Forest's position is that it is not fiscally prudent to move forward at this time with Option 2B, and that the Lake County Forest Preserve District should look at immediate opportunities to enhance the property that would not preclude future options such as a golf course or other significant recreation amenity.
- Mayor Pecaro, City of Highwood, said that he feels that it must be a destination 18-hole golf course to succeed.
- Ralph Pfaff, Town of Fort Sheridan Master Homeowners Association, replied that he would support Concept 2B as a compromise, even though it is not the best choice. Earlier in the meeting he had agreed with Mayor Belsky that the District should consider providing financing for a potential developer and had offered a Financing Option 4 to be added to option 3, whereby funds would be transferred from the General Fund to the Enterprise Fund to compensate for the transfer of land from golf use to general. However, he aligned to the group and agreed with Funding Option 3 to issue an RFP for privatization.
- Commissioner Feldman stated that Concept 2B is a bad business idea, and only a high end 18-hole course would be successful. She would support the group's decision to issue an RFP for

privatization for concept 2B, but thinks it would fail. She would rather give the land back to the Army.

- Sandy Hart, Lake Bluff Park District, replied that a golf course is not fiscally prudent at this time due to the economic impact. A greater benefit could be achieved with open space.
- Commissioner Calabresa stated that building a golf course is too risky now, and that the land should be protected in the mission of the Forest Preserve District.

Based on these comments, there was no clear consensus on a recommended use for the site; however, when asked by the consultant, no one disagreed to sending a recommendation to the Forest Preserve Board to issue a RFP to ascertain the feasibility for privatization of development and operations of a hybrid golf course, based on Concept 2B, at Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve.

Next steps

The consultant has prepared this draft report of the process and results of this Advisory Committee and is sending the report to the Committee members for final review. The final report will then be sent in January to the Forest Preserve Board. The newly elected Forest Preserve Board President and LCFPD Board Committees will make the decision on when to begin their deliberations regarding the issue. LCFPD Board and Committee meetings will be open to the public.

Appendices

A. Original Agreement

B. Advisory Group Meeting Minutes

C. Public Comments Analysis

D. Advisory Committee Working Protocols and Session Ground Rules

E. Golf Concepts 1, 2A and 2B

F. Advisory Group Meeting Presentations (separate document)

G. References – Project reports

H. Proposed 9-Hole Golf Course and Public Open Space Design Concept, November 17, 2010 (separate document)

A. Original Agreement

Excerpted from the Quitclaim Deed, dated December 4, 2001

http://www.lcfd.org/docs/Fort_Sheridan_Memorandum.pdf

“4. Restrictive Covenant on the use of a part of the property (Parcel G as shown on the Plat of survey attached hereto as Exhibit “B” and as described in attached Exhibit “D” is excerpted from this Land Use Restriction).

(a.) With the exception of Parcel G as shown on the plat of survey attached hereto as Exhibit “B” and as described in attached Exhibit “D”, the Property shall be a golf course and recreational open space in perpetuity and not devoted to another use, all in accordance with the Fort Sheridan Joint Planning Commission Concept Plan, dated September 30, 1994. Subject to compliance with the ordinance restriction as set forth in Paragraph 7 of this Quitclaim Deed, nothing contained in this land use restrictive covenant shall prohibit the construction and use of golf course amenities, including without limitation clubhouses, rain shelters, natural resource management centers, reconfiguration of golf holes, etc, at any location that the Grantee may elect. Parcel G shall be subject to the land use restriction and the environmental restriction as set forth in paragraph 6 of this Quitclaim Deed and shall be subject to the notice of unexploded ordnance and the ordinance restriction as set forth in paragraph 7. of this Quitclaim Deed.

(b) the land use restriction as set forth in this paragraph shall be a covenant running with the land and shall be forever binding upon the Grantee, its successor and assignees.”

Fort Sheridan Memorandum of Understanding between Army and Forest preserve District, 1998.

Conditions to Transfer:

1. The land herein conveyed shall be a golf course and recreational open space in perpetuity and not devoted to another use, all in accordance with the Fort Sheridan Joint Planning Commission Concept Plan dated September 30, 1994. Nothing contained in this Paragraph 1 of Conditions to Transfer shall prohibit the construction and use of golf course amenities, including without limitation clubhouses, rain shelters, natural resource management centers, reconfiguration of golf holes, etc., at any location that the District may elect. This covenant shall run with the land and be binding upon the parties, their successors, and assigns. This Section 1 of Conditions to Transfer benefits the land retained by the United States and is in the public interest and shall be enforceable in perpetuity by the United States.”

B. Advisory Group Meeting Minutes

December 2, 2009 Minutes

Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve Master Plan Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, December 2, 2009

The Lake County Forest Preserves Fort Sheridan Master Plan Advisory Committee met on Wednesday, December 2, 2009. The meeting was held at the Oak Terrace Elementary School, 240 Prairie Avenue, Highwood, Illinois.

Members Present:

Carol Calabresa, Chair

Anne Flanigan Bassi, Commissioner

Michelle Feldman, Commissioner

Susan Loving Gravenhorst, Commissioner

James Cowhey, Mayor

City of Lake Forest

Bob Kiely, City Manager

City of Lake Forest

David Limardi, City Manager

City of Highland Park

Liza McElroy, Executive Director

Park District of Highland Park

Lorenz Werhane, President

Park District of Highland Park

Charlie Pecaro, Mayor

City of Highwood

Ralph Pfaff

Town of Fort Sheridan Master Homeowners Association

Jack Meierhoff

Lake Bluff Park District

Ex-Officio Members :

William Brawner

U. S. Department of the Army

Aaron Winters, District Director

10th Congressional District

Also:

Bonnie Thomson Carter, President

Thomas Hahn, Executive Director

Andrew Kimmel, Deputy Executive Director

Nan Buckardt, Director

Environmental Education and Public Affairs

Michael Fenelon, Director

Planning, Conservation and Development

Bonnie McLeod, Director

Finance

Daniel Prezell, Director

Revenue Facilities

Chris Brewer, Consultant

1.0 Call to Order:

There being a quorum present, Carol Calabresa, Chair called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

2.0 Welcome and Introductions:

President Carter welcomed everyone to the initial meeting of the Fort Sheridan Master Plan Advisory Committee. She explained to the members that Carol Calabresa would serve as chair of the committee and she is also the Chair of the District's Planning and Restoration Committee. Any consensus recommendation coming forth from this Advisory Committee would go through the District's normal process of committee and Board approval, beginning with consideration by the District's Planning and Restoration Committee.

3.0 Advisory Committee Purpose, Goals and Process:

Chair Calabresa described the purpose and goals for the Committee members. She requested that everyone go around the table and introduce themselves and state who they represent.

The Committee will meet for the purpose of reaching consensus on conceptual master plan of preferred future public uses for Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve consistent with the mission and statutory requirements of the District. The consensus program will take the form of a recommended conceptual master plan, including opinions of probable construction costs and analysis of projected operating costs and revenues, which the Advisory Committee would approve and send to relevant Standing Committees and the Board of Commissioners of the Forest Preserve District for consideration. She asked that the members hold their comments and questions until after the presentation.

4.0 Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve Project Background:

Executive Director Hahn showed a slide presentation outlining the history and recent actions taken by the District and the direction given at previous Committee of the Whole meetings. In January the Committee of the Whole reviewed golf course market and economic analysis consultant reports, solicited public comments and discussed options. In March the Board met again as a Committee of the Whole and reviewed additional feasibility and costs analysis and heard additional comments. In May of 2009, the Board decided not to rebid the golf course construction and decided to form an Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from the surrounding communities. In July the Board approved the Advisory Committee members.

Director McLeod addressed the committee and gave a slide presentation detailing the funding sources that were available during fiscal year 2003/04 and the additional funding sources since then.

5. Land Use Options:

Mr. Hahn presented the following land use options along with the issues associated with each for consideration. He stated that the options were offered only as starting points for Advisory Committee discussion and welcomed any additional ideas that committee members might also later offer.

1) Adopted 2003 Master Plan

- 18-hole golf course (Silva design)

- Doesn't require Deed Restriction change
- Could bid in 2010 and start construction in 2011
- Requires average greens fees over \$100 to cover operations
- Potential adverse financial impacts to other area courses
- Public trails and open spaces are very limited
- Substantially less wildlife habitat and preservation value

2) *Blended golf and preserve alternative*

- 9-hole golf course

- Limited public trails, open space and habitat areas

- May not require Deed Restriction change
- Could design 2010, bid 2011 and start construction 2012
- Potential adverse financial impacts to other area courses
- Public access by lakeshore limited, most open space would be in Parade Ground, which requires higher maintenance
- More wildlife habitat and preservation value than 18 holes

3) *Traditional forest preserve alternative*

- Ample public trails, lake overlooks, picnic shelters, open spaces and habitat areas.

- Requires Deed Restriction change
- Could design in 2010, bid 2011 and start construction 2012
- Public operating funding required for trails and public areas
- No adverse financial impacts to other area courses
- Public access greatly expanded, especially by lakeshore
- Parade Ground open space requires higher maintenance
- Greatly expanded wildlife habitat and preservation value

4) *Land banking alternative*

- 3-5 year hold to reassess market and economic changes

- May not require Deed Restriction change
- Delays decision for 3-5 years
- Allows for evaluation of future golf market trends and other economic conditions
- No adverse financial impacts to other area courses
- Mowed trails provide temporary public access to recently graded and seeded areas
- Some public funding required for maintenance of land-banked areas.

6.0 **Golf Course Feasibility:**

Chris Brewer of Economics Research Associates, the District's golf market consultant, gave the history and background of his company's role regarding the Fort Sheridan project starting in December 2008. He detailed the presentations that were made previously to forest preserve commissioners regarding viability of an 18-hole plan for Fort Sheridan along with the greens fees/rounds and revenues and the projected

impacts to ThunderHawk Golf Club. He described actions other courses both private and public have taken in an attempt to increase play. He outlined the market context for both private and public courses and reviewed the 18-hole and 9-hole scenario implications.

7.0 Discussion among Committee Members:

Chair Calabresa opened the floor for discussion among the Committee members. A lengthy discussion ensued during which a number of options were discussed including consideration of either an 18-hole, 12-hole and 9-hole course; exploring the public/private scenario; economic impacts to surrounding golf courses and communities; fulfilling the deed restriction on the property; and various funding options. It was the consensus of the Committee to work cooperatively toward a solution which could be presented to the voting members of the Board of Commissioners for consideration.

Based upon the divergent views discussed, Mr. Hahn suggested that in order to reach a consensus, an impartial facilitator be brought into help the advisory committee understand the goals, objectives and concerns of each community, and to help the committee find common ground on which to build a consensus recommendation.

Chair Calabresa asked all the members if they were in favor of pursuing a solution by bringing in an outside facilitator. All the members were in favor of beginning this process. The Forest Preserve District will move forward on hiring a facilitator.

8.0 Next meeting date and agenda:

The Committee established the following as potential meeting dates in 2010.

- January 13, February 10 and April 14.

9.0 Adjourn:

There being no further discussion the meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Approved date: February 10, 2010

February 10, 2010 Minutes

Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve Master Plan Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, February 10, 2010

The Lake County Forest Preserves Fort Sheridan Master Plan Advisory Committee met on Wednesday, February 10, 2010. The meeting was held at the Gorton Community Center, 400 E. Illinois Road, Lake Forest, Illinois.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Carol Calabresa, Chair
Anne Flanigan Bassi, Commissioner
Michelle Feldman, Commissioner
Susan Loving Gravenhorst, Commissioner
James Cowhey, Mayor, City of Lake Forest
Bob Kiely, City Manager, City of Lake Forest
Michael Belsky, Mayor, City of Highland Park
David Limardi, City Manager, City of Highland Park
Liza McElroy, Executive Director, Park District of Highland Park
Lorenz Werhane, President, Park District of Highland Park
Charlie Pecaro, Mayor, City of Highwood
Greg Jackson, City Manager, City of Highwood
Sandy Hart, Vice President, Lake Bluff Park District
Ron Salski, Executive Director, Lake Bluff Park District
Ralph Pfaff, President, Town of Fort Sheridan Homeowners Assoc.

ALSO PRESENT:

Bonnie Thomson Carter, President
Tom Hahn, Executive Director
Andrew Kimmel, Deputy Executive Director
Nan Buckardt, Director, Environmental Education & Public Affairs
Bonnie McLeod, Director, Finance
Daniel Prezell, Director, Revenue Facilities
Randy Seebach, Land Development Manager
Susan Parks, Facilitator

1. Call to Order

There being a quorum present, Chair Calabresa called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Calabresa welcomed the group and thanked them for their participation. She provided some background on why the committee was formed and reminded them that they are charged with developing a master plan recommendation for the Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve to be sent to the Forest Preserve Board for consideration. She informed the public that they were welcome to submit written comments on the forms provided. She then introduced Susan Parks of Parks Consulting Group, who had been hired after it was agreed upon at the December meeting that the process would benefit by help from an outside facilitator. Her role will be to facilitate the discussion and lead the process to meet the Board's directive. Chair Calabresa then had the Committee members introduce themselves and state who they represent.

3. Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Gravenhorst, second by Commissioner Feldman, to approve the minutes of the December 2, 2009, meeting. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Facilitator Process Review

Facilitator, Susan Parks provided a recap of the interviews she had previously conducted with each of the Committee members. She concluded that there were many divergent opinions and stated that the group must work toward alignment to reach a consensus.

5. Discussion of Committee Objective and Working Protocol

Ms. Parks provided a list of proposed Committee protocols which outlined expectations for open and honest participation with discussions based on facts, mutual understanding, respect, compromising to reach solutions, shared responsibility and proposed session rules of one conversation at a time with no interruptions. She encouraged the Committee to first concentrate on “what” should be done and then work toward “how” it should be done.

6. Discussion of Overall Goals

At the direction of Ms. Parks, Committee members discussed what they expected to be included in the master plan for Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve. Whether or not the interests of nearby residents should outweigh those of the entire county was considered. Committee members asked for additional information from the Forest Preserve District, including the deed restrictions and financial information from the District. Forest Preserve representatives said the information would be provided to the Committee. It was noted that the District budget and audit are also accessible on the District’s website. In response to questions regarding funding, Forest Preserve representatives stated that only enterprise funds are used to build and operate golf courses, not tax dollars, and that no enterprise funds are used for general forest preserve public uses.

7. Brainstorm on Ideas

Susan Parks asked the Committee members to brainstorm and each write down ideas of what they would like to see in the master Fort Sheridan plan. She then had them choose their top two and bottom two choices from the suggestions. She collected all responses and reviewed them with the members. She said she will compile and categorize them to create a structure that she will provide to the members to identify potential scenarios for the site.

8. Summarize and review next steps

Ms. Parks stated that she believed that there were certain common areas of agreement. She told the group that a draft of the notes from the session, including the results of brainstorming, would be sent to them for their review and comment before the next meeting. The composition of the group, specifically the inclusion of organizations not part of the original agreement, was questioned and discussed. The Committee agreed to pursue the next steps and to meet again for further discussion.

9. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 14, 2010, at the Gorton Community Center in Lake Forest.

10. Adjourn

It was the consensus of the Committee to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Approved date: April 14, 2010

April 14, 2010 Minutes

Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve Master Plan Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, April 14, 2010

The Lake County Forest Preserves Fort Sheridan Master Plan Advisory Committee met on Wednesday, April 14, 2010. The meeting was held at the Gorton Community Center, 400 E. Illinois Road, Lake Forest, Illinois.

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

Carol Calabresa, Chair
Anne Flanigan Bassi, Commissioner
Michelle Feldman, Commissioner
Susan Loving Gravenhorst, Commissioner
Mary Van Arsdale, Parks & Recreation Director
City of Lake Forest
Michael Belsky, Mayor, City of Highland Park
Liza McElroy, Executive Director, Park District of Highland Park
Charlie Pecaro, Mayor, City of Highwood
Sandy Hart, Vice President, Lake Bluff Park District
Ralph Pfaff, President, Town of Fort Sheridan Master Homeowners Assoc.

NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

David Limardi, City Manager, City of Highland Park
Greg Jackson, City Manager, City of Highwood
Ron Salski, Executive Director, Lake Bluff Park District

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT:

Aaron Winters, District Director, 10th Congressional District

ALSO PRESENT:

Bonnie Thomson Carter, President
Tom Hahn, Executive Director
Andrew Kimmel, Deputy Executive Director
Nan Buckardt, Director, Environmental Education & Public Affairs
Bonnie McLeod, Director, Finance
Daniel Prezell, Director, Revenue Facilities
Mike Fenelon, Director, Planning, Conservation & Development
Susan Parks, Facilitator
Chris Brewer, Consultant
Linda Carlstone, Marketing Specialist
Marie Shields, Administrative Coordinator

1. Call to Order

Chair Calabresa called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Calabresa welcomed the group and thanked them for their participation. She noted that voting members only will be sitting at the table. She then introduced Forest Preserve President Bonnie Thomson Carter and Executive Director Tom Hahn who would be available to answer questions. She informed the public that they were welcome to submit written comments on the forms provided. She reminded the group of their assignment and goals. She then introduced Susan Parks to conduct the meeting.

3. Minutes

Motion by Susan Loving Gravenhorst, second by Sandy Hart, to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2010, meeting. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Review process and timeline

Facilitator, Susan Parks reviewed the committee's purpose of coming to alignment and consensus to develop a plan to present to the Board. She reminded them of meeting protocol and mentioned that voting members only would be at the table.

5. Additional Information

Susan Parks summarized the additional information requested by the committee that had been supplied to them before the meeting, which included financial documents and parameters, budget policies and practices, and the specifics of the deed restriction and original agreement with the Army. She then reviewed a summary of public comments and noted that copies of individual comments are available by request.

6. Framework of possible scenarios

Based on previous comments by the committee and the public, Ms. Parks presented several possible scenarios for development of the site: an 18-hole course, a 9- or 12-hole course integrated with natural areas; a typical forest preserve with trails and public access; or waiting to see if the economy and golf market improve.

7. Discussion of scenarios

The committee chose to discuss the scenario of a hybrid 9- to 12-hole course with natural areas. They agreed that the design would be very important in order to attract golfers and make the course financially sustainable; that it should be environmentally certified; that there should be walking trails as well as public access to the beach and bluff; and that the historic aspect of the parade grounds should be maintained.

Chris Brewer, the District's golf marketing consultant, spoke about the financial viability of such a course. After some discussion regarding the qualifications of this consultant, it was decided that a golf course designer would be hired to work with him and other local staff experts chosen by the members to analyze the feasibility of constructing and operating a 9- to 12-hole course.

8. Summarize and review next steps

Susan Parks will type up her current meeting discussion notes and send them out to the committee to review before the next meeting.

9. Next meeting

The next meeting will tentatively be held on Wednesday, June 9, 2010, at the Gorton Community Center in Lake Forest, pending the completion of the golf course analysis.

10. Adjourn

Motion by Mary Van Arsdale, second by Sandy Hart to adjourn. Voice vote being had, the meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Approved date: June 9, 2010

June 9, 2010 Minutes

Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve Master Plan Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, June 9, 2010

The Lake County Forest Preserves Fort Sheridan Master Plan Advisory Committee met on Wednesday, June 9, 2010. The meeting was held at the Gorton Community Center, 400 E. Illinois Road, Lake Forest, Illinois.

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

Carol Calabresa, Chair
Anne Flanigan Bassi, Commissioner
Michelle Feldman, Commissioner
Susan Loving Gravenhorst, Commissioner
Mary Van Arsdale, Parks & Recreation Director, City of Lake Forest
Michael Belsky, Mayor, City of Highland Park (arrived after introductions)
Liza McElroy, Executive Director, Park District of Highland Park
Charlie Pecaro, Mayor, City of Highwood (arrived after introductions)
Sandy Hart, Vice President, Lake Bluff Park District
Ralph Pfaff, President, Town of Fort Sheridan Master Homeowners Assoc.

NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

Patrick Brennan, Deputy City Manager, City of Highland Park
Ron Salski, Executive Director, Lake Bluff Park District
Chuck Bley, Vice President Town of Fort Sheridan Master Homeowners Assoc.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT:

Aaron Winters, District Director, 10th Congressional District

ALSO PRESENT:

Bonnie Thomson Carter, President
Tom Hahn, Executive Director
Andrew Kimmel, Deputy Executive Director
Nan Buckardt, Director, Environmental Education & Public Affairs
Bonnie McLeod, Director, Finance
Daniel Prezell, Director, Revenue Facilities
Mike Fenelon, Director, Planning, Conservation & Development
Susan Parks, Facilitator
Chris Brewer, Golf Marketing Consultant
Bob Lohmann, Golf Design Consultant
Todd Quitno, Golf Design Consultant
Linda Carlstone, Marketing Specialist
Marie Shields, Administrative Coordinator

1. Call to Order

Chair Calabresa called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Calabresa welcomed the group to the fourth meeting of this advisory group and thanked them for serving on the committee. She asked the voting members at the table, supporting staff and consultants to introduce themselves. She explained that tonight the group would explore concepts for a 9-hole golf course that were developed at the direction of the advisory committee at the last meeting. She invited the public to provide comments via the District's website or forms provided, and thanked them for their input.

3. Minutes

Motion by Mary Van Arsdale, second by Susan Loving Gravenhorst, to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2010, meeting. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Review of process and timeline

Chair Calabresa then turned the meeting over to facilitator Susan Parks from Parks Consulting Group. Ms. Parks reviewed the agenda for the meeting and explained that there would be a series of presentations, followed by discussion and assessment of next steps. A public open house may be scheduled for July or August. The Committee will probably meet again after that to continue its efforts to decide on a recommendation to present to the Forest Preserve Board. The committee discussed the timing of the open house and whether there would be more than one.

Tom Hahn briefly described what had transpired since the last meeting in April. The Forest Preserve District retained Lohmann Golf Designs, Inc., to develop several golf concept plans as requested by the Committee. Chris Brewer was asked to analyze the 9-hole golf market and the financial aspects of those concepts. Based on comments from the last meeting, Forest Preserve staff prepared land use concept maps that were used as a basis for the concept designs. Per direction of the committee, a working group of staff from committee member villages and park districts met to go over the concept plans.

5. Fort Sheridan land use concepts

Mike Fenelon presented two land use scenarios to show how different uses can interact and described the advantages and disadvantages of each. The first concept divided the site into concise use areas, with general public use to the east on the lakefront and golf use on the west side. In the second scenario, golf and general public use shared the lakefront and parade ground.

6. Golf plan concepts

Todd Quitno presented three golf plan concepts designed with the primary goal of financial success of the golf course. Other considerations were (1) to provide a challenge to all golfers, (2) to take advantage of the physical features of the site, (3) to provide unique play ideas, and (4) to provide a youth component where possible. He then described each concept in detail. All three blend golf with general public use, allow for a small clubhouse and have two sets of tees on some holes to play more like an 18-hole course, but differ on where the golf holes are placed. Two concepts have a beginner practice area that could also be used as a driving range.

7. Open space, public access and trail components of each concept

Mike Fenelon described the open space, public access and trail components of each golf design concept. Each concept includes trails, wetlands, woodlands and scenic overlooks of the lake and ravines. The trail routes would allow the user to experience the historic structures of Fort Sheridan and a range of landscapes.

8. Marketing and financial aspects

Chris Brewer spoke on the financial feasibility of the golf concepts. He showed comparisons with other courses in the area. He felt that options 2A and 2B had a better chance of generating revenue. Some of the fundamental revenue questions include the nature of the driving range/practice facility element, whether the course will play like a 9 or 18-hole course, and the layout of the alternative tee boxes.

9. Questions and discussion

The committee members had several questions regarding development and operating cost estimates, funds available for financing and revenue projections. Whether or not cost estimates should be obtained and an option chosen or any of the concepts eliminated before a public open house is held was discussed.

10. Level of alignment

The committee agreed to show all concepts to the public to get their input at an open house this summer and then meet again in September to attempt to come to a consensus to present to the Forest Preserve Board. The concept designs will be made available on the Forest Preserve web site and at city halls in Highwood, Highland Park and Lake Forest. Any requests for additional data needed should be emailed to Susan Parks.

11. Next steps

A public open house will be held at a date and location to be determined in July or August. Comments will be reviewed by the committee. Susan Parks will present an update to the Forest Preserve Board at their September 14 meeting. Any committee members who are available are invited to attend. The Advisory Committee will meet again at the Gorton Center on September 15 at 6:30 p.m.

12. Adjourn

It was the consensus of the Committee to adjourn at 9:15 p.m.

Approved date:

September 15, 2010 Minutes

Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve Master Plan Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, September 15, 2010

The Lake County Forest Preserves Fort Sheridan Master Plan Advisory Committee met on Wednesday, September 15, 2010. The meeting was held at the Gorton Community Center, 400 E. Illinois Road, Lake Forest, Illinois.

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

Carol Calabresa, Chair
Anne Flanigan Bassi, Commissioner
Michelle Feldman, Commissioner
Susan Loving Gravenhorst, Commissioner
James Cowhey, Mayor (arrived after introductions)
City of Lake Forest
David Limardi, City Manager, City of Highland Park
Doug Coutts, Director of Facilities, Park District of Highland Park
Charlie Pecaro, Mayor, City of Highwood
Ron Salski, Executive Director, Lake Bluff Park District
Ralph Pfaff, President, Town of Fort Sheridan Master Homeowners Assoc.

NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bob Kiely, City Manager, City of Lake Forest
Chuck Vice President, Town of Fort Sheridan Master Homeowners Assoc.
Kurt Gronau, President, Lake Bluff Park District

ALSO PRESENT:

Tom Hahn, Executive Director
Andrew Kimmel, Deputy Executive Director
Nan Buckardt, Director, Environmental Education & Public Affairs
Bonnie McLeod, Director, Finance
Daniel Prezell, Director, Revenue Facilities
Mike Fenelon, Director, Planning, Conservation & Development
Susan Parks, Facilitator
Bob Lohmann, Golf Design Consultant
Todd Quitno, Golf Design Consultant
Linda Carlstone, Marketing Specialist
Marie Shields, Administrative Coordinator

1. Call to Order

Chair Calabresa called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Calabresa welcomed the group to the fifth meeting of this advisory group, and thanked everyone for attending and providing input. She explained that the goal is to reach a level of consensus on a master plan for the Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve and prepare a recommendation to present to Forest Preserve Board. She asked the voting members at the table, supporting staff and consultants to introduce themselves.

3. Minutes

Motion by Susan Loving Gravenhorst, second by Michelle Feldman, to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2010, meeting. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Facilitator Process Update and Meeting Objective

Chair Calabresa then turned the meeting over to facilitator Susan Parks from Parks Consulting Group. Ms. Parks reviewed the objectives for the meeting and the charter of the group. She recapped the progress up to this point.

5. Review of Public Open House

Ms. Parks provided a review of the public open house held in August, which was attended by approximately 160 people. Concept plans for the different options were displayed and opportunity for comments was provided. Staff and Advisory Committee members were available to answer questions and provide information.

6. Review of Public Comments

Susan Parks stated that over 300 public comments had been received since January 2009. She noted that approximately half were supportive of developing a golf course at the site, and half were supportive of a more traditional forest preserve without a golf course. She provided a summary of themes that occurred most frequently in the comments. She noted that this information is not a statistically representative sample of the opinions of the people in the affected communities or Lake County. It is a summary of the responses by people who chose to submit a public comment.

7. Update on Conceptual Designs

Mike Fenelon provided details of the cost estimate of concept design 2B, as per direction of the committee at the last meeting. He explained how the estimates were arrived at, who developed them, and how they are divided between general public and golf use areas. Todd Quitno of Lohmann Golf Designs provided additional details on cost estimates for golf use areas. Discussion ensued regarding estimated costs, revenue, and financial impact.

8. Discussion on Level of Consensus

The group was polled about their level of consensus regarding concept 2B. Many of the members felt that they did not have enough information to determine if the objective of “fiscal responsibility” was being met. They felt that their recommendation to the Forest Preserve Board must be more detailed and complete in order for it to have the greatest opportunity to be successful. They requested a “total package” report on concept 2B including design and details, market study, financial analysis, construction costs, estimated revenue, operating costs, and financing options. They also requested (1) financial information about the effect of a 9-hole course on the neighboring golf courses, (2) information from Kemper Golf to compare construction estimates, (3) clarification on the golf/public area cost sharing breakdown of the design and construction costs, and (4) economic benefit information.

9. Next Steps

The Lake County Forest Preserve staff will determine a date for the Advisory Committee to meet again based on the time needed to gather the requested information and prepare the documents, allowing adequate review time for the Advisory Committee.

10. Adjourn

Motion by Michelle Feldman, second by Anne Flanigan Bassi to adjourn. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Approved date: November 17, 2010

November 17, 2010 Minutes

Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve Master Plan Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, November 17, 2010

The Lake County Forest Preserves Fort Sheridan Master Plan Advisory Committee met on Wednesday, November 17, 2010. The meeting was held at the Gorton Community Center, 400 E. Illinois Road, Lake Forest, Illinois.

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

Carol Calabresa, Chair
Anne Flanigan Bassi, Commissioner
Michelle Feldman, Commissioner
Susan Loving Gravenhorst, Commissioner
Robert Kiely, City Manager, City of Lake Forest
Michael Belsky, Mayor, City of Highland Park
Elaine Waxman, Vice President, Park District of Highland Park
Charlie Pecaro, Mayor, City of Highwood
Sandy Hart, Vice President, Lake Bluff Park District
Ralph Pfaff, President, Town of Fort Sheridan Homeowners Assoc.

NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mary Van Arsdale, Parks & Recreation Director, City of Lake Forest
Chuck Bley, Town of Fort Sheridan Homeowners
Ron Salski, Executive Director, Lake Bluff Park District
David Limardi, City Manager, City of Highland Park
Liza McElroy, Executive Director, Park District of Highland Park

ALSO PRESENT:

Tom Hahn, Executive Director
Andrew Kimmel, Deputy Executive Director
Bonnie McLeod, Director, Finance
Mike Fenelon, Director, Planning, Conservation & Development
Susan Parks, Facilitator
Chris Brewer, Golf Marketing Consultant
Bob Lohmann, Golf Design Consultant
Linda Carlstone, Marketing Specialist
Marie Shields, Administrative Coordinator

1. Call to Order

Chair Calabresa called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

2. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Calabresa welcomed the group to the sixth meeting of this advisory group, and announced that the goal is to make this the last meeting. She thanked everyone for the time they've dedicated to this process. She explained that tonight the group would review a report assembled by the Lake County Forest Preserve District that provides data and information requested by the Committee at the last meeting. The report is a compilation of information previously presented to the Committee. An analysis by Lohmann and Associates of a cost estimate of a 12-hole course by Kemper Sports Management is included in the appendix. A summary of the full report was provided for the audience to follow. Also, the meeting notes from an Economic Impact Roundtable conference call held by the City of Lake Forest were submitted. She stated that the goal tonight is to develop a recommendation

reflecting a consensus opinion or a summary of varying opinions of the members. The recommendation will then be forwarded to relevant Standing Committees and the Board of Commissioners for consideration. Chair Calabresa reminded the public that comments can continue to be submitted, and then asked the voting members at the table, supporting staff and consultants to introduce themselves.

3. Minutes

Motion by Susan Loving Gravenhorst, second by Michelle Feldman, to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2010, meeting. Questions regarding the Review of Public Comments and the Economic Roundtable Discussion were raised by member Belsky, and answered by meeting Facilitator Susan Parks, Chair Calabresa and other Committee members. Voice vote being had, the motion passed by the following vote: Ayes: 9; Nays: 0; Present: 1.

4. Facilitator Review of Meeting Objective

Chair Calabresa turned the meeting over to Facilitator Susan Parks. Ms. Parks explained the meeting objective of developing a recommendation to present to the Forest Preserve Board.

5. Review of Concept 2-B Report

The Committee reviewed and discussed the Concept 2-B Report, appendices, and the Economic Impact Roundtable conference call notes. Funding options, cost estimates and other details were discussed and explained.

6. Discuss and Develop Recommendation for Board of Commissioners

Ms. Parks asked the Committee members to each explain their own individual recommendations.

Commissioner Bassi felt that the hybrid course was a nice compromise, so she would support Concept 2-B, but without the Junior Course option, and only Funding Option 3 to issue an RFP for privatization should be considered.

Elaine Waxman, Park District of Highland Park, stated that she felt that another golf course was not needed, but one was promised. Funding Option 3 to issue an RFP for privatization of Concept 2-B is her recommendation.

Mayor Belsky, City of Highland Park, said he would support Concept 2-B if the cost is reasonable. Funding Option 3 should be considered if direct stakeholders have input into the RFP for privatization.

Commissioner Gravenhorst stated that all County residents should be considered, so she would support Concept 2-B with Funding Option 3 to issue an RFP for privatization, with the restriction that it's very closely watched and expenses trimmed where possible.

Bob Kiely stated that the City of Lake Forest's position is that it is not fiscally prudent to move forward at this time with Option 2-B, and that the Lake County Forest Preserve District should look at immediate opportunities to enhance the property that would not preclude future options such as a golf course or other significant recreation amenity.

Mayor Pecaro, City of Highwood, said that he feels that it must be a destination 18-hole golf course to succeed.

Ralph Pfaff, Fort Sheridan Homeowners Association, replied that he would support Concept 2-B as a compromise, even though it is not the best choice. He agreed with Funding Option 3 to issue an RFP for privatization.

Commissioner Feldman stated that Concept 2-B is a bad business idea, and only a high end 18-hole course would be successful. She would support the group's decision to issue an RFP for privatization for concept 2-B, but thinks it would fail. She would rather give the land back to the Army.

Sandy Hart, Lake Bluff Park District, replied that a golf course is not fiscally prudent at this time due to the economic impact. A greater benefit could be achieved with open space.

Commissioner Calabresa stated that building a golf course is too risky now, and that the land should be protected in the mission of the Forest Preserve District.

There was no clear consensus; however, when asked by Ms. Parks, no one disagreed to sending a recommendation to the Forest Preserve Board to issue an RFP for privatization of a hybrid golf course, based on Concept 2-B, at Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve.

7. Next Steps

Facilitator Susan Parks will prepare a draft report of the process and results of this Advisory Committee to be sent to the Committee members for review. A final report will then be prepared in early January to send to the Forest Preserve Board. When asked about a timeline for the process, Tom Hahn explained that the new Forest Preserve Board President and Committees (yet to be determined) will make the decision on when to bring the issue forward.

8. Thank You

Chair Calabresa thanked the public for their comments to the committee that worked so hard, and also thanked the staff and consultants for their time and efforts.

9. Adjourn

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

November 17, 2010 meeting facilitator notes - member comments on their recommendation to the LCFPD Board

Commissioner Calabresa

- Originally the Forest Preserve thought that that a golf course on the site would generate revenue. The economic picture was different then and building a golf course would have worked. The commissioners acted in good faith back then.
- When we look at the studies and the golf experts say this project is risky, then I can't support it. Our constituents tell us to cut government spending – there won't be support on the board for spending the money for a golf course. The referendum that was passed was for land acquisition and restoration. None of it is to be used for golf.
- We need to protect the land for the entire county in the mission of the Forest Preserve.

Commissioner Bassi

- The County is struggling with a lot of issues and fiscal responsibility is foremost in my mind.
- My district's residents are affected a lot by this issue, and I hear all sides.
- I like the idea of a hybrid solution (Concept 2-B) and would support the hybrid design without the Junior Golf option. The Junior Golf might only break even and not having it would open up a lot of additional space.
- I would only support financing Option 3 – even if costs were reduced by tweaking the design, the cost is a significant risk for the forest preserve.
- I don't feel that the county *needs* another golf course, but we need to make a good faith effort to meet the needs of *all* constituents and be fiscally responsible.

Commissioner Feldman

- I think Concept 2-B is a bad idea; it can't generate the revenue necessary to be financially sustainable. Only an 18-hole course could be financially sustainable.
- A year ago I brought up the idea of privatization but not many board members were interested at that time.
- I think we should "give the land back" to the Army and not install a golf course. If the option for the land had been a national cemetery, we would not be having these conversations.
- Concept 2-B will not get the votes from the board. I will go along with the group, but I think an RFP will fail.

Commissioner Gravenhorst

- We need a solution that is available to all people of the county to enjoy, whether it is golf or open lands.
- Many of my constituents care about maintaining the open space.
- The blended solution (Concept 2B) looks good, in the balance. I would support Concept 2B and the privatization Option 3, with a restriction that the costs are trimmed and that the finances can be balanced.

City of Highland Park

- What has been proposed tonight is not feasible because it requires funding from the General Fund.
- Fiscal responsibility aside, "a deal is a deal." We would not be here if the original golf course had not been taken away.

- I could support a hybrid (Concept 2-B) if we could get to a feasible cost. I don't think we are far from a consensus cost number and I think the group should continue to work on that before it goes to the board.
- I would support privatization (Option 3) if the direct stakeholders have input to the RFP process and the RFP. I don't want to set us up to fail if the RFP isn't done right.

City of Highwood

- I thank everyone on the committee for their participation this past year. The residents have been going through this for the last 10 years.
- Personally, I like concept 2-B and like the junior golf portion, but that's not the hat I have to wear. I feel this design is setting us up for failure no matter when we do it. I'm going to go with an 18-hole golf course with privatization. We need an 18-hole destination course or a 9-hole course with more of the best possible (lake) views to make Highwood a destination city.

City of Lake Forest

- The City of Lake Forest appreciates the efforts of the Forest Preserve District and the Advisory Committee.
- We acknowledge the challenges of the situation but also feel that any decision needs to be sustainable.
- While not opposed to option 2-B as a concept, we are concerned about the timing in light of the current golf industry decline and overall economic climate.
- The City of Lake Forest's position is that it is not fiscally prudent to move forward at this time with Option 2-B and that the Forest Preserve should look at immediate opportunities to enhance the property that would not preclude future options such as a golf course or other significant recreation amenity.
- While trying to appease different interests, we are concerned that the hybrid solution won't really please anyone, but the Forest Preserve has an obligation to the Town of Fort Sheridan that has not been met. If we send out an RFP for privatization, we must be very clear about the desired outcomes.

Park District of Highland Park

- I agree that we don't need another golf course, but the Town of Fort Sheridan was promised a golf course. I think that Option 3 would be the only way to go. I don't know if there's any better use of the land, but we need to think of the people that bought in the Town of Fort Sheridan.

Lake Bluff Park District

- We thank the board for following this process and also the public for their engagement during the process.
- We reviewed all the information as a board and our board is sensitive to the residents of Fort Sheridan and the situation this issue puts them in. We feel for them.
- However, we believe that it is not in the best interests of our community or the county to pursue the hybrid golf concept at this time. We feel that open space on the land will have a greater economic impact to the surrounding communities.
- The potential revenue loss to surrounding golf courses is unacceptable to us. Golf rounds are declining generally and another golf course will take rounds away from the existing courses.
- We don't think that going ahead with a golf course is fiscally sustainable or prudent for the whole county. We would prefer something that more closely supports the mission of the Forest Preserve District.

Town of Fort Sheridan Master Homeowners Association

- The Fort Sheridan homeowners' expectation when they bought into the community was for an 18-hole golf course. No notice was given when the old course was shut down.
- The golf course *was* the "big idea" 10 years ago. We don't want to wait 5 more years.
- At this group's first meeting, our position was for an 18-hole golf course, but we agreed to participate fully and came with willingness to compromise. We don't think Concept 2-B is the best choice – it is second best – but if it is the only way we can get golf that will meet the deed restriction, we are willing to compromise.
- We will support Concept 2 but we prefer an 18-hole solution.
- Past actions show the county hasn't demonstrated fiscal responsibility, such as when the old course was shut down. When the Forest Preserve committed to the course, the money should have been set aside then. Some of the large costs to date have gone into the various designs (Trent Jones and Silva).
- Our community has lost a great deal of faith in the Forest Preserve District.

C. Public Comments Analysis

Comments from the public were welcomed and encouraged throughout the process. The Committee wanted to hear the public’s concerns and ideas. All emails, letters and comment forms at meetings were collected, converted to a PDF, and shared with all Advisory Committee members. The consultant entered each comment into a spreadsheet for the following tallying and analysis.

It must be stressed that the public comments do not represent a statistically representative sample of the views of the residents of the Fort Sheridan communities or the counties. They only represent the views of people who chose to become involved in the process and/or submit a comment in the last 2 years.

Any quantitative analysis should be performed with caution, and not too much should be read into the “counts.” However, the qualitative analysis, in terms of the repeated themes of the comments is very helpful for understanding some of the public’s concerns

Total responses

When the tally of public comments was “frozen” for tabulating purposes in late November, 348 households had submitted public comments.

The final “count” of households at the end of November 2010 was:

- Supporting golf: 126 households (36.2% of all households who submitted comments)
- Supporting open space: 222 households (63.8% of all households who submitted comments)

The “household” was used as the basic unit for tallying because it seemed most fair and consistent.

- When a husband and both signed the comment, it was counted as 1 household, but 2 comments.
- Similarly, if a husband and wife submitted separate comments, it was counted as one household, and 2 comments.
- Finally, if a person submitted multiple comments on different dates, each comment was counted, but as one household.

About 20 % of all households both supporting golf and supporting open space submitted multiple comments over time, which suggests that they felt strongly about the issue and stayed engaged throughout the process.

The breakdown in the number households supporting golf and supporting open space was about half and half throughout January 2010 – August 2010. In August the Public Open House was held; after that point, the number of households supporting open space increased significantly. This suggests that many of the open space supporters either first learned about or decided to become engaged in the issue only after the conceptual designs for the site were available.

Timeframe	Households supporting golf % of all comments received supporting golf	Households supporting open space % of all comments received supporting open space
Unknown	2.5%	0%
Jan. – Dec. 2009	17.2%	14.7%

Timeframe	Households supporting golf % of all comments received supporting golf	Households supporting open space % of all comments received supporting open space
<i>(Before facilitated meetings of Advisory Committee)</i>		
Jan. – July 2010 <i>Advisory Committee Discussions</i>	13.9%	14.7%
Aug. – Sept. 2010 <i>(Design concepts identified and Open House conducted)</i>	59.8%	34.8%
Oct. – Nov. 2010 <i>(after the Sept. meeting discussion)</i>	6.6%	35.8%

Location of household

As expected, most of the comments supporting golf on the site were from Fort Sheridan households (57.9%). Another 28% came from households in the surrounding communities of Highland Park, Highwood, Lake Forest and Lake Bluff. The golf supporters were very local – only nine comments came from other communities in Lake County and no “pro golf” public comments came from outside of lake County.

Comments from open space supporters were more spread out across the region. 14.9% of comments supporting open space came from households in communities in Lake County outside of the Ft Sheridan area. 7.5% of all households were actually outside of Lake County, mainly Cook County – both suburban and Chicago. Four regional environmental non-profits also provided support for maintaining the site as open space and forest preserve. This suggests that the site is important to many in the greater Chicago region.

Community	For Golf - % of total households who submitted comments	For Open Space - % of total households who submitted comments
Fort Sheridan	57.9%	4.5%
Highland Park (not Ft Sheridan)	9.5%	23.0%
Lake Forest	16.7%	27.5%
Lake Bluff	2.4%	18.0%
Highwood (not Ft Sheridan)	0.8%	0.5%
Other Lake County	7.1%	14.9%
Non-Lake County	0.0%	7.7%
Non-Profit Organizations	0.0%	1.8%
Unknown	5.6%	2.3%

Public Comment Themes

Almost all of the responses commented on the beauty and uniqueness of the site. However, there were very different themes voiced in the comments from households supporting golf and those supporting open space.

Themes from comments that support golf on the site

Themes are listed in rank order, based on the frequency with which a theme was mentioned: 1 = most frequently mentioned, 10 – least frequently mentioned.

1. The legal obligation with the Army must be honored (32.0%)
2. An 18-hole golf course was promised and should be built 13.3%
3. Residents feel betrayed, insulted and disappointed in the Forest Preserves actions concerning the site (12.8%)
4. Golf could provide a revenue generating opportunity through golf fees (7.9%)
5. The uniqueness of the site could provide a beautiful golf experience (7.9%)
6. Ft. Sheridan owners purchased homes based on promise of a golf course and feel their property value has been impacted (7.4%)
7. The District made a big mistake when the original golf course was removed (6.4%)
8. There are already enough trails and preserves in the region ((5.4%)
9. A legal remedy will be pursued if the obligation is not honored (3.9%)
10. There are not enough public golf options in the area. The area needs this facility (3.0%)

Households supporting golf were very focused and consistent in the themes of their comments. The legal obligation was provided most often (32% of the time). The next two most mentioned themes (18-hole course and feeling of betrayal) were related to the legal obligation and together were mentioned another 25% of the time. The rest of the themes were mentioned less than 10% of the time.

Themes from comments that support open space (a traditional forest preserve)

Themes are listed in rank order, based on the frequency with which a theme was mentioned: 1 = most frequently mentioned, 10 – least frequently mentioned.

1. There are enough golf courses in the region; golf is declining and there is not enough demand for another course (21.3%)
2. Building a golf course is not economically feasible; there is no appetite for funding a course with tax dollars (20.9%)
3. This is a unique place in the region; this is a 100 year decision and the legacy of the site needs to be considered (14.6%)
4. A golf course would benefit only a few. The District should consider the county as a whole, not just one community (12.6%)
5. More open space and trails are needed in the area (12.4%)
6. The site has significant ecological value that would be compromised with a golf course. (6.1%)
7. Birding, migratory bird habitats need protection (5.7%)
8. Poor decisions of the past should not dictate current actions (3.7%)
9. The mission of the Forest Preserve District is preserves (2.2%)
10. There is concern about the safety of walkers if a golf course is on the site (0.4%)

For households supporting open space, the themes were more evenly distributed. However, the top 2 (fiscal concerns and not enough demand for more golf) were often cited together, and accounted for 42% of the comments. The next three themes (the uniqueness of the site, the need for more open space, and the accessibility for all people) often conveyed the passion and emotional link between the households and this particular site.

Themes from households that are open to a compromise that includes a blended solution with golf and natural areas

While most admitted they preferred an 18-hole course, 71 of the 126 households that supported golf were open to a compromise (a 9 or 12-hole course blended with paths and trails). Most supported Concept Design 2b for a compromise.

Only 6 of the 222 households supporting open space were open to a compromise.

Copies of all of the comments are available for review. Please contact Marie Shields (mshields@LCFPD.org) for PDF versions of the comments.

D. Advisory Committee Working Protocols and Session Ground Rules

Full participation

- Everyone participate
- Speak openly and honestly, but not with blame or accusation.
- Critique ideas -- not people or groups
- Fact-based discussions

Mutual understanding

- Listen to each other
- Respect legitimacy of each organization's perspectives, needs and goals

Inclusive solutions

- If one group feels they have "lost," we have all lost
- Compromise will be necessary -- strive for consensus to best meet the needs of all
- Take the leap! Be open-minded.
- Think broadly and creatively
- Offer more than objections and obstacles

Shared responsibility

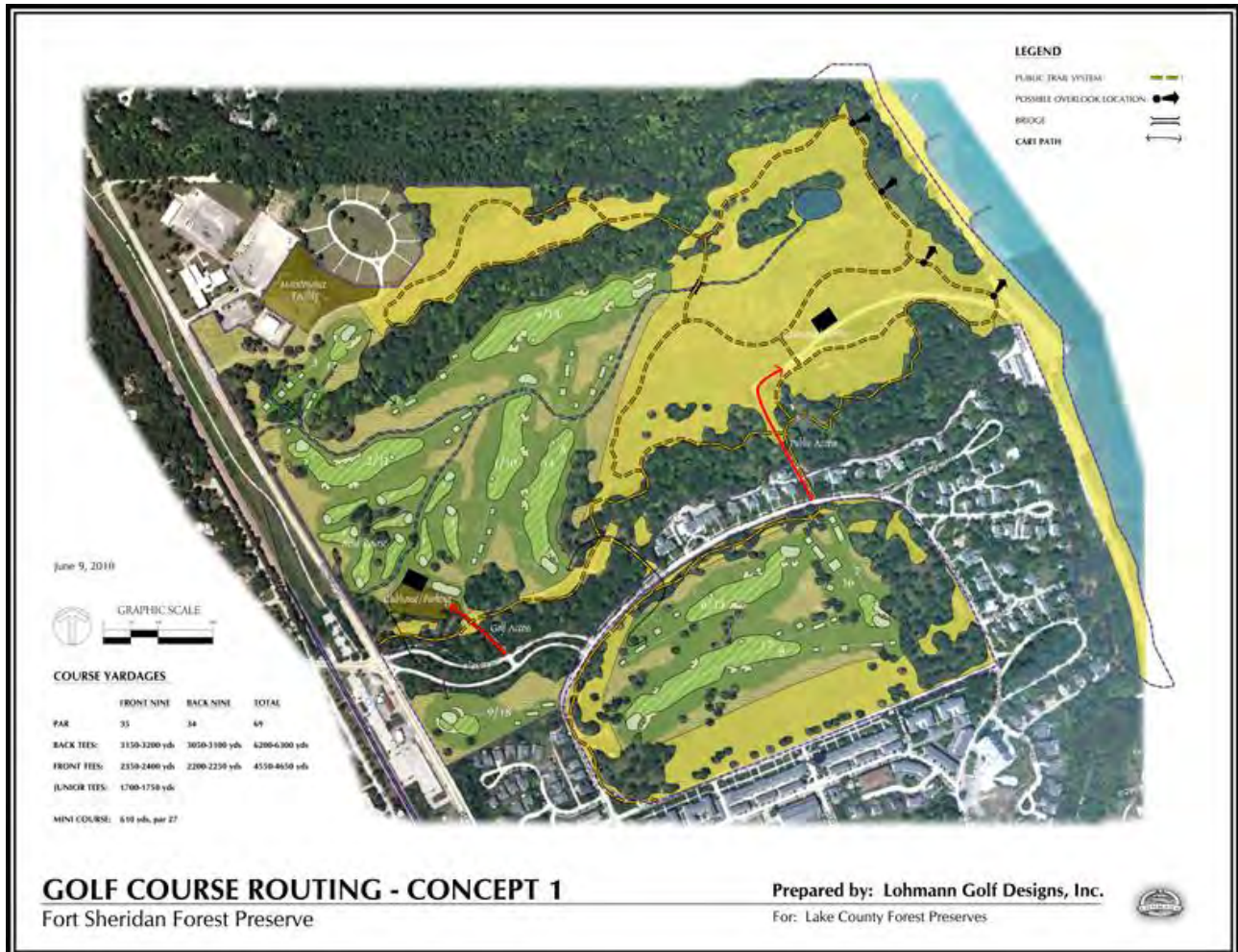
- Responsibility for the process – work in good faith
- Work for the good of the whole
- We all will own the outcome
- Align with only what you can support.

Session Rules

- One conversation at a time
- Each party at the table contributes
- Stay on topic; there will be a "parking lot" for other topics or issues
- "Process Checks" to refocus, if needed
- No interruptions (cell phones)

E. Golf Concepts – 1, 2A, 2B

Concept 1



Concept 2A



Concept 2B



F. Advisory Group Meeting Presentations

Several presentations were included in Advisory Group meetings. The following PDF documents contain more detailed information than was included in the meeting minutes:

April 2010 Advisory Committee meeting presentation: Fort Sheridan 4-14-10.pdf

June 2010 Advisory Committee meeting presentation: Fort Sheridan 6-9-FINAL.pdf

September 2010 Advisory Committee meeting presentation: Ft. Sheridan Advisory Committee meeting Slides 09-15-10.pdf

November 2010 Advisory Committee meeting presentation: Fort Sheridan 11-17-10.pdf

G. References – Project reports

Several reports were shared with the Advisory Group members throughout the process. The ones listed here were shared from February – November 2010. Others are included on the Fort Sheridan page of the FCFPD website.

Economic Impact Conference Call Summary, November 2010

Fort Sheridan Advisory Committee

Summary by Linda Carlstone of Nov. 17, 2010 conference call

Participants:

- Three National Golf Foundation (NGF) representatives
- Pete Halter, chairman of Halter Properties L.L.C., which develops and markets unique properties
- Advisory Committee: It was hard to tell who was there; as best I could tell: Bob Kiely, Mary van Arsdale, Ralph Pfaff, Reps from Park Districts of Highland Park and Lake Bluff
- Susan Parks

Overview:

The experts painted a bleak picture of golf in general and took a rather negative opinion about the Fort Sheridan course helping local housing costs or local businesses. NOTE: It was hard to tell which expert was talking at times so their names (below) may be mixed up in places, but basically they were making the same points.

Comments regarding golf economy

NGF: It's a tough business to be in right now; there's a lot of competition driving fees down; expenses are up, particularly in the public sector; municipal courses are strained to be self-sustaining. There's not a lot of new development, but it has not dried to zero. There are closures, so the market is shrinking for the first time in a long time. Yet, if designed well, it could work.

Halter: No new golf developments are contemplated. Health and wellness are the trend, not golf. My experience now is that if people have a choice of golf vs. activities, they will choose activities.

In the old days, there would be a 20% to 30% uplift in the value of a house on a course. Right now you cannot get golf course financing if your name is Walt Disney. You would do better with a park and amenities all could enjoy.

Additional problem with Fort Sheridan is that "you are burdened with courses all around." I would be hard pressed as a tax payer to want to contribute to another course.

Comments on economic impact to surrounding business

NGF: The piece you are missing is an Impact Analysis. That could tell you the value of 9 vs. 18 holes? Would it be a destination? Put heads in the beds? (over night lodging) If it just drew the people who live there it would not help local business. It's our general belief that a 9-hole course has a much lower economic impact because it only draws local. But you would need hard estimates.

Halter: I would recommend a "big design crown jewel concept" of park recreation with a health club. That would add value for any person. An amphitheater for music like Grant Park in Chicago; not just trails. I don't see a 9-hole course adding economic value to the area homes; maybe 18-hole would, or leave it dormant until the market changes.

NGO: I would be concerned that a 9-hole course would not help the economy in the area. It could drain resources.

Advisory Committee input:

Ralph made most of the comments by the committee members. He filled the experts in on the history that led to this decision. He told them how this was more than about finances, it was about the deed restriction ... He also told them the Forest Preserve has the money from the referendum but they want to spend it on property.

In turn, he was asked if the homeowners would accept responsibility for the club and run it as a homeowner membership club. (Halter said this would take 400 members.) Ralph said the Army would probably not approve. He was asked if there is a time constraint when the homeowners would bring a lawsuit. He said it could come to that, but right now they put their weight behind cooperation with the committee in hopes of a compromise of 9 holes that 90 percent of them would accept.

Advisory Committee Q & A to the experts

Q: Will the aging demographics in American being more golfers?

A: It would if in 20 years the people who are 40 now would golf like the people who are 60. But can't say where they will be in their lifestyle and I wouldn't make future business decisions on that.

Q: Have you seen the specific plans for our course and its location with ravines and the lake?

A: NGF – We did review the design concept and it looks appealing. I am sure it is beautiful but caution that a beautiful course alone is not an indication a course will be self sustaining or perform economically. A lot of nice golf courses don't cash-flow well. It depends on the financial picture. I would hate to be a chairman voting on this now.

Q: What's your opinion of 9 or 18 holes?

A: 9 is not a destination course; 18 has more risk because it costs more. Need a study to be sure.

Q: Are there golf trends we could consider?

A: NGO- Nothing we see as successful.

Finally, someone asked how this would be presented at the meeting. Kiely said he will not be there but Mary would.

H. Proposed 9-Hole Golf Course and Public Open Space Design Concept, November 17, 2010

See PDF document: Fort Sheridan Nov. 17 Advisory Committee Report –no attachments-final.pdf
Will be distributed separately.