

**TIMBERLANE NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT & BEAUTIFICATION  
DISTRICT**

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING OF THE BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS**

**April 20, 2023, 6:30 PM**

**Conducted via Zoom**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER (6:33 PM)**

Roll call: Chair Jon McGill, present; Ann Berthelot, present; Gary Chauvin, present; John Firestone, present; Pamela Russell, present. Quorum was present. Panelists: Luis Arocha, Robert Wolfe, Mike Simon, Donny Darville. Zoom: Two attendees.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

**1. Approval of the Minutes from the Regular April 20, 2023, TNIBD Meeting**

MOVER:	McGill
SECONDER:	Berthelot
ACTION:	APPROVE DRAFT MINUTES
VOTE:	5 – 0
YEAS:	McGill, Berthelot, Chauvin, Firestone, Russell
NAYS:	None
ABSENT:	None

**2. Café Hope and Clubhouse Update**

Chairman McGill stated that the Commissioners were provided with a construction update and timeline by the contractor. He and Luis have reviewed it and will make it public soon, likely by posting on the website. He introduced Robert Wolfe of Robert Wolfe Construction Company (RWCC) and Mike Simon, the project manager. Mr. Wolfe indicated that they wanted specifically to provide background to District members regarding the delays that have occurred. One chief cause of delay was getting the Arts District set up, which was instrumental in helping to close the funding gap for the renovations. In addition, there were problems regarding delivery of materials. Given these issues, it wasn't until late 2022 that they were able to get fully underway. At this point, the roof is 99 percent complete, the demo is nearly finished, and framing has begun.

Luis Arocha stated that he is very appreciative of the time and effort that Robert and Mike have put in. He stated that RWCC upfronted the funds for the roof and wasn't paid until this part of the project reached this near-completion point. RWCC is also upfronting funds for the interior renovation, so obviously they are motivated to meet the timelines that have been set. Luis stated that they expect partial occupancy (pro shop, interior restrooms) by early summer to midsummer; as soon as that phase is complete, renovations will proceed on the lounge area, bar, kitchen, and dining room, which they expect to complete by the middle of the fall. He stated that the funding gap is nearly closed, so they expect to proceed immediately thereafter to the ballroom, to have that completed between Thanksgiving and the end of the year. Work on the second floor is a lower priority, so that will not be addressed until renovation of the ground floor is complete.



Luis added the cautionary note that the clubhouse is an old building, and they are likely to encounter unexpected issues once walls are opened. Mike agreed, explaining that renovations are less predictable than new construction. For example, they have discovered some areas where the slab is 8 to 10 inches out of line, and in parts of the kitchen area, the slab is 20 inches deep. Also, the pilings for the back of the building are lower than those in the front. So, these issues will have to be addressed.

Luis also mentioned that they are using local workers and Westbank businesses, including not only RWCC but also Garrity & Accardo Architects; a Gretna firm that provides custom-made basins for the bathrooms; and Renee Becnel for the interior design.

Robert Wolfe stated that they have a lot of experience in major projects such as this one, some involving much older and more damaged buildings (including the New Orleans Mission) and that they are prepared to handle the problems that Luis mentioned, to get the project done—and done as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible.

Commissioner McGill commented that notwithstanding the abovementioned problems, he was shocked at how well the clubhouse was built. He was able to see its structural integrity during the remediation process that took place after Hurricane Ida. Robert agreed, saying that the building has “great bones.” He added that he has family in Timberlane, has long ties to the neighborhood, and is committed to seeing that this project is done right. Jon stated that he wants the District to know that RWCC at various times has fronted as much as a half million dollars toward the project and has never once demanded payment. When Jon asked him last week whether he has a problem with continuing with the project on this basis, Robert replied no, that he has no problem. Jon stated he wants these facts on the public record.

Commissioner Russell asked for a big-picture estimate of when the entire project will be completed. Robert responded that if that includes the second floor, the question would be better directed to Luis. He stated that his company was the lowest bidder (they were not just given the project) by about half a million dollars. Even so, there was a funding gap. At that point Robert got the idea of getting tax credits through establishment of the Arts District, which is providing about \$300,000 to \$400,000 to help close the gap. He estimates that the major portion of the renovations, which will put the facility into use, will be completed by the end of the year.

Luis then clarified the amount of the funding gap: the gap between insurance coverage and the cost of the project was originally about \$3 million dollars. Insurance provided about \$2.7 million; the total project will cost \$5.5 million. The gap now is down to about \$1 million. Moreover, they have four funding requests pending that will dramatically close that gap, likely to about \$500,000. He said he feels very confident that the organization’s fundraising efforts will succeed.

Jon McGill and Luis further clarified the timeline. Phase 1, the roof, is completed. The first part of phase 2 (pro shop and interior bathrooms, which will allow for admitting the public into the building) will be complete by the end of the summer. The estimated completion of second part of phase 2 (the rest of the ground floor, except for the ballroom) is late summer or early fall. There is a push to have phase 3 (the ballroom) complete enough for occupancy by November, so that Café Hope can host the Gretna Green golf tournament. Luis added, in response to comments by Commissioner McGill, that they expect to be able to host holiday parties for up to about 100 to 125 people. Jon then suggested the possibility of proposing to local businesses that they make a tax-deductible donation, in return for which they would be allowed to host a party. Jon offered to look into the legal/tax issues surrounding such a plan, should Luis be interested.



Commissioner McGill then announced that the pool will not open in 2023. He will ask Commissioner Berthelot to draft a resolution so stating, to be voted on at the next meeting. He also stated that he agrees with Commissioner Firestone's suggestion of sending a mailer to the District members informing them of this decision and the reasons for it, given that relatively few members attend meetings or read minutes.

### 3. Century Update

Donny Darville provided an update. KPI (the final one for this fiscal year): March was an excellent month, with better weather. Rounds were up 12 percent for the period. Average dollars spent per round have now exceeded \$50. For the fiscal year, we are up 16 percent on rounds played, even with 97 bad weather days, with an average of \$48.94 per round. New sales: three residents and eight non-residents have joined, and 18 for GolfVantage. Donny said they will be looking at the resignations of non-resident golf members to identify trends and reasons for their resignations. Monthly dues are at \$15,388.

Revenues are ahead of budget by about \$6,000, exceeding those of March 2022 by about \$12,000. Expenses were under budget by about \$2,500. Net operating income was better than budget by \$8,873. For the year, net operating profit is better than budget by \$48,442.

Commissioner Russell asked for a comparison of the average amount spent per round at the time when Century took over versus today. Jon replied that it was about \$25 per round. Donny added that Century is preparing their annual TGR report that will include a narrative as well as the information presented tonight. Included in this report are data from the former Timberlane Country Club at the time that the TNIBD took over. Overall, the annualized revenues (golf revenues only, not including food/beverage revenues) from TCC in 2019 was \$539,000. Under Century management, that number has increased year by year, this year coming in at \$863,000. The goal throughout has been to improve the product, which has led to the increase in revenues. Commissioner Russell commented that the progress that has been made in the last three years is phenomenal—a story that few District members are aware of. Commissioner McGill added that the bad weather in 2021 did cause a setback (the course was closed more than 30 percent of the year, including the two-week period after the hurricane), but this year we surpassed the numbers of rounds played in 2020. This is especially remarkable given that 2020 was the Covid year, when revenues had markedly increased over the previous year.

Donny added that there is still a lot of room for growth; even with the increase in rounds played over the last few years, we are still at about 20,000 rounds; 40,000 rounds is a possible goal. Jon added that a 25 percent increase (another 5,000 rounds) is doable and sustainable. He stated that with the increase in the daily fees, we have essentially doubled revenues since taking over. And within the next year or two he feels confident that we will have tripled the revenues by making the necessary improvements (e.g., irrigation, greens renovation).

Donny proceeded to report that the irrigation contract has been signed. The senior agronomist will be contacting the irrigation specialist to set a time for the site visit in 30 to 60 days. The timing is good, given that the turf is in transition from winter to summer. Commissioner Chauvin added that the bunker renovations have been completed and that they look great.

Donny added that the course improvements need to be better communicated, and he has asked Richie Tomblin and Michelle Preuss to help out with that effort. The golfers who come routinely are aware of the improvements, but that success story needs to be broadcast more widely. Moreover, at some point we will have a \$5 to \$6 million clubhouse—and that needs to be communicated as well. All voiced their agreement.



This resolution having been submitted to a vote of the Board of Commissioners of Timberlane Neighborhood Improvement and Beautification District, Parish of Jefferson, State of Louisiana, the vote thereon was as follows:

MOVER:	McGill
SECONDER:	Berthelot
ACTION:	ESTABLISH AND SET AMOUNT OF SPECIAL ASSESSMENT FOR 2023
VOTE:	5 – 0
YEAS:	McGill, Berthelot, Chauvin, Firestone, Russell
NAYS:	None
ABSENT:	None

This resolution was declared adopted by the Board of Commissioners acting as the governing authority of Timberlane Neighborhood Improvement and Beautification District, Parish of Jefferson, State of Louisiana on the 20th day of April, 2023.

#### **6. Public Funds Investment Discussion**

Chairman McGill thanked Commissioners Berthelot and Russell for producing an investment policy, which is being reviewed by the CPA. However, the promontory checking account is now earning over 4 percent, and 3- and 6-month Treasury notes are currently yielding a little over 5 percent. Given these rates, plus the risks of tying up our funds in a still-uncertain interest rate environment, Jon stated that for now it's more prudent to keep the TNIBD funds in the liquid promontory checking account. With the policy in place, the Chairman will have the flexibility to act should circumstances change. He asked whether the other Commissioners were comfortable with this strategy, and all agreed.

#### **7. Maintenance Shed Discussion**

Commissioner Russell stated that the completion of the maintenance shed is big news that should be communicated but also asked whether the roof is going to be painted. Commissioner Chauvin stated that he has asked a contractor to provide a quote but hasn't received it yet. He added that he had a golf operations meeting in which they discussed posting pictures of the bunker renovations, bunker renovations, and the repair of the bridge between Fairways 10 and 11.

Commissioner Russell then asked whether any FEMA money is still available to fix the relief station on the 14<sup>th</sup> Hole. Commissioner Chauvin stated that he doesn't think this will be a great expense and will be choosing cost-effective materials. He clarified that the primary goal was to ensure that the building is structurally sound to protect the assets inside. The painting contractor walked on the roof, confirming that the building is structurally sound. Gutters have been installed around the building, addressing prior concerns about maintenance. With the building having been painted, it blends into the surroundings, making it less noticeable.

#### **8. Adjourn the Meeting (7:52 PM)**

MOVER:	McGill
SECONDER:	Russell
ACTION:	ADJOURN
VOTE:	5 – 0
YEAS:	Berthelot, Chauvin, Firestone, McGill, and Russell

#### 4. Treasurer Update

Treasurer Ann Berthelot presented the financial statements for February 2023. Noteworthy items follow. **TGR:** There were 11 bad weather/closed days. Revenues: Green fees were under budget by \$3,439 primarily due to the weather and the Mardi Gras holiday. Membership dues were under budget by \$4,927 primarily due to fewer GolfVantage members than were budgeted for. Driving Range revenues were over budget by \$2,549. Total income was unfavorable to budget by \$5,190. Expenses: Driving range expenses were lower than budget by \$1,253. Net income was unfavorable to budget by \$146 due to lower revenues than were budgeted for the month (primarily GolfVantage and February and Mardi Gras holiday). Year to date, however, we are \$49,750 favorable to budget.

**TNIBD:** Income: No 2022 assessment revenue was recorded for this month. Expenses: Nothing to note. Interest earned came out better than budgeted again by \$4,640. Net income was favorable to budget by \$4,813. The overall net income for TGR and TNIBD is favorable to budget by \$4,667.

Financial reports are subject to change based on our end-of-year review.

#### 5. Assessment Resolution

On motion of Commissioner McGill and seconded by Commissioner Berthelot, the following resolution was offered:

**A resolution establishing and setting the amount of the special assessment for the year 2023 in the amount of One Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$1,950.00) on all property subject to taxation within the District**

**Whereas**, the passage by a majority vote of the votes cast of the proposition submitted to all registered voters of the Timberlane Neighborhood Improvement and Beautification District (the "District"), qualified in and entitled to vote at the election on May 4, 2019, authorized the District to levy and collect a special assessment in an amount not to exceed One Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$1,950) on all property subject to taxation within the District, with an estimated \$1,012,050 Dollars reasonably expected to be collected from the levy of the assessment for one year, for a period of 10 years, beginning with the year 2019 and ending in and including 2028, for the purpose of promoting and encouraging the improvement, beautification, and overall betterment of the District, including, but not limited to, the acquisition, construction, improvement, operation and/or maintenance of recreational and other facilities in furtherance of the authorized purposes of the District.

**Whereas**, in order to have the amount of the special assessment included on the tax assessment rolls of the Jefferson Parish Assessor for the year 2023, it is necessary at this time for the Board of Commissioners of the District to establish and set the special assessment for the year 2023.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE AND IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** that the amount of the special assessment for the year 2023 is established and set in the amount of One Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$1,950.00) on all property subject to taxation within the District. This resolution shall be continuing and effective for the 2023 special assessment.



NAYS: None  
ABSENT: None

  
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Jon McGill, Chairman  
Signed:

  
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John Firestone, Secretary  
Signed:

Date approved: May 18, 2023

Approved