

## Comments for RAB Regarding the Coal Creek Golf Course

Concern: Culture Issues leading to reputation damage

The current management of the CCGC has implemented changes that I believe negatively impact the golf course and its future success. Many of the changes represent a shift from prior practices, and while some change is good, and possibly even needed, other changes should be challenged. They reflect poorly on the course and are causing many to question their loyalty to a course that appears to care more about the bottom line than about the community it serves.

Recent examples, collected over the last 6-8 weeks, include:

- A single person cannot make more than two tee time reservations. So, if you are trying to golf with a group larger than 8 people, scheduling is difficult. My question is WHY? If a person has a full foursome, and is willing to pay the prevailing rate, why can they not make as many reservations as needed? What difference does it make who is playing? The policy has directly impacted a group of golfers who have played at CCGC for many, many years and has caused them to question whether to continue playing here.
- The CCWGA (women's league) recently hosted a Scenic League event on a Wednesday, whereby women from other leagues come to our course for a friendly competition. One of the women from a neighboring league had surgery and requested a handicap flag for her golf cart – this was three days before the cart path only rule was lifted. Management declined her request and therefore, she could not play. Not only was this inflexible, but she also then goes back to her home course and tells everyone about her negative experience at Coal Creek. As we know, one unhappy person typically shares their unhappiness with many.
- I had the opportunity to play on Mothers' Day with my family in the afternoon. We commented on how nice it was to have the course so empty – great for golfers who don't like to wait on or be pushed by golfers in front or behind them, but not great for a golf course trying to maximize revenues. Come to find out, many of the neighboring courses offered mothers free or discounted golf on that day, hence the lack of demand at CCGC. While offering a discount is a small hit to revenue, a full foursome, with 3 full-fee paying golfers, is certainly better than open slots on the tee sheet.
- Women's Weekend League – this league, which was originally implemented by David Baril to encourage more women participation – has not only received no support from the course, but in fact has encountered so many obstacles it is unlikely to keep going. Because tee times cannot be held for this league (as is done for the men's weekend league) a CCWGA board member has to log-on after midnight to secure tee times; and now because of the policy mentioned above, can only make two reservations. This is a small league and would require only one hour's worth of dedicated times, at most. While

the course has managed this league in prior years, the CCWGA (women's league) has assumed management responsibilities and has only asked for some flexibility with respect to booking times.

- Imperial season pass holders (the very few people who paid \$3,670 for their pass!) were charged for golf on Memorial Day. Apparently, the course management decided this pass was good for weekends, but not holidays (again, WHY??), changing policy without communication. After many players complained, management changed course and decided not to charge, but not before some players gave up and went home. A reminder...these are the MOST loyal and committed golfers of CCGC.
- League play winnings, which are funded by the leagues, and have typically been remitted to the course to apply to members accounts, now cannot be used to pay for green fees. This is a new rule. The money can be used for merchandise, cart rental or range balls...but not green fees. Again, WHY? This new rule is prompting the women's league to consider not remitting the winnings to the course and instead, paying members out directly. This is the exact opposite outcome the course would want since now there is no incentive to buy in the shop.

Sadly, I could go on but I think you get the idea. I understand and appreciate that the golf course needs to be financially sound, but I think this bottom-line focus has rippled through the organization in a way that will have long-term negative financial consequences. I personally have had casual conversations with golfers that I did not know, local Louisville residents, that said they are simply playing other courses more often and are generally avoiding CCGC altogether because of the current culture. This makes me truly SAD. We all love the golf course and want it to succeed financially, but at what price?

I recall Councilman Dickinson asking the RAB at our recent joint meeting, "what do we want CCGC to be"? I thought this was an excellent question, and it caused me to reflect. I want the course to be a place that Louisville golfers WANT to play at, to gather and socialize, and recapture the sense of community that we once had. I want it to be a place where management respects the individual (guest and staff alike) and does not change the message based on the day, the recipient or the mood. And if getting all this back means that we NEVER have a new clubhouse, then that is a tradeoff I am willing to make. I realize that I speak only for myself here, but be assured, I have had many, many conversations and these are common sentiments. I believe the financial health of the golf course will not be negatively impacted if we refocus on what we are all about – a welcoming, respectful and well-run golf course that Louisville can be proud of.